Cover Image: A Luminos student in the Wolaita zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR) in Ethiopia sits at his desk during class.

Current Image: Luminos Liberia student Josephine (center) plays a vocabulary game with her classmates, competing against another team to spell the most words with a set of flashcard letters.
Luminos student Betelehem with her father, Petros.
As we look back at 2022, many words come to mind. Disruption: from pandemics, climate change, conflict, and displacement. Inequality: millions of children in low- and middle-income countries face a learning crisis. But, despite these challenges, the words that rise to the top of my mind are determination, hope, and joy.

What makes me so optimistic? It’s the enduring spirit and tenacity of the children we serve. Together with support from their families, our community-based partners, and Luminos, these children are overcoming obstacles standing in the way of their success in education.

Consider Betelehem. Before she arrived in a Luminos classroom, she experienced violence in her community, dropped out of first grade, and was forced to leave her home at just seven years old. Like many of our students in the Konso zone of Ethiopia, Betelehem had faced immense stress and trauma.

But her father, Petros, had hope.

“I believe the Luminos program will open her mind and help her learn fast,” he shared.

The Luminos program helps children learn to read, write, and do math, and promotes the well-being and safety of all children.

“I feel happy in class,” says Betelehem.

Luminos and our community-based partners work tirelessly to reach the most vulnerable out-of-school children with life-changing education.

Thanks to your support, Luminos is serving 45,584 out-of-school children in the 2022–23 school year — more than double our reach last year.

But our work doesn’t stop there. In 2022, Luminos launched two new country programs in Ghana and The Gambia and signed working agreements with governments in all our African country programs. The Ethiopian and Ghanaian ministries of education participated in an educational exchange organized by Luminos in Ghana. Our Liberia program expanded to serve nearly twice as many students with transformative education, and we launched additional projects centered on girls and keeping children safe. Our programs in Ethiopia scaled to new geographies and populations, and we strengthened our government adoption work.

We also launched the Luminos Method: a collection of best practices derived from our experience working in some of the hardest-to-reach communities. The Luminos Method is available to the broader education sector as a means to accelerate our vision of helping all children achieve foundational learning across the globe.

We were also honored to receive the 2022 Klaus J. Jacobs Best Practice Prize, which recognizes outstanding achievements and practices in advancing quality education.

These achievements are only possible thanks to your support. Together, we can ensure that every child can catch up and thrive.

On behalf of our team and the children and communities we serve, thank you for making such an incredible year possible.

Warmly,

Caitlin Baron
CEO, the Luminos Fund
Global crises are upending learning

Global health emergencies, climate change, conflict, and other crises can devastate education systems and put children’s futures at risk.

According to new estimates from UNESCO, 44 million primary-school-aged children in Sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to education – a heartbreaking increase from past data.

The consequences of missed education can last a lifetime and affect future generations.

We must act now
Join us

The global learning crisis facing young children today presents an opportunity for collective action. Together, we can ensure no child is ever denied the chance to learn.

Luminos has a proven solution.

We are supporting education systems to be adaptable and resilient, thereby protecting children’s futures.

Working together with governments and community-based organizations, Luminos is taking urgent action to reverse the current learning crisis and scale our award-winning program to help out-of-school children resume their education, catch up, and thrive.
Our Mission
To ensure all children have equal access to joyful, foundational learning, especially those shut out of education by crisis, poverty, or discrimination.

Our Vision
A world where no child is ever denied the chance to learn.

Our Theory of Change

Who We Work With

**Target Population:**
Out-of-school children ages 8–14 in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East who have been denied the opportunity to receive quality education.

**Partners:**
Ministries of education, community-based organizations, families, donors, and research and evaluation organizations.

Our Work

**SHOW**
We deliver the Luminos program to children denied an education due to crisis, poverty, or discrimination.

**SHARE**
We promote broader adoption of the Luminos program by government and other partners.

**SHIFT**
We champion and advocate for the Luminos Method, including among relevant donors, ensuring all children have equal access to joyful, foundational learning.
Our Beliefs and Values

We believe that learning to read is a crucial milestone in every child’s life. At Luminos, we unlock the light in every child through the transformative power of foundational learning. We do this by upholding the following core beliefs and values:

1. We believe that every child is capable of learning a remarkable amount in a short period of time, if given the chance.

2. We keep children’s joy and well-being at the heart of everything we do.

3. We embrace assessment as a key component of effective teaching and learning.

4. We celebrate and empower local leadership throughout our work with partner communities and governments.

5. We use research, program data, and skilled classroom observation in the tenacious pursuit of excellence.

6. We celebrate the unique contexts and cultures of the communities we serve in our curricula and pedagogy.

7. We act with the highest standards of integrity and care, ensuring mutual accountability among colleagues and partners.

8. We take the initiative to solve problems where we find them, managing details large and small, with urgency.

9. We act deliberately to ensure that our organization is inclusive for people of different genders, racial backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientations, religious beliefs, abilities, and other sources of diversity.

10. We build deep, authentic relationships with our supporters in celebration of the mutually transformative power of giving.

Intermediate Outcomes

Direct Outcomes

- Children who were previously denied the chance to go to school learn to read, write, and do basic math.
- Luminos graduates transition into government school with the foundational learning they need to succeed.
- Community-based organizations, governments, teachers, and ministry of education officials are equipped with the core practices necessary to achieve foundational learning at scale.

