



A family for all children

IMPACT REPORT

2023

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

-J.K. ROWLING, LUMOS FOUNDER AND LIFE PRESIDENT

WITH WARMEST THANKS

FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES...

It is clear that 2023 has been a year of extraordinary progress for Lumos, and it is with great pleasure that I reflect on the work we have accomplished together. We have made significant strides in reforming children's care and protection systems around the world, ensuring that more children grow up in safe, loving families rather than institutions.

In Kenya, we are supporting the roll out of a national care reform programme, having successfully trialled it in Embu County. In Colombia, we have advanced our efforts to protect children from violence, putting young people's voices at the heart of the care reform process. Meanwhile, our ongoing support for children separated from their families, especially in Ukraine and Moldova, has provided essential education, mental health services and humanitarian aid under extraordinary difficult conditions.

Through all our programmes we have focused on empowering and supporting some of the most marginalised children, families and other excluded groups. We have ensured the inclusion of children in education, prevented the separation of children through family strengthening and expanded our foster care initiatives as part of our broader global child care reform efforts.

There is still so much work to be done. To continue this vital work, we need to raise significant funds to support the national scale-up of child care and protection reforms in Kenya, expand our global advocacy for Care Reform to



increase political commitment resources and impact, and sustain our violence prevention programmes, including the first ever Ministerial conference on ending violence against children in Colombia.

In the US, our successful fundraising efforts have been crucial to supporting our global and national programmes, particularly those in conflict zones like Ukraine. We have launched initiatives that prioritise child and youth participation, including the formation of a Global Youth Advisory Board, which will guide our future direction.

Your support is essential to advancing this work. With your help, we can continue to transform the lives of vulnerable children, ensuring that they grow up in families, not institutions.

Thank you for standing with Lumos in our mission.

With deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carol Copland'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Carol Copland
Chair of Trustees, Lumos

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO...

As we reflect on the past year, I am incredibly proud of the global momentum we have achieved in care reform, driven by a collective commitment to ensuring that every child grows up in a safe and loving family. In 2023, Lumos not only expanded its reach but also deepened its impact, developing a new strategy that puts children and young people at the heart of everything we do.

Across our programmes, we have seen remarkable progress. In Kenya, we worked closely with the government to implement care reforms that are transforming the lives of children. In Panama and Colombia, we have laid the foundations for long-term change by collaborating with local partners and authorities to promote family-based care. Our efforts in Moldova have focused on early childhood development and supporting young refugees, while in the USA, we successfully raised significant funds to support our global initiatives.

One of the most challenging and inspiring aspects of our work this year has been our response to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. At the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London, we advocated for child protection to be a central part of the recovery efforts, and we have intensified our support for displaced children, ensuring they receive the care and education they need despite the turmoil.



As we look ahead, I am confident that with the continued support of our partners, donors, and advocates, we will be able to build on these achievements and continue to drive meaningful change for children around the world. Together, we are creating a future where every child can grow up in a nurturing environment, free from the harms of institutionalisation.

Thank you for being part of this vital journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pete McDermott'.

Pete McDermott
Lumos, CEO



ADVOCACY IN 2023:

CHAMPIONING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, FAMILY-BASED CARE, AND AMPLIFYING YOUNG VOICES

In 2023, Lumos continued to advocate for care reform at the highest levels, demonstrating the critical connection between family-based care and other major global issues including education.

Our evidence-based advocacy spanned the globe, addressing a wide range of issues related to family and community-based care. Central to our approach was the belief that no single actor can transform children's care globally. By working in partnership, sharing insights, and speaking with a united voice, we helped to ensure that many more children received the love, attention, and opportunities they need to thrive.

A significant highlight of the year was the completion of our Global Thematic Review on Education, funded by UBS Optimus Foundation. This review revealed that many families around the world are being forced to make an impossible choice, between their children's rights to family life and to education, when the only opportunity for their child to receive an education is to send them a way to a residential institution. Building on these findings, we launched the "Learning Curves" Research Pack in February 2023, featuring case studies, policy briefs, and event recordings that significantly raised awareness of the links between education and institutional care. To ensure this research results in real-world change, we held a series of advocacy events, including a global launch event and a national launch in Moldova, one of our Case Study countries, a global roundtable bringing together governments from four countries to discuss the challenges of residential education, and an NGO

Roundtable with actors in the education sector, raising their awareness of this critical issue.

