



**Luminus**  
Education

Report No. 2

26<sup>th</sup> March - 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020



# **LUMINUS TRANSFORMATION**

IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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## Foreword by Luminus CEO

Dear Colleagues,

Since my last update to you on 25 March, more parts of the world have faced the devastating impact of the COVID-19 virus on families, communities and our very way of life. What we're facing is very challenging, but the everyday acts of **courage, humanity and solidarity** that we witness in Jordan are inspiring – led by His Majesty King Abdullah II – to our tireless front-line workers, to small businesses remodeling production lines, to the Jordanian government leading the national effort to end the pandemic.

Today, I want to let you know how we're focused on **supporting the wider community** where we study and work every day as well as the **Luminus community of students and staff**. Secondly, the update attached here will provide more details on the **progress of the Luminus Transformation Project** - to deliver a quality education online and help our community thrive once more - in what will be the 'new normal' as we learn to live with the virus and its impact.

At Luminus, we want to **utilize our resources and skills to contribute to finding solutions** to mitigate the devastating impact of COVID-19. As we all watch the news unfold about this unprecedented crisis, it's clear that there is a need to assist some of the households where our students come from. To that end, we have established the following initiatives to aid in the fight against the pandemic, and we continue to explore other ways to respond to urgent needs.

### In the Community

With Luminus ShamalStart FabLab, we are in a unique position to help. When it became clear there was shortage of ventilators, we partnered with Techworks, a Crown Prince Foundation initiative, to begin **working on a project to tackle two important medical challenges faced in Jordan**, and globally. Firstly, to speed up the manufacture and production of face-shields for Healthcare workers using laser-cutting technology – and secondly, to produce a basic ambu-bag automation device





based on an open source project called OxyGEN Project. The device has been modified to reflect the equipment and supplies available and has a monitoring system that transmits the number of breaths to a mobile application through the internet. We have completed the initial prototype, and it will go through the proper testing channels to verify usability in the medical field. It's this kind of spirit - **to innovate and support** with whatever resources we have at hand - that will sustain us through this crisis.

## **For Students, Staff and Partners**

We remain committed to ensuring our students experience flexibility and efficient services during these challenging times to meet their education needs – but the **health and wellbeing** of our students, as well as that of the wider Luminus 'corporate family' remains paramount.

For our students, we conducted a rapid survey which gave us alarming results – that many students were unable to study since they had very limited access to basic necessities such as food. Together, the Luminus team immediately mobilized and **delivered household monthly food packages** to over 140 households in Amman and Irbid, with more planned during the Ramadan period.

In these uncertain and stressful times, many in our community have also faced the challenges of working from home, with staff and students alike having the double-burden of caring for others such as elderly family members or educating children. As CEO, I recognized this tremendous challenge – and appreciate that **our team is our best asset**, and I will do my utmost to support them during this difficult and uncertain time.

In full transparency, I announced that there would be no redundancies, while staff on probation would be issued with limited contracts for at least 2 months. Teachers will receive their full salaries while there will be an agreed reduction for others', but everybody will continue to be paid throughout the crisis period. In the months ahead, we will continually use workforce modelling to assess all of our options to keep any furloughs as a last resort.

Given that we are now into the second 'phase' of this crisis, and recognizing the need for longer-term sustained professional support, we have established a **Social Care Unit to support our community**.

Operating daily, qualified and trained staff will be on hand to listen to or talk through any issues our team may face. The trained Call Centre staff operating the unit have a referrals network and are empowered to escalate issues to the Crisis Management team at any time through a hotline system, with full confidentiality.

Given our long-term commitment to support the wellbeing of our students, I'm pleased to announce the **establishment of a Student Care Unit** - expected to begin operations next week. This Student Care Unit will provide tailored services to meet the unique needs of all of our students - to process all questions, complaints, suggestions and comments.

### **Preparing for Post-Covid Era**

As the days unfold and the crisis moves into its third month in Jordan, we will continue to monitor and evolve our response to the COVID-19 pandemic – making adjustments to Luminus programmes based on evidence, accurate data, and market viability.

Thank you for your support on this journey – we consider you a part of the extended Luminus family.

