Our Simple Solution

Strategic Plan 2026-2028

mary's meals

a simple solution to world hunger

Introduction

This plan expresses an even greater urgency in seeing the realisation of our vision – **that every child receives one daily meal in their place of education and that all who have more than they need, share with those who lack even the most basic things.**

The growing evidence and increasing recognition of the positive impact of daily school meals – and the willingness of people all over the world to support our focused and effective mission – reinforce our belief in our vision. And the voices of millions of children are crying out for it to be realised without delay.

Today, 78 million primary-age children are out of school, with a similar number attending school hungry and without the provision of a meal.

We live in a volatile and uncertain world. It feels more difficult than ever to confidently predict specific outcomes when so many factors outwith our control continue to shift. At Mary's Meals, we rely on providence as much as we ever did.

We will continue to be guided by our values in all our activities and decision making and will become an even more agile organisation with an ability to make the most of new opportunities, to scale up rapidly, to reach more children, or to transition out of certain programmes as circumstances change.

We will also, for the first time, take the experience and expertise we have gained through providing school meals in some of the most challenging environments for over 20 years and use it to support governments and other organisations to run their own effective, child-centred school meal programmes. These new initiatives that can help many children indirectly will not detract from our core work, which remains focused on running and expanding Mary's Meals programmes directly, but they will create a need to find new ways to communicate the wider success of our work in addition to the number of children fed each day by Mary's Meals.

During this three-year period, we will work towards three interdependent goals:

- By bringing our values to life in a new way, we will see an even more vibrant, distinct culture lived across the whole Mary's Meals family that will inform our approach to recruitment, leadership, and ways of working.

- By improving and replicating successful initiatives, as well as implementing new approaches, we will double the number of people supporting Mary's Meals.

- By focusing on keeping our promise and reaching the next child waiting, we will serve Mary's Meals to more than 4 million children every school day – and reach many more children indirectly by advising governments and other organisations on their school meals programmes.

These three goals will be achieved through the delivery of the following nine objectives:

Feed

Objective 1.

Keeping the Promise – continued focus on high-quality programme implementation.

Outcomes
1.1 We have a positive impact on a child's wellbeing and education, because we continue to provide a high-quality daily meal.
1.2 We improve efficiencies and effectiveness to continue to scale at low cost.
1.3 We leverage focused innovation for programmatic improvement.

Objective 2.

Reaching the Next Child – maintaining a global portfolio of programmes targeted on reaching the most vulnerable children and exiting/transitioning where appropriate

Outcomes
2.1 We are reaching over 4 million of the most vulnerable children, using targeted needs assessments to guide our choices of who to reach, and we have the ability to double the number of children in our programme within two years.
2.2 We have exited, in a responsible manner, low-need schools and programmes where we believe we no longer have a role.
2.3 We have learned from past approaches and innovations and set up successful transition pathways for identified programmes.
2.4 We have a plan and are prepared to reduce our programme by 20% at any point in time as a contingency.

Objective 3.

Broadening our Reach – forming new partnerships to allow us to catalyse others to deliver child-centred school feeding

Outcomes
3.1 We have played an indirect role in children receiving school meals.
3.2 We are actively sought out in the sector to share our knowledge and expertise.

Objective 4.

Strengthening and growing the grassroots foundations of Mary's Meals

Outcomes
4.1 We have more structured and supported volunteer groups around the world.
4.2 We have doubled the number of active, registered supporters by end 2028 through inspiring storytelling and broader reach.
4.3 We have grown brand awareness, from c. 1% to 40%, dependent on market.

Objective 5.

Embrace the opportunities presented in the major donor space by building our global toolkit and resourcing for engagement

Outcomes
5.1 We have increased major donor income to £20m.
5.2 We have grown new major donors by 8%.

Objective 6.

Revitalise the brand for long-term audience growth

Outcomes
6.1 We have implemented our revitalised brand by June 2026.
6.2 We have grown uptake of global campaigns from 58% to 68% within two years.

Strengthen

Objective 7.

Values and culture – refresh how we articulate and embed our values, culture, and behavioural frameworks

Outcomes
7.1 We have increased employee engagement and alignment by fully implementing a refreshed articulation of our values and culture framework.
7.2 We have evidenced progress and positive impact via global culture surveys.

Objective 8.

Global organisational design – clarify entity and team roles, reduce duplication, and ensure flexible and scalable National Affiliate models

Outcomes
8.1 We have developed our understanding of the optimum organisational and network design models to guide the next phase of growth with agility.
8.2 We have reviewed our workforce plan to ensure future readiness with reduced duplication across the family.
8.3 We have developed flexible affiliate organisation design models that enable vibrancy and growth.

Objective 9.

Increased efficiency and effectiveness of our global work through accelerated usage of key technology-enabled solutions, including responsible use of AI and our digital platform

Outcomes
9.1 We have clearly articulated our strategy, framework and policies for adopting existing and emerging technology-based solutions across the Mary's Meals family.
9.2 We have increased effectiveness and efficiency of our work by accelerating implementation of technology-based solutions across identified core activities and processes.
9.3 We have a global family that is appropriately skilled and confident to benefit from – and manage the risks of – using existing and emerging technology-based solutions.

Mary's Meals International Organisation
Craig Lodge, Dalmally, Argyll, Scotland, PA33 1AR

Charity number: SC045223 Company number: SC488380

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