In June 2023, Lumos played an active role in the Ukraine Recovery Conference, co-hosted in London by the UK Government and the Government of Ukraine. Lumos worked in coalition with other key agencies to make an international call for the development of inclusive child protection and care system in Ukraine, and co-hosted a side event to the conference with both governments entitled 'Care Reform: a Ukraine Reconstruction Priority'.

We also continued to develop our More Than a Number campaign, focused on redirecting philanthropic funding and efforts away from institutional care models, into family and community-based care. This campaign will be a key priority for the coming year.



AMPLIFYING YOUNG VOICES WORLDWIDE

Throughout all our work in 2023, we increased our focus on empowering children and young people to influence decisions that affect their lives. Child and youth participation is essential: it ensures that policymakers and service providers understand the real issues that children and young people face, leading to more targeted and effective actions. It also empowers young people to develop communication and negotiation skills, making them more confident in the services that support them.

To this end, we developed a new Child and Youth Participation (CYP) strategic plan, clarifying how we can deliver the greatest impact. We created opportunities for children and young people to share their insights and ideas across the countries where we work, and we began setting up a Global Youth Advisory Board to ensure that young people can advise us on all our programmes and future direction.

Our new CYP strategy, developed through extensive consultations with Lumos teams and young self-advocates, also recognised the need to amplify the voices of parents and families, particularly those with lived

experience of institutionalisation and family separation. This commitment to youth participation was further reinforced by the launch of our new Lumos podcast in 2023, providing a powerful platform for young people to discuss the value of CYP, share success stories, and advocate for youth voices to be catalysts for change.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Child and youth participation expanded significantly in 2023, particularly in Colombia, Kenya, and Moldova, where a total of 435 children and young people were directly involved in participatory activities. These included contributions from self-advocates to the Lumos US Gala communications, UBS projects, and the More Than a Number Campaign.

FUTURE FOCUS

Looking ahead, Lumos remains committed to building on this momentum, ensuring that global commitments on care reform turn into meaningful change in countries, that every child's right to grow up in a family and receive a quality education is respected, and that the voices of young people are heard and valued in all aspects of our work.