Wishing you and your loved ones safety and good health,  
***Founder and CEO of Luminus Education***  
**Ibrahim Safadi**



## Progress Update - Technology and Infrastructure Transformation

Since the first Transformation Progress Update issued on 25 March 2020, Luminus has continued and accelerated the change required to move to a fully online institution providing world class higher and further education to vulnerable youth. The on-going transformation affects all aspects of Luminus' operations and not just teaching, as without the ancillary support functions we would not be able to communicate with our students, understand their difficulties and concerns and make plans accordingly. All activities and investments not only meet the immediate need of supporting enrolled students but also contribute to the **strategic goal of restructuring and reorganizing to meet the 'new normal' post COVID-19 era**. Progress towards this transformation is taking place across all aspects of the organisation and are outlined below.

## Progress Update - Technology Enabled Education

As an initial step to move teaching online, Luminus distributed laptops, routers and essential equipment from the campus to over 300 teachers to enable them to start teaching successfully. This shift to virtual classes continues with 4,774 Diploma and Degree students attending classes as of 19/4/2020, comprising 98.9% of the cohort and only 51 students not enrolled. 2,036 students on short courses of 1 year duration or less, have commenced classes following online training on how to use the Learning Management System (LMS). 547 programmes are now available on the LMS, with classes recorded for students to reference. Attendance is running at 92%, on target with our Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). We are adding, gratis, additional materials into the students' study plan, focusing on digital literacy for computing and remote working skills, as part of our work to prepare them for working in a Post Covid-19 context.