Indirect Outcomes

- Powerful elements of the Luminos Method are practiced across national education systems and reflected in donors’ priorities.

Intended Impact

Children become lifelong learners with the necessary foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and “learning how to learn” that enable them to succeed in challenging learning contexts throughout their education.

Donors and national governments embrace the core belief that even the most marginalized can master learning at remarkable speeds when given the chance.
**What We Do**

**Luminos builds transformative education programs.**

In one school year, our program teaches children to read, write, and do math. We help them to catch up on three years of learning in just one school year, and then reintegrate into local government schools.

Luminos serves out-of-school children who are 8-14 years old. We serve boys and girls in relatively equal numbers.

Over 90% of Luminos students complete our program. When they transition to government schools, they are better prepared for lifelong learning.

In each country, our holistic approach centers on partnerships with community-based organizations and government. We share best practices and work towards locally owned, results-driven education solutions with increased capacity to support the most marginalized out-of-school children with quality learning.

This robust network of local partnerships enables resources to go further faster, delivering impact, efficiency, and accountability amid some of the world’s most difficult circumstances.

Luminos has a deep evidence base and proven track record of impact that disproves the misconception that scaling education programs must come at the expense of quality. **Our program proves that it is possible to deliver inclusive, high-impact learning even in extremely marginalized communities.**

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**Parent Engagement**
We partner with parents in marginalized communities to support their children’s lifelong learning.

**Data-Driven**
Using real-time data, we identify classrooms that need additional support.

**Supervision & Coaching**
Supervisors regularly visit classrooms, providing feedback and coaching to teachers.

**Joyful Classrooms**
- Student-centered, empowering learning
- Foundational reading, math, and SEL skills
- Local learning materials, games, and stories
- Young adults trained as community teachers
- Small class sizes (25-30 students)
- 5 days a week for 10 months, covering grades 1-3
- Teacher-led assessment
- Accelerated, activity-based learning

**Transition**
Over 90% of our students advance into government schools joining their peers.

**Government Schools**
We partner with ministries of education to strengthen education systems: sharing best practices, prioritizing shared goals, building capacity, advising on national education policies, and supporting research.

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**Community Partners**
We partner with community-based organizations to co-create and deliver our country-specific programs in the world’s most marginalized areas.
Our Impact

218,541 out-of-school children given a second chance education

Luminos students progress up to ten times faster than students in comparable programs

Luminos students can read short stories by the end of our program

Luminos Alumni

**Tenneh**
Liberia Luminos class of 2017-18
Today: 7th grade student

“The Luminos program helped me want to build a future. It encouraged me to continue my education... It helped me to learn more about books and math.”

**Degnesh**
Ethiopia Luminos class of 2021-22
Today: 4th grade student

“When I entered the Luminos classroom, I could not identify letters. Now I’m reading at home and at school... The program made me love education. I was very proud of myself... Now I have the attitude that I can do anything I want.”

**Sekou**
Liberia Luminos class of 2017-18
Today: 7th grade student

“My favorite memory is when they taught me how to read, how to spell, and how to pronounce words. When I think about it, I get happy.”
Our Reach and Growth

In the 2022-23 school year, Luminos is serving 45,584 vulnerable and out-of-school children across our programs.

The Gambia
- 533 students served
- 1,529 total beneficiaries

Ghana
- 2,000 students served
- 5,686 total beneficiaries

Liberia
- 5,010 students served
- 14,223 total beneficiaries

Lebanon
- 1,200 students served
- 3,440 total beneficiaries

Ethiopia
- 36,841 students served
- 46,949 total beneficiaries

Students Served Year-on-Year

- 2019-20: 13,081
- 2020-21: 15,735
- 2021-22: 20,840
- 2022-23: 45,584

Total beneficiaries include parents, teachers, government officials, and students.
Luminos students in Ghana clap and sing outside their classroom.
Key Accomplishments: 2022-23 School Year

Hosted the Berlin Global Education Funders Forum
In partnership with the Robert Bosch Stiftung, Luminos hosted a forum in Berlin that brought together leaders from international education to discuss a path forward post-COVID.

Signed an MOU with The Gambian Government
Luminos signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with The Gambian government in May 2022, endorsing the customized accelerated learning curriculum we co-created to help out-of-school primary-aged children catch up.

Launched in Ghana
In March 2022, Luminos launched a new program in Ghana serving 1,500 formerly out-of-school children. We also initiated new research with the Oak Foundation’s support to help identify and support children with learning differences.

Inducted into the HundrED Hall of Fame
Luminos was honored by HundrED for the sixth consecutive year and inducted into the HundrED Hall of Fame, which recognizes education innovations that have demonstrated sustained growth of impact and scalability.
Launched the Luminos Method at UNGA

Luminos launched the Luminos Method during our sixth annual U.N. General Assembly week event. The event, “Teachers Leading in a Post-COVID World,” highlighted innovative strategies to tackle the global teacher shortage and tools to help children become successful learners.

Luminos classrooms remained safe havens in Lebanon

Despite the challenging operating context in Lebanon, an assessment found Luminos classrooms remained safe havens with passionate teachers, impactful learning materials, and strong student attendance.