OUR GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

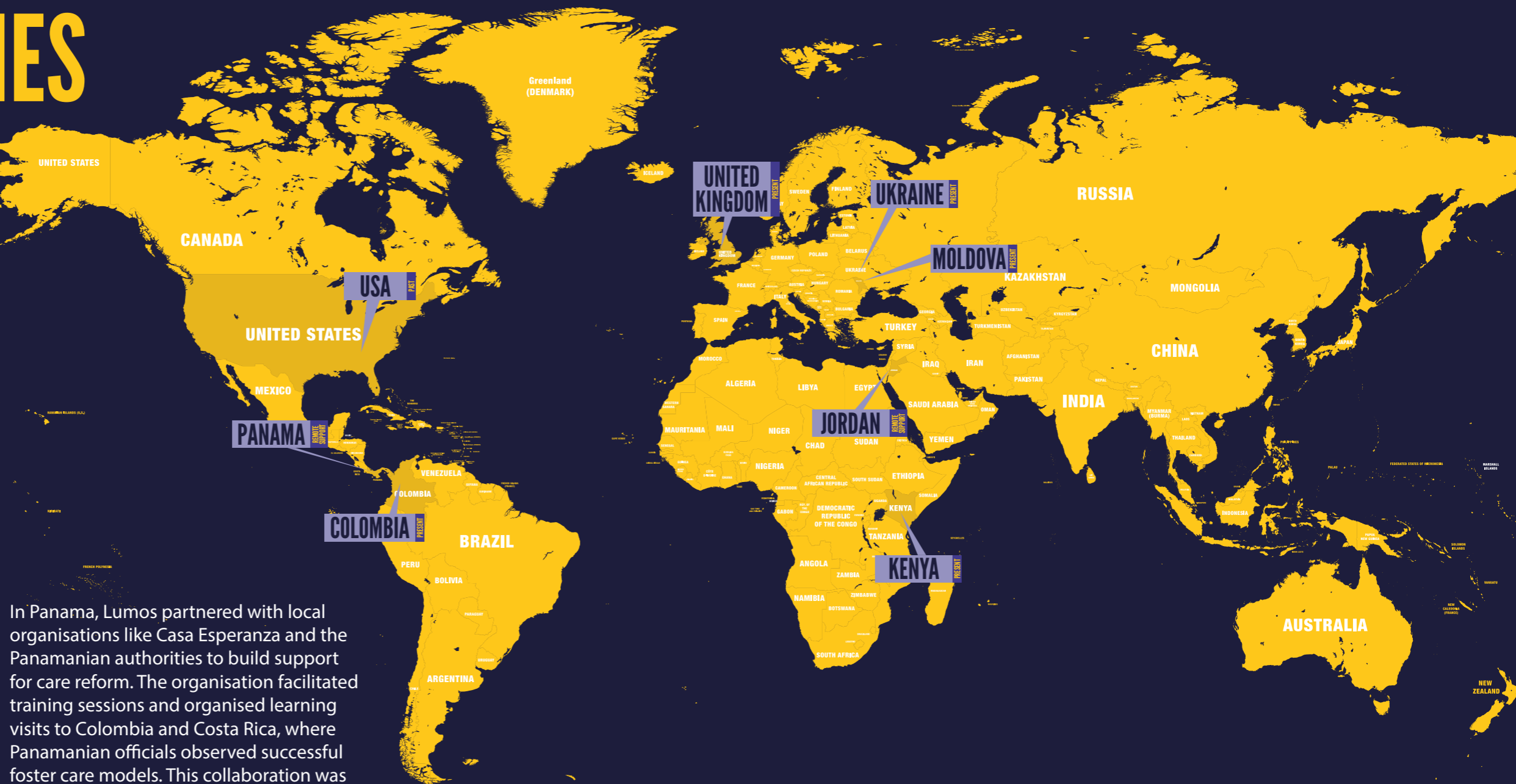
WHERE WE WORK

In 2023, Lumos made significant progress in reforming children's care systems globally, with a focus on promoting family-based care, empowering young people, and collaborating closely with local authorities.

In Colombia, Lumos rapidly advanced care reforms by empowering young people and collaborating with the government. The organisation developed country-specific plans, engaged children and families in programmes to keep them together, and supported the creation of a participation network for children in care. This ensured that young voices were integral to the reform process.

In Kenya, Lumos worked extensively with the government to advance care reforms. The organisation helped develop and finalise nine key policy documents and established advisory committees at both national and county levels to facilitate the transition of children from institutional settings to safe, loving homes. A major milestone was the launch of Kenya's first child-friendly court in Embu County, improving the judicial experience for children involved in care cases.

In Moldova, Lumos led care reform efforts by focusing on early childhood development and supporting young refugees. The approval of a new national action plan for early intervention services was a key achievement, informed by Lumos's pilot projects. The organisation also established early childhood intervention centres and engaged young people in advocating for care reform.



In Panama, Lumos partnered with local organisations like Casa Esperanza and the Panamanian authorities to build support for care reform. The organisation facilitated training sessions and organised learning visits to Colombia and Costa Rica, where Panamanian officials observed successful foster care models. This collaboration was crucial in helping Panama develop its own foster care programme, aiming to reduce the reliance on institutional care.

In Ukraine, Lumos continued its decade-long commitment to supporting children amid the ongoing conflict. The organisation provided emergency food and education kits to over 1,900 children and worked with Ukrainian authorities to draft a national strategy focused on increasing family-based care. Lumos also advocated for child protection to be a central part of Ukraine's recovery efforts.

