



Our Simple Solution

Strategic Plan 2024-2026



Introduction

This plan expresses a bold commitment to keeping simplicity at the heart of our unique mission and our confidence in it. We know that serving Mary's Meals profoundly changes the lives of the world's most vulnerable children, and we also know that an ever-increasing number of people, all over the world, will very generously support this easily understood, tangible and effective mission when they learn of it and the part they can play. Our strategic pillars of **Growing the Movement**, **Feeding More Children**, and **Strengthening the Organisation** elevate our current work, and by continuing that focus, we will be able to radically increase the number of children we reach.

After decades of progress, the number of people affected by hunger has increased significantly in recent years. While the UN's second Sustainable Development Goal aspires to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030, one in nine people globally are struggling with hunger. Between 2019 and 2022, the number of undernourished people increased by 150 million, primarily as a result of conflict, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the global economic crisis has pushed millions more into hunger. Alarmingly, almost half of those affected are children who are often denied access to education as a result.

But this situation is not hopeless. We live in an abundant world that produces more than enough food for us all. We know that our vision – that every child receives one daily meal in their place of education – is not an unrealistic dream, but rather something that should have happened long ago. Mary's Meals must play a very important part in that vision being realised while not making the mistake of thinking we alone are responsible for achieving it – let alone the broader aspiration of Zero Hunger. In this way, we will avoid 'mission drift' and the loss of our simplicity. Rather, during the period of this plan, we will sharpen our focus on the tangible thing we have been given to do – serving daily meals to children in their place of education – knowing that many other laudable initiatives and changes that are necessary for Zero Hunger depend on this foundation to build on. We also know that if we carry out this work with unrelenting commitment to getting better at what we do, our actions and carefully channelled voice will influence policy makers and other organisations to further prioritise the universal provision of school meals.

While it is important for us to understand our part in 'the big picture' and consider the long-term ramifications of our work, we should never lose focus on the individual child at the centre of our work, and our overwhelming desire to ensure they eat at school today.

Grow the movement

We aspire to an average growth in income of **20% per annum** globally.

We believe that our grassroots movement, led by the National Affiliates, is key to growing the movement and reaching more children. We will ensure that every National Affiliate, supported by Mary's Meals International, will develop and increase their capacity to support ambitious growth plans based on the significant potential in their nation. We believe that high net worth (HNW) individuals will join us in this aspiration while achieving their goals of strategic philanthropy, allowing the movement to grow and unite us all around the ambition of achieving Zero Hunger.

We know that significant growth is achievable by doing better what we do already and becoming more effective at scaling up and replicating the considerable success we have already achieved. This requires us to believe deeply in the compelling appeal of our simple, crucial mission and the values that underpin it, including our 'confidence in the innate goodness of people'. It also requires a continued commitment to learning and innovation.

We will draw on the exceptionally inspiring stories around our work and implement compelling campaigns that reach new supporters and encourage existing ones to journey with us, recognising that the rolling out of the technology that we are now deploying opens many opportunities for us to do this better. MMI will ensure it has the people and skills required to deliver, in a timely and excellent manner, the enablers of growth for the rest of the family – as well as its other global responsibilities including building relationships with global key stakeholders.

We will also give particular focus to a small number of ambitious initiatives that have the potential to create 'breakthroughs' to reach new audiences many times the size of our current support base. The growth aspiration stated above of 20% growth globally, is not dependent on these activities, the timing and success of which can be difficult to predict.

Feed more children

During this period, it is anticipated that inflation, particularly volatile and rapidly increasing food costs, will make it impossible to forecast with any certainty future budgets required to feed a certain number of children. For this reason, we will not state a specific number of children we aspire to feed but will continue to exercise good stewardship and ensure we are ready to expand as quickly as possible as various scenarios unfold. We believe that our income growth aspiration will allow us to maintain the current scale of the programme and **significantly increase numbers of children fed**, while continuing to focus our resources on areas of most acute need.

We will develop an approach to programme lifecycles that see us more purposefully move responsibility away from Mary's Meals at different stages towards eventual successful transition. We will do this while continuing to choose to work in environments where acute poverty and instability makes transition away from Mary's Meals particularly challenging.

To ensure we respond to the volatile food sourcing context and build robust and more transition-ready programmes, we will further develop our food systems strategy and approaches. We will continue to build scalable, low-cost and robust food systems while also piloting several smaller scale and innovative approaches that may lead to transformative change. While making progress in these areas, we will ensure that the promise to the child of a daily meal in their place of education remains paramount.