**300+** teachers were equipped with laptops, routers and essential equipment



**4,774** Diploma & Degree students and **2,036** students on short courses attending classes



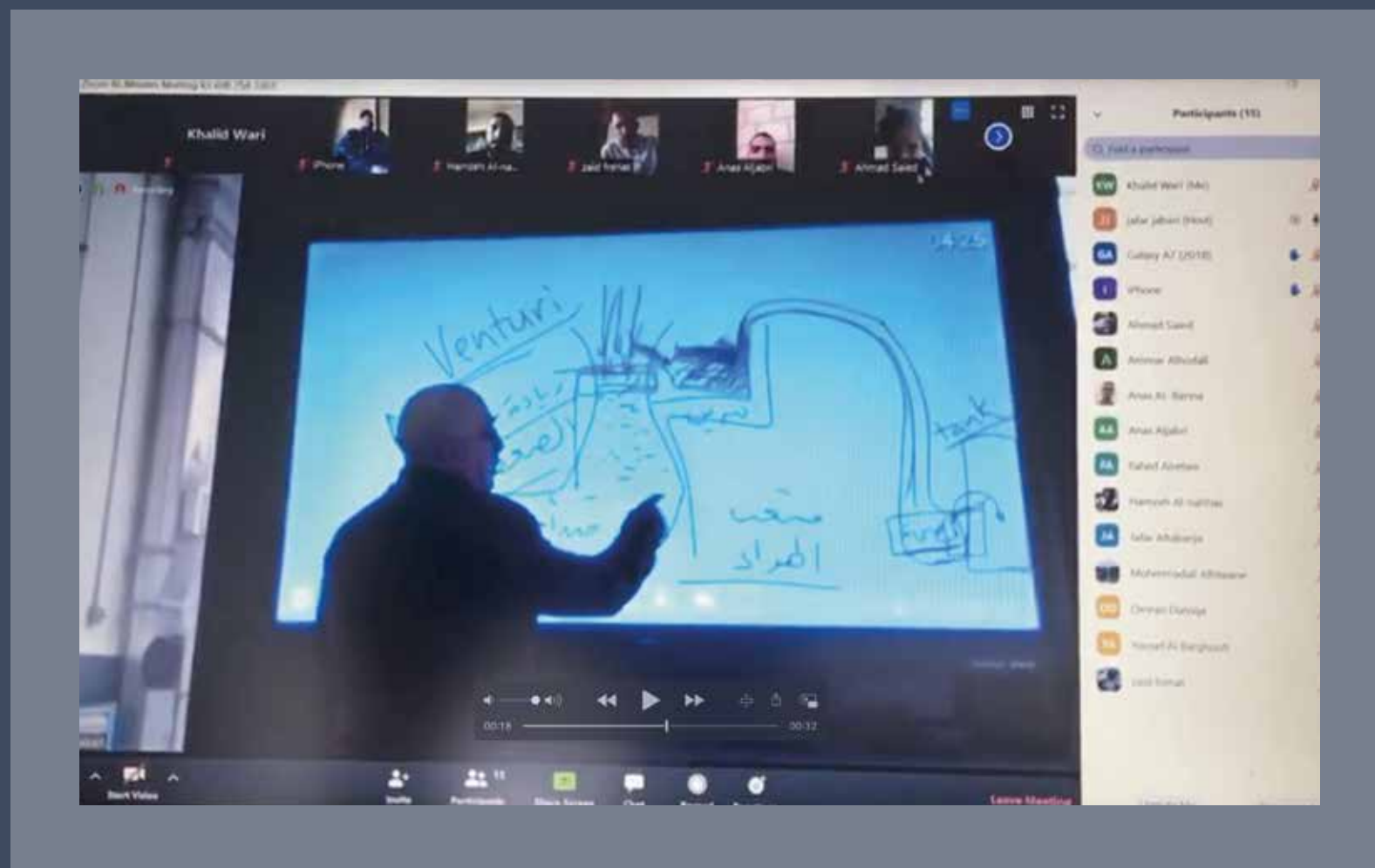
**547** programmes available on LMS



**92%** attendance







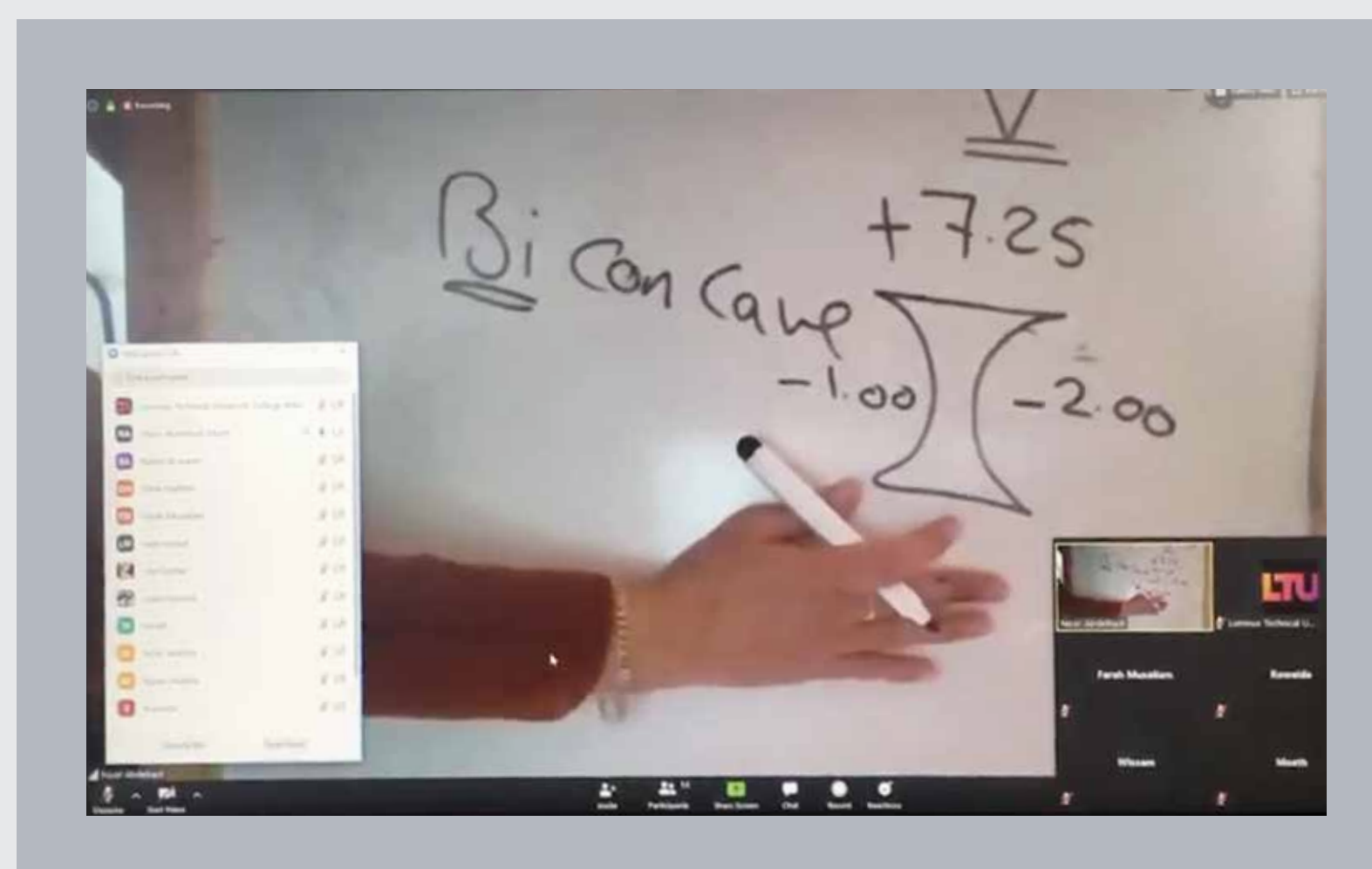
However, delivery in itself is not the end-goal. The **quality of the provision and delivering learning outcomes are equally important** to Luminus. A plan was thus devised to monitor and assess the standard of delivery to ensure quality and to identify further training and/or technology required to improve the learners' experience. Conducted by internal and external observers, this process has allowed the development of specifications for Teacher and Student Technology Kits for the supply of which we are currently raising funds. By providing teachers with additional equipment and software, lessons will be more effective and there will be greater interaction with students, thereby improving learning outcomes. Investment in technology for teaching will have a multiplier effect as the number of students attending virtual classes increases.