In the USA, Lumos hosted a successful fundraising event in New York City, raising over \$535,000 to support global programmes. The event highlighted Lumos's work, particularly in conflict zones like Ukraine and featured a panel discussion between Lumos Founder and Life President J.K. Rowling, Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States Oksana Markarova, and Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights & Child Rehabilitation Daria Herasymchuk.

Finally, in the global team, Lumos prioritised Child and Youth Participation (CYP) across its work. A new CYP strategic plan was developed, and a Global Youth Advisory Board was launched to guide Lumos's future direction. The organisation also introduced training for staff and created a podcast to amplify young voices globally.

UKRAINE

PUTTING FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF RECOVERY

In 2023 we marked our 10th year of working in Ukraine. Amid the ongoing conflict with Russia, Lumos focused on delivering urgent humanitarian aid, influencing care reform at all levels, and uniting organisations to prioritise child protection. Every year thousands of children are still being institutionalised, especially in times of conflicts.

Our efforts in 2023 aimed to address these long-standing challenges and support children and families through the crisis.

Our humanitarian work focused on three key areas: providing emergency food and education kits to 1,915 children from 909 families, offering technical support to increase family-based care, and advocating for child protection to be central to Ukraine's recovery plans. We also collaborated with Ukrainian authorities to shape future childcare reforms, drafting a national strategy to increase foster families and reduce the number of children entering institutions.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Provided emergency supplies to 1,915 children across 909 families.
- Supported the drafting of Ukraine's national strategies on family-based care and inclusive education.
- Trained 45 TOT trainers on MHPSS nationwide by the program approved by the Ministry of Education and Science
- Advocated for child protection at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London, brought child protection priorities and principles internationally by leading Ukraine International Advocacy Task Force.

PREPARING TO REACH MORE DISPLACED CHILDREN

Towards the end of 2023, we intensified efforts to support children displaced by the conflict. Our goals include in-kind support to 3,000 children, increasing access to formal, informal, inclusive education for 18,000 children, training 2,400 teachers to provide mental health support, assisting in provision of MHPSS support to 16,000 of children and their parents, and offering emergency cash assistance to 2,000 families.



ALLA'S STORY

Alla, a mother of three who also cares for her niece, has faced tremendous challenges due to the conflict. With her husband unemployed, she is the sole provider for her family. The pressure on her mental health is immense, but the food and education kits from Lumos have helped her focus on the future. Determined to keep her family together, Alla remains resilient despite the ongoing struggles.

KENYA

CREATING PROGRESS AT EVERY LEVEL

In 2023, Lumos continued its vital work in Kenya, driving forward its mission of care reform across the country. Our efforts focused on strengthening government collaboration, promoting child and youth participation, and ensuring that care reforms are embedded at every level of society.

Throughout the year, we engaged directly with the Kenyan government, securing their commitment to care reform. At a key event attended by Lumos CEO Peter McDermott, senior officials from the Directorate of Children's Services and the National Council for Children's Services acknowledged Lumos's role in spearheading the care reform agenda. This marked the beginning of a year of widespread progress.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Supported the development, review, and finalisation of nine key policy documents related to Kenya's comprehensive care reform strategy.
- Established advisory committees at both county and sub county levels to coordinate children's care, aiming to contribute to transitioning 1,500 children from statutory institutions and 26,000 from private institutions into safe, loving homes.
- Launched Kenya's first child-friendly court in Embu County, transforming the judicial experience for children involved in care reform cases.

DRIVING CHANGE ACROSS KENYA

One of our primary objectives in Kenya is to work in partnership across Africa, building awareness of the challenges children face when separated from their families. As the secretariat for the Africa Working Group on Children Without Parental Care, we have played a pivotal role in fostering collaboration and securing funding to support these initiatives, ensuring that children can leave institutions behind and be safely reunited with their families.

"THE CHILDREN'S COURT IS A DREAM COME TRUE. IT FEELS LIKE A NEW YEAR'S GIFT AND WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO LUMOS. CREATING PROGRESS AT EVERY LEVEL."