Nearly doubled our reach in Liberia

Luminos classrooms in Liberia welcomed nearly twice as many students. Thanks to generous support from Echidna Giving, we strengthened our focus on girls and keeping children safe. We also launched our Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) in Liberia with IDinsight, which will conclude in autumn 2023.

Hosted a government learning exchange in Ghana

Luminos arranged for leaders in Ethiopia’s Ministry of Education to visit Luminos classrooms in Ghana and meet with their counterparts in Ghana’s Ministry of Education, facilitating the exchange of lessons learned and best practices on scaling effective accelerated learning programs between both countries.

Expanded government adoption in Ethiopia

Luminos signed an MOU with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to nearly double our reach. The MOE is adopting our model in 9 of 11 regions and two city administrations.

Awarded the Klaus J. Jacobs Best Practice Prize

The Klaus J. Jacobs Best Practice Prize 2022 honored Luminos for our outstanding achievement and practice in advancing quality education.

Luminos classrooms in Liberia welcomed nearly twice as many students. Thanks to generous support from Echidna Giving, we strengthened our focus on girls and keeping children safe. We also launched our Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) in Liberia with IDinsight, which will conclude in autumn 2023.
The World Bank estimates that 92% of children in low-income countries cannot read by the age of 10. However, amidst this staggering statistic, in Luminos classrooms, we are proving what is possible in some of the world’s most challenging contexts and helping children triumph.

Luminos students, alumni, and teachers have defied the odds and embarked on extraordinary journeys of learning and growth.

Bound by a shared passion for education as a catalyst for transformative change, these individuals have achieved remarkable feats. As Luminos scales our education mission to ensure all children have equal access to joyful, foundational learning, we are thrilled to celebrate their achievements and share their inspiring stories.

Ethiopia

Konjit | student

Ghana

Suraiya | student

Lebanon

Yousef | alum

The Gambia

Fatou | teacher

Liberia

Emmanuel | alum
In Liberia, Luminos student Hanford proudly shows the short story she is reading in class during an exercise to identify nouns.
Konjit lives with her family in Konso, a small farming town in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR) of Ethiopia.

She loves writing and excels in reading. When Konjit grows up, she wants to be a doctor so that she can help people. But five years ago, Konjit’s life was upended when her family was forced to flee their home.

“Everything was stolen and burned,” says Konjit. “We started from nothing here.”

Since late 2020, inter-communal conflict in the region has displaced more than 228,000 people, and thousands of children are out of school.

Konjit had never been to school, but along with her guardian, Abebe, the stabilizing force in her young life has become a Luminos classroom.

“Everybody welcomed me,” she says warmly. In just one school year, Konjit is learning to read, write, and do math in a joyful and safe learning environment.

“At first, Konjit was shy, but now she has confidence in herself,” says Konjit’s teacher, Tiblet.

Last year, Luminos expanded to Konso to serve children displaced by violence, like Konjit, who face numerous barriers to education. In recent years, drought has brought an additional challenge by exacerbating food insecurity in the region. As part of our Konso effort, Luminos provides a free lunch for students.

“Education is important for changing my future. If I’m educated now, I will get a job and help my family.”

Konjit, Luminos student
“This might be the only meal they have today,” explains Tiblet. In addition to Konjit, Abebe has two other children in the Luminos program: Andinet, age 10, and Ashalo, age 8. He recognizes their family is unfortunately still an outlier.

“The conflict has a big impact on education. Many children have no second chance at education because of conflict,” says Abebe. “There’s only a small portion of displaced children who are in school.”

Providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for children like Konjit is critical to ensuring that they are not left behind. The Luminos program not only offers education and nourishment but also instills a sense of hope and possibility for a better future.

“Education is important for changing my future. If I’m educated now, I will get a job and help my family,” says Konjit.

“Education is key to all growth,” Abebe agrees. He is committed to supporting Konjit’s learning journey.

“When Konjit comes home, I help her with her assignments. I want her to have a good education to get a job and I’m willing to help her all the way,” he says. “This is an important program, and I hope the government can expand it. If all schools had this approach, a generation with concrete knowledge can be created.”

Luminos is working with the Ethiopian government to do just that. Since 2017, the Ministry of Education has been rolling out the Luminos model nationally to reach out-of-school children, through a program known as the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), reaching over 65,000 children.
Joyful, bright-eyed, and brimming with hope for the future. These are just a few words that describe 9-year-old Yousef.

Despite having to overcome several challenges at a young age, his optimism shines brightly. Yousef was an infant when his family fled their home in Syria and settled in Lebanon. As he grew, his education was postponed because his parents could not afford to enroll him in school. Despite these obstacles, this aspiring pilot continues to dream big.

In Lebanon, Luminos works closely with two community-based organizations, reaching more than 7,000 children like Yousef to date — providing a safe, welcoming environment where students can catch up on foundational skills and develop their full potential.

After successfully completing the Luminos catch-up program, Yousef transitioned into public school to continue his education.

“Education is important because it helps me in the future to get a job and be an independent and effective member in society.”

Yousef, Luminos alum

Education is important because it helps me in the future to get a job and be an independent and effective member in society.” Yousef says. “I want to reach university level and get a degree in aviation.”