Based on international best practice, the student kits include:

- Additional **internet bundles** required to keep the students and their families online since this was identified as a key challenge, with Luminus covering 80,000 JOD as the cost for the first month;
- **Laptops to complete assignments and coursework** – this cannot be done via mobile phones or basic tablet devices;
- **Headsets** so that students are able to focus and concentrate, knowing that many are studying and working in crowded family homes with associated distractions;
- Access to **Panopto video platform** to create, host, share and stream videos, and to allow key word video searches, submission of presentations for review and 1-1 feedback, means that Luminus Education is delivering education through world-class platforms.



Working to secure funding for these kits will be a significant focus over the coming weeks in order to help all Luminus students 'bridge the digital divide'. As virtual delivery will be the 'new normal' for Luminus post COVID-19 crisis, all Kits will be on loan to students for the duration of their study. They will then be available to new students allowing Luminus to widen access to more remote communities that were difficult to reach because of transportation challenges or to those who cannot commit to full time study but wish to improve their employment prospects.



As part of the Luminus Business Continuity plan, we will largely operate remotely until the risk of COVID-19 transmission is significantly reduced, and in line with Government of Jordan directives. Therefore, our students will largely undertake their studies virtually even after the lockdown is lifted. For students requiring 'practical' parts of their courses and education, Luminus will stagger their attendance, thereby minimizing congestion on campus, and continue to enforce social distancing to reduce the risk of any outbreaks while allowing the practical components of courses to be completed safely. A full Standard Operating Procedure for any phased re-opening of such classes is currently being developed.

## Expanding the Luminus Employment Hub

In planning for employment for young people in the post COVID-19 era, the Luminus Employment Hub is reaching out to, and engaging in discussions with, new and emerging industries, some of whom would not have been as available under normal circumstances. In addition to discussions regarding required competencies and skills, the Employment Hub, in coordination with other departments, is arranging to include employers in the recruitment interview panels. So far, employers in the Garment, HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), Hospitality and Hair and Beauty sectors have participated in student interviews for scholarships, providing valuable insights for both the Employment and Career Advising teams.



Informed by this invaluable employer feedback, substantive work has now begun on amending the Foundation and Career Readiness programmes so that students will be even better prepared to meet the demands of the marketplace in the post-COVID era, including both digital and soft skills.