MR MUNDI, EMBU COUNTY CHILDREN COORDINATOR



COLOMBIA



MAKING PROGRESS FAST

In 2023, Lumos made great progress in Colombia in its work ensuring young people grow up in safe and loving families, as we focused on empowering young people and collaborating closely with the government.

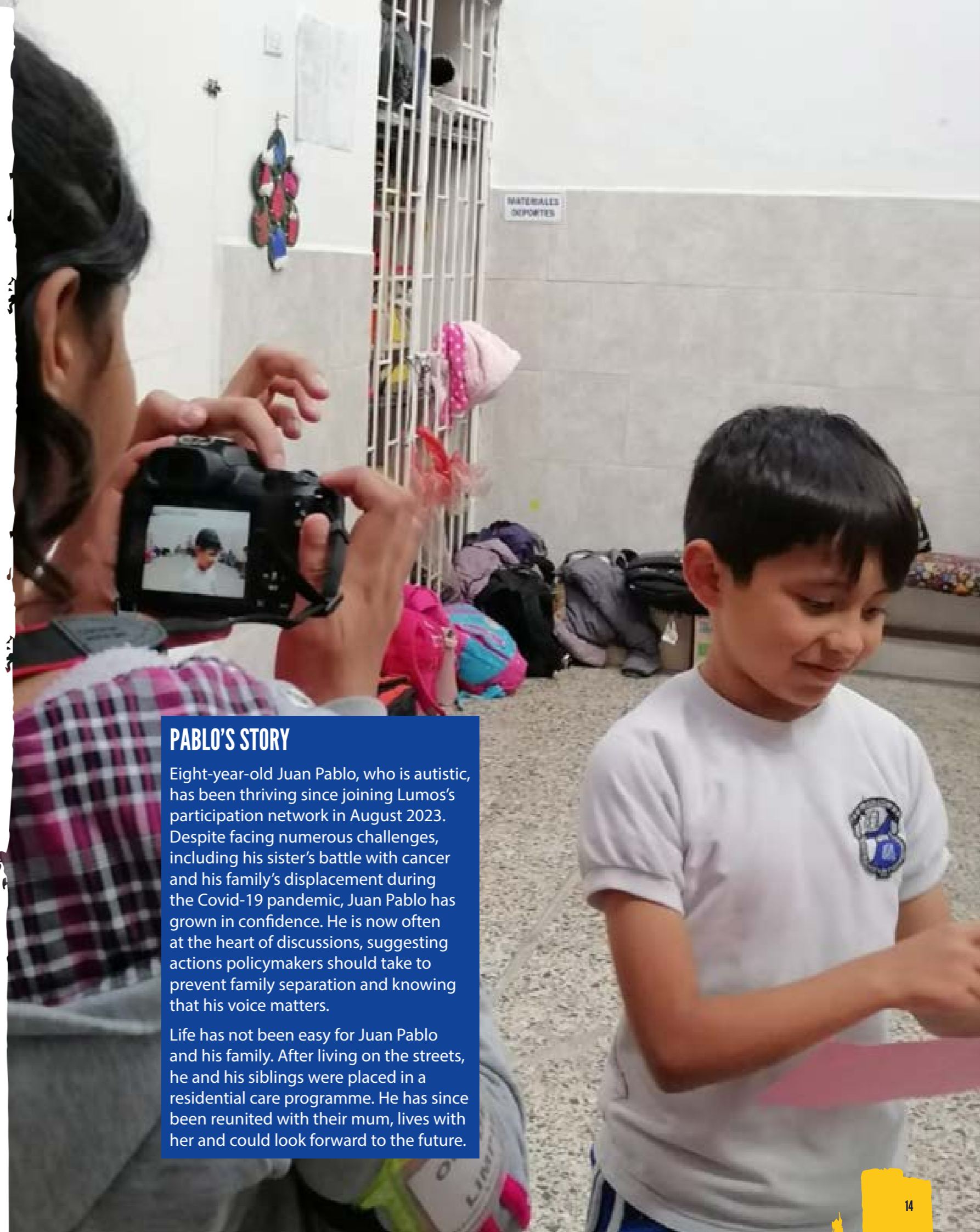
Following the appointment of a Child and Youth Participation (CYP) coordinator in June 2023, our team quickly developed country-specific plans and recruited 60 volunteers aged 13 to 17, including 36 girls and 24 boys, to form three advocacy groups. These young advocates participated in 37 activities, workshops, and training sessions, all designed to foster creativity, collaboration, and emotional resilience, preparing them to inspire reform of the care system in Colombia.