But Yousef’s path to lifelong learning — and aviation — is not an easy one. As a result of teacher protests over salaries, public schools in Lebanon have faced significant disruptions and closures. The country has endured a series of ongoing social, economic, political, and health crises in the past few years.
which have created a dire situation for children, especially the Syrian refugee children Luminos serves. Due to a nationwide economic crisis, prices of basic goods have skyrocketed, and many families have limited access to electricity, which substantially restricts the delivery of basic services.

“Life has become hard and complicated,” says Yousef’s mother, Watfa. “The electricity and many other problems made Yousef feel sad. I am worried about everything, especially not being able to afford my children’s basic necessities.”

Today, through an additional Luminos program, Yousef is receiving homework support for math and English (English is one of the two standard languages of instruction in Lebanon). His motivation for learning grows more and more each day.

“I love my classmates and my teachers,” says Yousef. “After classes, I usually revise my lessons and then I get ready to go to the public school in the afternoon schedule.”

According to his teacher, Amal, Yousef has shown significant improvements and is thriving as a self-confident, intrinsic learner.

“Yousef usually interacts with the pictures shown in stories and connects them with his surroundings. He has proved to be an independent learner. He answers and solves the questions individually,” says Amal.

By providing a safe and nurturing space to learn, Luminos programs help mitigate the devastating impact of compounded crises and school closures.

Beyond learning, our classrooms offer a sense of stability and hope — not only for our students, but their teachers and parents, too.

“Hope has motivated us to curb pessimism. This hope is reflected in the students’ faces. When we see the learners’ diligence and interest in discovering knowledge, our confidence in the coming days is boosted.”

Amal, Luminos teacher
Suraiya’s first reaction upon entering her Luminos classroom was awe — she thought it was beautiful.

The humble building dedicated to learning was a beautiful sight in Suraiya’s eyes because it represented a long-awaited opportunity to join her peers in an environment that had always been out of reach.

“I had never stepped in one before,” Suraiya says wistfully. At age 12, Suraiya had never been to school. In the Ashanti region of Ghana, where Suraiya and her family live, it is all too common for children to miss out on education. Nearly 23,000 primary-school-aged children in Ashanti are out of school.

In 2022, Luminos officially launched in Ghana to give out-of-school children in the Ashanti region a second chance at education. Suraiya was one of 1,500 children enrolled in Luminos’ classrooms.

Suraiya and her mother, Ramatou, used to work together on the family’s charcoal farm to make a living — Ramatou did not have the money to send Suraiya to school. Every day, Suraiya would accompany her mother to a plot of land in the forest, cut down wood, and burn it into charcoal to sell.

Through the free Luminos program, Suraiya quickly began learning how to read, write, and do math. English is her favorite subject, but Suraiya also enjoys learning addition and singing along with

“She wasn’t able to read at first, but now she is improving. She hadn’t been to school before so she wasn’t able to do math, but now she can.”

Ramatou, Suraiya’s mother
her teacher, Adams. Suraiya admires Adams and appreciates the way he helps her learn.

“When he teaches, I understand,” says Suraiya. “He has been telling me that I will do well in the future.” With her teacher’s encouragement, Suraiya feels inspired about her learning progress. “I want to be brilliant!” she declares.

Suraiya’s mother also notices her growth.

“She wasn’t able to read at first, but now she is improving. She hadn’t been to school before so she wasn’t able to do math, but now she can,” says Ramatou.

Ramatou is not able to read or write, but she can see Suraiya’s progress as Suraiya brings home materials to practice reading aloud. Suraiya also shares what she learns in the Luminos program with her siblings and the neighborhood children that come to her for help.

“She helps them to read,” beams Ramatou.

Suraiya was steadfast in her attendance during the school year, believing education will help her become a better person in the future. After completing the Luminos program among the top three students in her class, Suraiya is advancing into the local government school. She dreams of continuing her education all the way through college and becoming a nurse.

“I will become a nurse and bring pride to my parents,” Suraiya declares. “I will come and take care of the sick here.”

Sitting in front of Fatou are 29 children who are eager to learn, pursue their passions, and make a positive impact on the world.

“I want to be a teacher so that I can help other children read and write,” says Pendi, a 13-year-old Luminos student.

Only a few months ago, like his classmates, Pendi was among the 89,190 primary-aged children who are out of school in The Gambia.

As their teacher, Fatou has a critical role in reaching the most vulnerable children and ensuring they achieve the foundational skills needed to succeed in life.

“We are helping both the children and the community.” says Fatou. “There are certain children who have never been to school, and some of them have been to school but dropped out.” she explains. “Bringing all children back to school, back to class, and teaching them is important to me.”

In The Gambia, Luminos is working hand in hand with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) to ensure all children have a second chance.

“We are helping both the children and the community. There are certain children who have never been to school, and some of them have been to school but dropped out. Bringing all children back to school, back to class, and teaching them is important to me.”

Fatou, Luminos teacher
at education. Working together, we developed an accelerated learning curriculum and launched a pilot program. Over the next three years, we will scale to reach up to 26,500 children in The Gambia. However, finding qualified candidates for teaching positions in rural and marginalized communities can be challenging. UNESCO estimates that almost 69 million additional teachers need to be trained globally if there is any hope of achieving universal education by 2030. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is particularly critical, with 70% of countries facing acute teacher shortages.