## **Adapting Self-employment and Entrepreneurship Programmes**

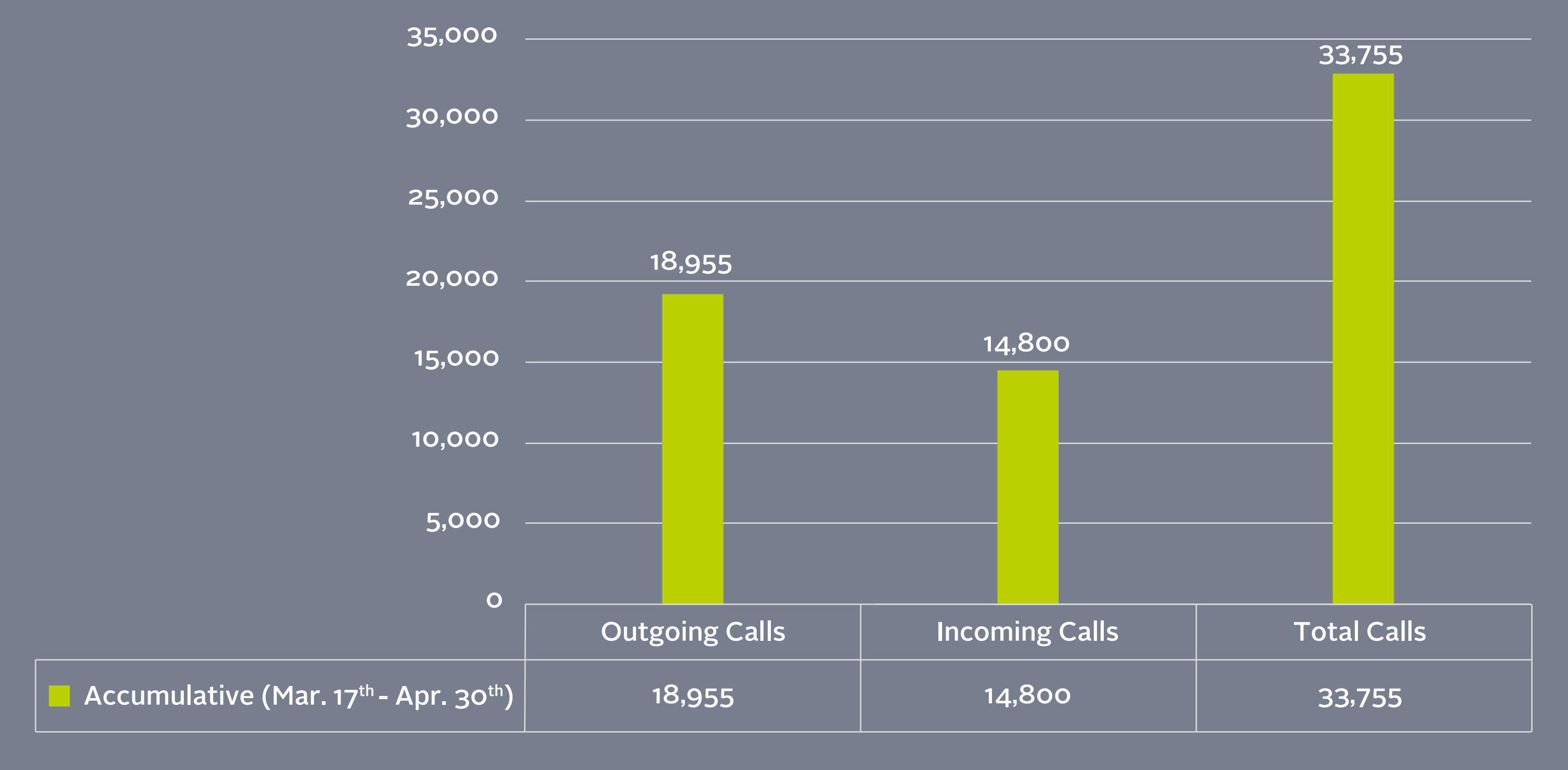
In addition to providing access to the Fab Lab and Finance, Luminus ShamalStart is delivering all other operations virtually:

- **The Incubation team is monitoring and following-up with start-ups, providing training, mentorship, legal support and consultations online;**
- The 12<sup>th</sup> wave of the Acceleration program is in the final stage, finalist applicants having sent their final pitch and ShamalStart team are studying the possibility of conducting the pitching session online;
- Applications for Wave 13 are open online, together with all communication and marketing and outreach activities;
- **ShamalStart has started to conduct online workshops and training for the public, related to entrepreneurship and digital fabrication,** with 80 participants registered in the ‘Build Your Start-Up’ workshop, and another 36 participants registered for the ‘Fusion 360’ workshop. The sessions provide high quality training and also serve to attract people who are interested in applying for the acceleration program. All the workshops are recorded and shared on social media channels for those who are interested but were unable to attend.
- **Specialist digital fabrication education** - The FabAcademy programme – continues with weekly online workshops and all four students are still actively participating and contributing. **Two of the students live in a refugee camp and have minimum resources but are still managing to continue the course showing amazing commitment and tenacity.**