Throughout the year, we worked closely with ministers to move Colombia towards a future based on family and community care, rather than institutions. We presented our national plan for childcare to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), which included recommendations from

local experts and government officials involved in our research. This collaboration has given Lumos a valued voice in discussions on care reform.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Worked closely with the Colombian government and civil society organisations to push care reform to the top of the political agenda, contributing valuable insights to Colombia's national plan for childcare.
- Engaged 271 children and 178 family caregivers in programmes designed to keep families together, with 36 children successfully reunited with their families.
- Provided workshops on effective care processes to 117 professionals involved in foster care programmes and 71 foster mothers across the Cundinamarca, Bogotá, Tolima, and Antioquia regions.
- Established a participation network for 59 children and adolescents living in residential care institutions or in family separation programmes, promoting their involvement in care reform.



PABLO'S STORY

Eight-year-old Juan Pablo, who is autistic, has been thriving since joining Lumos's participation network in August 2023. Despite facing numerous challenges, including his sister's battle with cancer and his family's displacement during the Covid-19 pandemic, Juan Pablo has grown in confidence. He is now often at the heart of discussions, suggesting actions policymakers should take to prevent family separation and knowing that his voice matters.

Life has not been easy for Juan Pablo and his family. After living on the streets, he and his siblings were placed in a residential care programme. He has since been reunited with their mum, lives with her and could look forward to the future.

MOLDOVA

A NEW CHAPTER FOR FAMILY-BASED CARE

In 2023, Lumos continued to lead care reform in Moldova, focusing on early childhood development, supporting young refugees, and empowering young people to advocate for change.

A significant milestone was the approval of a new national action plan for early intervention services for children with developmental delays. This plan informed by Lumos's pilot projects, will help prevent family separation by ensuring that vulnerable children and their families receive the support they need at the right time. The plan includes the establishment of 24 new early intervention centres across Moldova, with Lumos playing a central role in their creation.

Lumos organised for self-advocates to share their stories during an education conference at the Moldovan Parliament, raising awareness of the challenges they face. Plus, we created an independent NGO, called Youth and Experience, so young people can continue working with children in care and care leavers long into the future.

We continued to support young refugees in four regions. Children and young people took part in activities, including a three-day youth forum and workshops on creating child-friendly spaces. We also continued to support young volunteers at two Youth Friendly Health Centres, as part of our broader initiative to prevent young children, including those with disabilities, from being separated from their families. In 2023, 68 young people—49 girls and 19 boys—participated in peer-to-peer support workshops at these centres.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Collaborated with the government to approve a National Action Plan for Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services for 2023–2027, based on our model of intervention centres.
- Provided training for 542 healthcare, social care, and early education professionals, enhancing the quality of support available to children and families.
- Supported 435 children and young people in youth participation events, empowering them to advocate for care reform.
- Established six new ECD/ECI community centres and early education spaces in seven institutions, supporting 1,337 children in 2023.

ROMINA'S STORY

Romina Sorbală, a paediatrician in Floresti, Moldova, is part of Lumos's initiative to expand Early Childhood Intervention centres across the country. Growing up in Floresti and returning there after her studies, Romina now works in an ECI centre, where she provides crucial medical assistance to children with developmental delays – or at the risk of having one – and is openly surprised by the quality of the facilities and the positive impact they are having on families.

Romina shares, "We keep children busy playing and while they do, we're doing our job: observing, channelling the game to achieve our purpose and showing parents and carers what they can look out for at home."

With a smile, Romina concludes, "I feel like I'm part of the change."





THANK YOU



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