In The Gambia program, government partners recruit teachers. They identify young adults from existing government initiatives, creating a sustainable pipeline of teachers and setting the foundation for long-term government adoption of our model.

Fatou participated in a multi-week training before classes began, and she receives ongoing coaching from Luminos and our community-based partners.

“Being a teacher, I’m learning something from it, helping myself. Teaching is also helping others to learn something, which is a big thing and very important,” says Fatou.

Luminos provides high-quality, interactive training so teachers can experience the kind of learning we want them to recreate for their students: fun, effective, caring, and safe.

“I have improved in a lot of things like how to manage the class,” she says.

In the classroom, Fatou is responsible for conducting regular assessments of student learning and tracking their progress.

“I have seen a lot of changes. In the beginning, it was discouraging. I was asking the students about letters and words, and they could not say them. Now, if I ask them to say any letter, they can say it. It is the same thing with reading,” she says. “They are encouraging me to do more because now they can write and they can read,” says Fatou.

Teachers like Fatou are instrumental in unlocking the light of learning so children can reach their full potential and fulfill their aspirations. Together with MoBSE, we can transform education in The Gambia and take one step closer to our vision of a world where no child is denied an education.

“My dream for my students is that they can become like me one day. Not necessarily a teacher, but if you are educated, you can achieve many things.”
EMMANUEL
A Family Steps on the Path to Education
On a bustling government school campus in Liberia, students on their lunch break fill the air with loud and lively conversation.

Tucked away from the midday sun under the cool shade of a corridor, a Luminos alum named Emmanuel shares his story. At 15 years old, Emmanuel has achieved something remarkable: he’s made it to the eighth grade after being out of school for nearly a decade. And he has no plans of stopping.

“I’d like to go and continue my education past high school — go to college, and get a degree in medicine,” he says.

These big dreams and achievements are possible because Emmanuel attended Luminos’ catch-up education program four years ago. Inside a joyful, interactive classroom, Emmanuel learned how to read, write, and do math for the first time.

“I like school because education is a powerful tool and the key to everything,” he explains.

Emmanuel’s mother, Josephine, marveled at the pace at which he was learning.

“They were learning really fast,” she says. “And he’s still progressing. The program helped him a lot. I’m proud that he can read and write.”

Josephine, who had to drop out of school after first grade, saw the Luminos program as an opportunity to ensure Emmanuel’s future would be different from her own.

When Josephine learned about Luminos’ free catch-up education program, she knew it was a second chance to help her son learn, grow, and gain the tools he needed to succeed — and the first step for their family into the world of education.

In the Luminos classroom, Emmanuel discovered his passion for math, which quickly became his favorite subject.

“Everything in math is my favorite — subtraction, percentages, addition,” Emmanuel says.

When Emmanuel completed the Luminos program, he was equipped with strong foundational learning skills and transitioned into fourth grade at his local government school.

Meet Emmanuel’s Former Luminos Teacher: Varney

Varney, now a supervisor of Luminos classrooms, was Emmanuel’s teacher in 2019 when Emmanuel attended the Luminos program.

“Emmanuel was very smart,” Varney recalls. Varney is not surprised by Emmanuel’s continued love of math, noting that Emmanuel helped as his teacher’s assistant in mathematics. Varney still comes to check on his former Luminos students on their government school campus.
One of Emmanuel’s current teachers, Robert, was amazed at the differences between Luminos alumni like Emmanuel and other students. Luminos students were better behaved, able to concentrate for longer periods, could pronounce words correctly, and were much more likely to volunteer — especially to read in front of the class.

“Emmanuel is especially good at math,” Robert notes, observing that while other students will count using their fingers, Emmanuel is able to do mental math quickly. Robert says that, even during breaks, Emmanuel can often be found in the classroom running his friends through math problems on the blackboard.

“It helped me,” says Emmanuel of the Luminos program. “Before I didn’t know math, and now I know math and I’m on the Middle School Academic Team!” As a member of his school’s Academic Team, Emmanuel participates in quiz competitions where he excels at answering math questions.

“I’m proud to be in school and learning,” says Emmanuel, “because they teach us, and we can learn, and then take it home to our parents.”

In addition to bringing knowledge home to his family, Emmanuel dreams of improving his community.

“I want to see my community get better. I want to see water pumps and a market every day. I want to be a doctor because a doctor helps other people.”

Emmanuel, Luminos alum

Emmanuel and his fellow Luminos alum, Princess, stand with their former Luminos teacher, Varney.
Spotlight: Our Country Leadership

The Gambia

“...The 89,190 out-of-school children in The Gambia give us 89,190 reasons to work towards the government’s mission of educating every Gambian child. Every time a parent tells us that their child can now help them read a prescription, or we see our teachers helping students well beyond the regular school day with their lessons, we understand that the impact of this program goes far beyond the walls of our classrooms.”

Donnalee Donaldson, Senior Director of Programs

Lebanon

“...Being a leader of projects that reach tens of thousands of marginalized children fills me with pride. Not a day goes by without me thanking God for the opportunity to impact their lives with quality, transformative education.”

Dr. Alemayehu Hailu Gebre, Ethiopia Country Director & Regional Strategic Advisor

Liberia

“...We proudly support Liberia’s commitment to equitable education by reducing the number of out-of-school children. Our efforts prepare children with vital life skills, fostering their enrollment in schools for a brighter future.”

