



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:

Objective 1.

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

Outcomes	Activities
<p>1.1 We have a positive impact on a child's wellbeing and education, because we continue to provide a high-quality daily meal.</p> <p>1.2 We improve efficiencies and effectiveness to continue to scale at low cost.</p> <p>1.3 We leverage focused innovation for programmatic improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure consistent feeding of children, as monitored by targeted Feeding Rates by programme (in strategic programmes). • Yearly impact surveys done to ensure positive impact on children's hunger, wellbeing, and readiness to learn. • Headcounts conducted across programmes (all strategic programmes have monthly headcounts), and data informs feeding parameters. • Set and meet yearly targets by programme for % spent on food. • Pilot innovations that have the potential to scale, with the focus on the areas of monitoring and food systems in Y1 and 2, and learn from/scale if appropriate in Y3.

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	Activities
<p>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.</p> <p>2.2 We have exited, in a responsible manner, low-need schools and programmes where we believe we no longer have a role.</p> <p>2.3 We have learned from past approaches and innovations and set up successful transition pathways for identified programmes.</p> <p>2.4 We have a plan and are prepared to reduce our programme by 20% at any point in time as a contingency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a progressive roadmap to 4 million, with capacity in at least seven programmes to scale, and ability to scale by 20% in any two quarters. • New programme countries/implementers are ready for on-boarding by end of 2026. • Rolling need assessments undertaken in 5% of our global programme yearly. • A roadmap for 20% contraction across programmes in the rare case that the need arises is actively maintained. • All programmes in ‘small programme’ and ‘maintain at scale’ categories of the Who We Reach strategy have been assessed and decisions on next steps made by end of strategic period. • Three piloted transition approaches are under way within the strategic period. • Learnings from current exits are applied to strengthen and formalise the school exit process.

Objective 3.

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

Outcomes	Activities
<p>3.1 We have played an indirect role in children receiving school meals.</p> <p>3.2 We are actively sought out in the sector to share our knowledge and expertise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalise our principles for our role in advising others (Y1), to be applied throughout the strategic period. • Explore opportunities for government advising (Y1) and learn from this to position ourselves in this space. • Form innovative partnerships with government and other stakeholders to allow us to influence school meal provision implementation by others. • Package resources that draw on our knowledge of school feeding implementation to more easily share our approach with stakeholders. • Actively participate in key sector forums and networks throughout the strategic period.

Objective 4.

Strengthening and growing the grassroots foundations of Mary’s Meals

Outcomes	Activities
<p>4.1 We have more structured and supported volunteer groups around the world.</p> <p>4.2 We have doubled the number of active, registered supporters by end 2028 through inspiring storytelling and broader reach.</p> <p>4.3 We have grown brand awareness, from c. 1% to 40%, dependent on market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global best practice in regional support structures and support mechanisms is codified, reinforced with assets, and transferred across affiliates. • High value, inspiring creative assets are developed, including two global film productions per year. • Increase in investment of digital marketing, taking us globally closer to a 93/7 expenditure and driving brand awareness, frequency, and income. • Enhanced physical presence in Medjugorje to grow the number of pilgrims we can engage with. • Universal adoption of IDP (Integrated Digital Platform), with friction-free supporter experiences, and segmentation and training in place to create effective supporter experiences. • Market growth plans focused on maximum eight incubated affiliates per year to scale these with specific interventions and organisational support. • More engagement with high profile events, working in a faith-related context where appropriate.

Objective 5.

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

Outcomes	Activities
<p>5.1 We have increased major donor income to £20m.</p> <p>5.2 We have grown new major donors by 8%.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch and stewardship of a global HNW (High Net Worth) & UHNW (Ultra High Net Worth) philanthropic donor community, who commit to a multi-year giving pledge. • Supported field visits for major donors, connecting them with internal leaders and external opinion formers to deepen commitment. • National Affiliate training programme to expand capability throughout the family in major donor advancement and retention. • Define the Mary’s Meals proposition (including awareness raising, relationship support, employee engagement, communications) and establish process for growth in corporate partnerships. • Expansion of Night of Hope event to multiple markets. • We have grown the number of corporate partnerships, supporting our income and engagement.

Objective 6.

Revitalise the brand for long-term audience growth

Outcomes	Activities
<p>6.1 We have implemented our revitalised brand by June 2026.</p> <p>6.2 We have grown uptake of global campaigns from 58% to 68% within two years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a new brand strategy, capturing who we are and the change that generosity can bring in an authentic, distinctive, and expansive way, with accompanying guidelines. • Launch of a new suite of fundraising and technology products available for National Affiliates. • Greater visibility across audiences of our brand story – in terms of impact, innovation, and knowledge of issues related to child hunger and poverty. • A more usable articulation of our cost-effective model. • Recruitment of more young people into volunteering and acting as ambassadors for Mary’s Meals. • Better delivery of campaigns in terms of timing and ability to localise.

Objective 7.

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

Outcomes	Activities
<p>7.1 We have increased employee engagement and alignment by fully implementing a refreshed articulation of our values and culture framework.</p> <p>7.2 We have evidenced progress and positive impact via global culture surveys.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create a refreshed values and culture framework through global workshops and listening sessions. • Review and revise the Mary's Meals leadership framework to embed the refreshed values and key behaviours into leadership behaviours and decision-making. • Integrate values into people management (recruitment, onboarding, performance reviews, and other key organisational processes (such as VTO). • Launch a global internal communications campaign to share stories and examples of values in action. • Create a digital toolkit for managers and teams to facilitate ongoing conversations about values and culture. • Review the culture survey to ensure that all the right metrics are being monitored. Run a full survey in 2026. • Facilitate post-survey action-planning workshops at team and country levels. • Report and share progress transparently across the organisation, highlighting areas of strength and improvement. • Use pulse surveys to track momentum and adjust interventions.

Objective 8.

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

Outcomes	Activities
<p>8.1 We have developed our understanding of the optimum organisational and network design models to guide the next phase of growth with agility.</p> <p>8.2 We have reviewed our workforce plan to ensure future readiness with reduced duplication across the family.</p> <p>8.3 We have developed flexible affiliate organisation design models that enable vibrancy and growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a global network design review, including benchmarking with similar federated or networked organisations. • Map current structures and roles across entities to identify overlaps and gaps. • Engage external expertise to support modelling of scalable and flexible design options. • Develop guiding principles for flexible organisational design that reflect values, subsidiarity, and strategic priorities. • Conduct a workforce planning review to assess future capability needs, identify skill gaps, and implement targeted development and recruitment strategies.

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	Activities
<p>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.</p> <p>9.2 We have increased effectiveness and efficiency of our work by accelerating implementation of technology-based solutions across identified core activities and processes.</p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct internal engagement sessions on key technology-enabled solutions to inform strategy, framework, and policies. • Conduct external scanning with other organisations and thought leaders to further inform us on successful approaches and lessons to consider. • Collaboratively develop Mary's Meals strategy, framework, and policies for key emerging opportunities. • Review key technologies already in place to ensure they are still optimal. • Identify and implement specific opportunities, including AI and our digital platform, in line with the strategies and learnings from all above. • Ensure awareness and training is sufficient to gain full benefits for each. • Assess benefits realised and continue to refine solutions as appropriate.



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