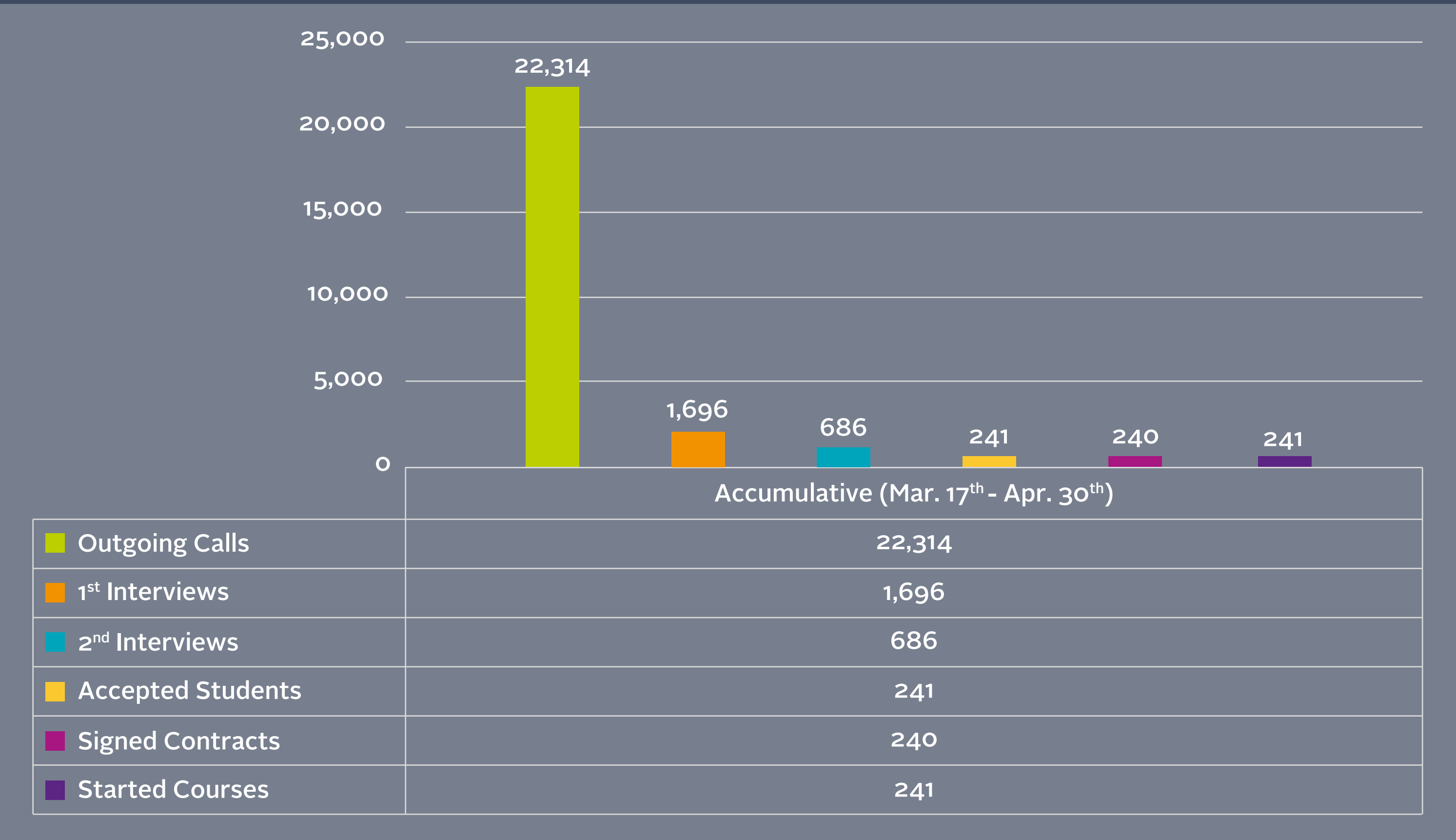


# Luminus Operations and Management

**1** **The Call Centre** continues to work remotely, operating from 8:30am to 10pm and has dealt with a significant increase in operations, covering a total of over 33,750 calls, in the week of April 30<sup>th</sup>, as shown below:



**2** **Expanding Luminus’s Outreach & Recruitment** - Once mechanisms were put in place to deliver virtual classes to existing students, plans for the Outreach and Recruitment campaign of new students were started. All elements of the recruitment process are now fully available online and in the seven weeks since 17 March, 241 students were accepted into programmes. These students were trained remotely to access the LMS by a team of over 70 staff. Outreach and recruitment statistics are shown in the table below:





The recruitment process for the School of Advanced Computing has moved totally online following this process:

1. Outreach and applications through Social Media, targeted at specific groups
2. Filtration & Interviews through a Cloud call center called Maqsam
3. Virtual English Placement Test through Zoom
4. Acceptance & Admission to 101 course through our systems: SIS & LMS
5. Delivering Education through Zoom & LMS

Since March 15<sup>th</sup>, 3 Outreach campaigns were conducted and recruited 75 students for scholarships provided by both Al Ghurair Foundation for Education and UNICEF, 27 of whom have started classes and another 33 scheduled to start on April 25<sup>th</sup>. The Creative Media School is also conducting online recruitment and to date has registered over 100 students on UNICEF scholarship programmes.