James Earl Kiawoin, Liberia Country Manager

Ethiopia

“...Our impact in Lebanon is made possible thanks to the unwavering commitment of our community partners. They ensure that our students not only have the best possible learning opportunities, but a safe space to experience joy and growth.”

Liz Robinson, Associate Director of Programs

Ghana

“I am inspired by the remarkable support we receive from the government of Ghana, Luminos teachers, and community partners. Through our collaborative efforts, we are making a profound difference in the lives of out-of-school children, empowering them to actively contribute to the development of the country.”

Frederick Adu-Gyamfi, Ghana Country Manager
In September 2022, we launched the Luminos Method, a collection of best practices derived from our experience working in the hardest-to-reach communities in Ethiopia, Ghana, Lebanon, Liberia, and The Gambia combined with the latest research.

Luminos is making these materials available to the broader education sector to address the learning crisis facing our global community.

The first four elements of the Luminos Method are now available on our website in both interactive and PDF formats, with more publishing in the months ahead. Get a glimpse into these elements on the page to the right.

by sharing the Luminos Method, we can accelerate our vision of helping all children achieve joyful, foundational learning, even in some of the world’s most challenging contexts.

The challenges that children face today are beyond the reach of any single organization. We believe that...
Community Teachers

The world desperately needs more teachers, with UNESCO estimating that almost 69 million more teachers need to be recruited to achieve universal education by 2030. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is particularly dire, with 70% of countries experiencing acute teacher shortages. From our classrooms, we know that minimally experienced, but well-supported teachers drawn from the same communities we serve can play a critical role in reaching the most vulnerable children and enabling them to catch up with their peers. This element of the Luminos Method explores who our community teachers are, how we train them, and how we provide ongoing support.

Identity & Self-Belief

In many of the countries where we work, a large proportion of children have not experienced how it feels to be successful at school. When students enter a Luminos classroom, “successful learner” is not part of their identity. Yet, research shows that students with higher levels of self-belief are much more likely to be successful at school. We believe that by valuing their cultures, providing opportunities for students to experience academic success, and highlighting role models from similar backgrounds, students can dramatically change how they view themselves and their own potential. As students start to experience small successes in their learning, their self-belief and motivation grow, which leads to further achievements.

Teacher-Led Assessment

It is estimated that 262 million children worldwide will complete primary education without achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading. For students currently in school, it is essential to assess their progress on a regular basis to ensure they get timely support to keep their learning on track. Through our experience, we have found that providing teachers with a “low-tech, high-touch” approach helps them to see their students as individuals and enables teachers to more effectively respond to students’ needs. By having teachers lead the collection of this data — rather than program monitoring and evaluation staff — they are equipped with the information that they need to address learning gaps in their classrooms. This approach ultimately leads to better learning outcomes for children.

Phonics for First-Generation Readers

Imagine growing up in a home without books or with parents who are not able to read. In many low-income contexts, including where Luminos works, this is an unfortunately common reality. As a result, entering a classroom can be daunting for first-generation readers, and catching up with their peers can feel like an insurmountable hurdle. Phonics instruction is a proven method to help children overcome these obstacles and become confident, independent readers — a crucial ability for first-generation readers in low-resource contexts. By explicitly teaching children the relationship between sounds and letters, phonics enables them to decode new words rather than relying on memorizing words previously taught by their teacher. This is a crucial step in the journey from learning to read to reading to learn.
Our Boards

Board of Directors
The Luminos Fund Board of Directors is comprised of donors and independent leaders from the education sector. They approve strategy, provide fiduciary oversight, evaluate organization leadership, and advance our mission through fundraising and outreach.

- **Dr. Kwame Akyeampong**, Director (Professor of International Education and Development, The Open University)
- **Atje Drexler**, Director (Senior Vice President, Global Issues, Robert Bosch Stiftung)
- **Erin Ganju**, Director (Managing Director, Echidna Giving)
- **Alan McCormick**, Board Chair (Partner, Legatum)
- **Philip Vassiliou**, Director and Treasurer (CIO and Partner, Legatum)
- **George Kronnisanyon Werner**, Director and Secretary (Former Minister of Education, Liberia)

Advisory Board
The Luminos Fund Advisory Board is comprised of top researchers and thought leaders in international education, committed to championing our education mission. Advisory Board members provide invaluable support on Luminos policy, advocacy, and program design.

- **Carol Bellamy**, Former Executive Director, UNICEF
- **Dr. Alex Eble**, Assistant Professor of Economics and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University
- **Dr. Belay Hagos Hailu**, Associate Professor of Education and Director of the Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University
- **Susannah Hares**, Co-Director of Education Policy and Senior Policy Fellow, Center for Global Development
- **Dr. Dzingai Mutumbuka**, Former Minister of Education and Culture, Zimbabwe
- **Dr. Harry Anthony Patrinos**, Adviser, Office of the Chief Economist, World Bank
- **Dr. Aleesha Taylor**, Principal, Herald Advisors

In Ethiopia, Luminos teacher Tiblet checks on a group of her students, answering questions and getting them excited about the reading lesson.
Meet Our Newly Appointed Board Members

Luminos is delighted to introduce three new board members who are helping shape and scale the organization’s mission to ensure all children have equal access to joyful, foundational learning. Dr. Kwame Akyeampong has been appointed to the Luminos Board of Directors, while Dr. Belay Hagos Hailu and Dr. Aleesha Taylor have joined the Advisory Board.

**Dr. Kwame Akyeampong: Board of Directors**

Dr. Kwame Akyeampong is Professor of International Education and Development at The Open University. He has over 25 years’ experience in education program evaluation, teacher education policy, education access, and equity, with a focus on disadvantaged and marginalized groups in Sub-Saharan Africa. Kwame played a leading role in a longitudinal study of the Luminos flagship program in Ethiopia, was essential in our expansion to Ghana, and served on the Luminos Advisory Board from 2021-2022.

**Dr. Belay Hagos Hailu: Advisory Board**

Dr. Belay Hagos Hailu is Associate Professor of Education and Director of the Institute of Educational Research at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. With a PhD in special needs and inclusive education, Belay has extensive experience leading research projects in educational assessment, systems of education, and early childhood education. He is also a valued advisor to Ethiopia’s Ministry of Education, having supported the development of key education sector plans.

**Dr. Aleesha Taylor: Advisory Board**

Dr. Aleesha Taylor is the Principal of Herald Advisors, a consulting firm she founded to support leaders and organizations to thrive in the intersections of philanthropy, education, and international development. Aleesha previously served as the Deputy Director of the Open Society Foundations’ education program, where she managed a team across five countries to implement a global grant making portfolio that sought to strengthen education systems and civil society.
Our Partners

Innovative partnerships with governments, community-based organizations, and community teachers enable Luminos to invest in local leadership and build capacity for the long-term sustainability of our programs. Luminos is deeply grateful to our dedicated network of partners who make our work possible.

**Ethiopia Partners**
- African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)
- Emmanuel Development Association (EDA)
- Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus-Development & Social Service Commission — South Area Work (EECMY-DASSC)
- Hope for Children in Ethiopia Relief and Development Association (HCF-RD)
- Integrated Service on Health and Development Organization (ISHDO)
- Positive Action for Development (PAD)
- Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL Ethiopia)
- Wolaita Development Association (WoDA)

**Ghana Partners**
- Link Community Development
- School for Life

**Lebanon Partners**
- Ana Aqra Association
- Basmeh & Zeitooneh

**Liberia Partners**
- Kids’ Educational Engagement Project (KEEP)
- Liberia Institute for the Promotion of Academic Excellence (LIPACE)
- Restoring Our Children’s Hope (ROCH)
- Special Emergency Activity to Restore Children’s Hope (SEARCH)

**The Gambia Partners**
- Effective Intervention
- Future in Our Hands

Staff from Luminos and School For Life in Ghana.
Our Approach to Proximate Leadership

Luminos places a strong emphasis on proximate leadership by forming partnerships that are highly collaborative and anchored in true candor and mutual respect. This approach is central to our operating model. By valuing, amplifying, and celebrating local cultures, Luminos programs provide contextualized learning that helps prepare students for success in future classroom environments.

Spotlighting Partner Voices

In 2022, Luminos partnered with Tshikululu Social Investments, a South African consulting firm, to conduct anonymous feedback sessions with our community partners in each of the countries where we work. Read their insights and perspectives.

“The Luminos Fund highly assisted us with what to perform and how to perform for the project. So, we gain this skill. They really assisted us.”

“Luminos has an understanding of even the grass-level challenges faced in the country.”

“It’s been a blessing to work with [Luminos] because they make it so easy and open. We really do have frank conversations and they also listen to our ideas.”

“There’s flexibility to learn together... They are open to learning about our experiences and we are open to learning about theirs. Feedback and review sessions are where we reflect and learn and share.”

“Partnering with the Luminos Fund has allowed us to develop our creativity, attention to detail, and ability to set priorities. We continue to learn from the program, and it is making a significant impact in the education sector.”

Woinshet Mengesha, South and Central Branch Office Manager, EECMY-DASSC
Reaching Scale with Government

Luminos takes a holistic approach to education and collaborates closely with ministries of education in each country where we work. Together, we are tackling the most pressing education issues of our time: how to ensure that not only is no child shut out from education, but that all children have equal access to joyful, foundational learning.

Through these partnerships, Luminos prioritizes sharing best practices, strengthening education systems, and deepening collaboration to address the learning crisis and deliver transformative learning to millions of vulnerable children. Below, we share three spotlights of our partnerships with government.

"The strength of Luminos is the phonics. Their approach to reading compared to our regular conventional school is different. Even with numeracy, their classes are really participatory and student-centered. So, learning can take place effectively there."

Thomas Clark, Director of Alternative Basic Education, Ministry of Education, Liberia

Reaching thousands of children through government classrooms in Ethiopia: The Sidama success story

Ethiopia is home to our longest-standing and most advanced government partnership to date. Through years of support and advocacy from Luminos, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has embraced accelerated learning as a national strategy to reach out-of-school children and is adopting the Luminos program model for implementation in government schools across the country. The Sidama region in particular has achieved remarkable success in scaling the Luminos model.