**3 Scaling up support in Luminus HR Operations** - an internal, all staff Platform has been initiated and activated, '*We Are Luminus*', to improve internal communication and foster a culture of community and support for all staff, including those working remotely. We Are Luminus will provide an effective mechanism for disseminating information, canvassing opinions and suggestions, reviewing direct feedback and recognizing individual achievements and team milestones.

**4 Improving Cyber Security** – Given the increased risks of a more remote-based workforce and Luminus's reliance on technology, maintaining secure ICT systems is a priority. As such, we have invested in improving our digital services and reviewing Luminus's security measures across all levels, for both staff and students, such as all communications taking place utilizing HTTPs with an end-to-end encryption scheme. Moreover, access to any resource will require a successful SSO authentication and Luminus has applied a complex yet flexible security matrix allowing for the definition of a very robust role-based authorization paradigm where every user should have the appropriate privileges to access the designated resource. Finally, hosting providers such as Microsoft Azure and AWS have tested, robust, detailed and rigid security policies and requirements, hence ensuring Luminus Cloud services are secured and available 24/7.



## Preparing for Post-COVID Era

As the days unfold and the crisis moves into its third month in Jordan, Luminus will continue to monitor and evolve our response to the COVID-19 pandemic – making adjustments to Luminus programmes based on evidence, accurate data, and market viability. Our focus now is to **prioritize preparing the foundations for a ‘post-COVID era’ since there will be no ‘back to normal’ – and this includes:**

**1 Education Provider delivering Quality Outcomes - but with an Agile Strategy:** We are constantly reassessing our plans and keeping an **agile strategy** based on the evolving nature of the crisis and adjusting accordingly. Luminus’ priority remains **to be our students’ best service provider like we never have before, providing a quality education that equips them for a ‘post-COVID’ world with both the soft skills, digital skills, competencies and technical qualifications needed.**

**2 What are the skills and opportunities for the ‘post-Covid’ era?** The team at Luminus are now tailoring programmes that will deliver for this era - taking steps to ensure our **business and education strategies and programmes will not only respond to market trends, but help to shape them.** We are exploring new growth sectors and industries – such as healthcare technology and reaching out to new partners and communities, defining the skills and providing the trainings required.

**3 Renewed focus on bridging the digital divide:** Through consistent outreach – including to some of the most vulnerable communities in Jordan, we need to re-double our efforts to **ensure all students have the devices, support and digital skills to be able to learn remotely. This is costly and resource-intensive, but an investment we are fully committed to** so that our students will be equipped with the skills they need in the post-COVID era. This includes enhanced digital skills, remote learning, participating in simulations, holding meetings and conducting interviews virtually to guarantee they are confident and ‘workforce ready’ on graduation.

**4 Talent outreach and co-creation transcends geographic boundaries:** Regardless of where we are located, the new reality means talent and opportunities to co-create are more



easily accessible online – including to design programmes, mentor students and staff alike, as well as to exchange knowledge and collaboratively innovate with leading national, regional and global experts.

**5 Redouble efforts to retain and support more youth and female students:** With the COVID-19 crisis, we see from emerging global evidence that young women in particular will be disproportionately negatively affected, and highly likely to drop out of both education and employment – often due to increased burdens of care, lack of affordability and have more limitations to rejoin the workforce. Luminus, together with the Government of Jordan, will specifically focus on **supporting existing female students, and that in future scholarship and student intake schemes, young women will be prioritized for comprehensive packages of support.**

**6 Seeking Opportunity in Adversity:** Although crises always happen, they always end – and we have sought to **keep our team and workforce resilient and optimistic about the future.** While Luminus will continue to reduce costs to maintain viability, we will consistently innovate around new opportunities, and reinvest in growth areas in order to capture **opportunity in adversity** and shape the ‘Education for Employment’ model for the post-crisis future.



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