Since Sidama became an autonomous regional state in June 2020, regional education leaders there have taken a vested interest in supporting and expanding education solutions. Luminos supported the region’s adoption of the Luminos model in a pilot of 90 primary school classrooms in six districts, which has grown considerably year-on-year. Sidama is the first region in Ethiopia to have adopted the model in all districts, reaching over 20,000 children in the 2022-23 school year.

Government adoption of the Luminos model is essential for our scale and impact

Ethiopian children served (2018-2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Direct Delivery</th>
<th>Government Adoption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>5,010</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>9,966</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-21</td>
<td>11,847</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021-22</td>
<td>15,100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022-23</td>
<td>36,841</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"The strength of Luminos is the phonics. Their approach to reading compared to our regular conventional school is different. Even with numeracy, their classes are really participatory and student-centered. So, learning can take place effectively there."

Thomas Clark, Director of Alternative Basic Education, Ministry of Education, Liberia
Promoting cross-governmental collaboration to transform education systems across Sub-Saharan Africa

Developing resilient and transformative education systems requires deep collaboration and knowledge sharing. This belief was the impetus for a powerful peer-to-peer exchange between the ministries of education in Ethiopia and Ghana, facilitated by Luminos in July 2022.

This exchange was a unique opportunity to showcase ongoing work within each country’s education sector and share best practices from Luminos’ flagship program in Ethiopia with one of our newer programs in Ghana.

Both governments have shown a strong desire for continued collaboration, and Luminos facilitates quarterly virtual learning exchanges between these two ministries of education.

Answering the call: Delivering transformative education for out-of-school children in The Gambia

The Gambia has taken commendable steps to increase primary school access, but ensuring all children receive a quality, basic education remains a challenge. Recognizing this challenge, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) sought Luminos’ expertise to develop an accelerated learning curriculum and framework to bring transformative education to the country’s 89,190 out-of-school children of primary-school age.

Through a small pilot in the 2022-23 school year, Luminos, in close partnership with MoBSE, is supporting 533 previously out-of-school children from marginalized communities to have a second chance at education. Over the next three years, Luminos will scale to reach up to 26,500 children and train 760 teachers.

“lt’s a good thing to have Luminos coming on board to partner with us in this great endeavor of providing education to all the children living in The Gambia. We value the partnership, and we look forward to a stronger, strengthened relationship and collaboration so that we’ll be able to achieve our goals.”

Honorable Minister Claudiana A. Cole, MoBSE, The Gambia
Our Donors

We are immensely grateful to our donors and supporters who have helped Luminos bring thousands of out-of-school children back to learning. Our vision of a world where no child is denied the chance to learn is generously supported by a range of organizations, foundations, families, and individuals.

Core Supporters

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Cartier Philanthropy  
Dovetail Impact Foundation  
Dubai Cares  
Echidna Giving  
Hirschmann Stiftung  
Legatum  
The LEGO Foundation

mc2h foundation  
Mirath Foundation  
Mulago Foundation  
Oak Foundation  
Peter Cundill Foundation  
Pousaz Philanthropies  
Robert Bosch Stiftung  
SAS-P

Supercell  
UBS Optimus Foundation  
USAID’s Development Innovation Ventures  
Vitol Foundation  
Yield Giving

Other Generous Contributors

Aptissen  
Beverly Sherck Education Charitable Corporation  
Eurofins Foundation  
Greg Gottlieb  
PoNosi Foundation

Our Awards
# Our Financials

## Statements of Financial Position

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$5,841,590</td>
<td>$3,992,462</td>
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<td>Board designated operating reserve</td>
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<td>$1,760,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable</td>
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<td>$1,203</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions receivable, current portion</td>
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<td>$4,762,494</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
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<td>$8,972</td>
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<td>Advances</td>
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<td>$42,901</td>
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<td>Contributions receivable, net and non-current portion</td>
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<td>$1,296,301</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$12,992,092</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,864,333</strong></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>$213,862</td>
<td>$72,849</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET ASSETS</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without donor restrictions</td>
<td>$8,987,089</td>
<td>$6,062,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With donor restrictions</td>
<td>$3,791,141</td>
<td>$5,729,025</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total net assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$12,778,230</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,791,484</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total liabilities and net assets</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$12,992,092</td>
<td>$11,864,333</td>
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</table>

## 2022 Statement of Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Without Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>With Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue and Support</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and contributions</td>
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<td>$1,954,761</td>
<td>$8,018,871</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net assets released from restriction</td>
<td>$3,839,946</td>
<td>($3,839,946)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total revenue and support</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,904,056</strong></td>
<td>($1,885,185)</td>
<td><strong>$8,018,871</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Operating Expenses</strong></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program services</td>
<td>$6,011,456</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$6,011,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and administrative</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>$565,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>$415,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,992,865</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>$6,992,865</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Non-Operating Activities</strong></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net foreign currency transaction gain (loss)</td>
<td>$13,439</td>
<td>($52,699)</td>
<td>($39,260)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Change in Net Assets</strong></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net assets, beginning of year</td>
<td>$6,062,459</td>
<td>$5,729,025</td>
<td>$11,791,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>$2,924,630</td>
<td>($1,937,884)</td>
<td>$986,746</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Net assets, end of year</strong></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$8,987,089</td>
<td>$3,791,141</td>
<td>$12,778,230</td>
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The Luminos Fund is a 501(c)(3) registered nonprofit.