Our programme country teams will further increase globally aligned programmatic development and delivery excellence and build greater local awareness and fundraising.



Strengthen the organisation

Individually and collectively, the Mary's Meals family is intently focused on continuously living our values, enhancing our distinctive culture, and increasing our capability to achieve this bold mission. As we move forward, our priority is to ensure that **our values are the foundation of everything we do**. This will continue to strengthen the organisation and prepare each area to rapidly expand our work as we grow.



Our renewed focus on **simplicity** and our inability to predict the near future with any certainty does not diminish our ambition. Our desire to reach the next child waiting is stronger and more urgent than ever.

We believe that the execution of this plan – in a manner consistent with our values and organisational culture – set out in the six objectives below, will support further rapid growth of the Mary's Meals movement, allowing us to keep the promise to the children in our programme while also reaching out to the next child waiting.



Grow the movement

1. National Affiliates strengthen capacity to enable more rapid growth to realise more of the national fundraising potential with a consistent understanding developed across the MM movement of what a healthy NA looks like.

Outcomes (Growth enablers)	Measurables
<p>A matrix that defines the primary components of what a “healthy” National Affiliate is will be developed and used in collaboration with MMI to help support the growth of each National Affiliate.</p>	<p>National Affiliates are operating at a capacity that supports an average and sustainable 20% growth in global income.</p>
<p>Grassroots Model is implemented and used to raise awareness and grow the movement across the National Affiliates, emphasizing a regionalized approach as appropriate.</p>	<p>Supporter count is growing at an accelerated rate across the MMs movement, and retention rates are improving across each National Affiliate.</p>
<p>Supporter journey best practices are embedded across all donor segments in National Affiliates.</p>	<p>Global metrics are in place, leveraging the Integrated Digital Platform (IDP) so that donor segmentation and journeys are consistent across the organization.</p>
<p>Robust youth movement is an integral part of the NAs activities.</p>	<p>Aim for 100% participation with National Affiliates in the Global Youth Ambassador program.</p>
<p>NA’s will continue to focus on fully utilising assets that have proven to grow the grassroots movement, such as The Shed That Fed 2 Million Children, and films, etc.</p>	<p>Assets strategy is embedded in the VTOs of National Affiliates and supported by MMI.</p>

2. MMI becomes more effective and focused on delivering in a timely fashion key enablers of growth for the NAs founded on very inspiring story telling content and the provision of best practice approaches to scaling NAs.

Outcomes	Measurables
<p>A matrix that measures the effectiveness of the MMI support to the National Affiliates is developed and implemented to ensure world-class support.</p>	<p>Satisfaction survey is shared on an annual basis to ensure that National Affiliates’ are receiving the support that is needed to grow their local movement.</p>
<p>MMI supports the growth and success of National Affiliates through effective marketing, inspirational storytelling, and the dissemination of best practices. Campaigns and strategies around assets are a critical and effective way to grow the movement and engage current supporters.</p>	<p>Audience/supporter count to grow significantly across the movement. Data from the Integrated Digital Platform and analysis of growth channels is used to inform campaigns and growth strategies across the movement.</p>
<p>Medjugorje strategy is designed to grow the movement through finding new NAs, board members, and professional volunteers.</p>	<p># of new National Affiliates and engaged supporters (board members, professional volunteers) from new territories.</p>
<p>The content produced by MMI is inspiring and engaging, effectively conveying the mission and impact of PAs and is used by NAs in an engagement strategy with their supporters.</p>	<p>Annual satisfaction survey to National Affiliates to ensure needs are being met. Data will be utilized to analyse supporter engagement across all media channels.</p>

Outcomes	Measurables
<p>Product strategy is available for NAs to use in support of their growth plans that provides levels of offers from large scale (FAS) to smaller, more flexible offers.</p>	<p>National Affiliates have a menu of products and offers for their supporters to use as needed. Complete by EOY 2024.</p>
<p>MMI supports the NAs with developing effective communications strategies, building effective supporter journeys while attracting new audiences based on targeted segments based on research and data.</p>	<p>Significant supporter growth is sustained YoY and increased retention rate across the National Affiliates. Increased quantity of supporters who are in the "reoccurring +" category, based on the Cicero research project.</p>

3. Create stronger capacity and various 'cases for support' to encourage and support multiple £million + gifts per annum that are aligned to our strategic priorities.

Outcomes	Measurables
<p>HNW Model is implemented as a significant and sustainable revenue stream has been established in the HNW segment. The model supports both the expansion of the feeding programs and the ongoing ability to keep our promise.</p>	<p>HNW Model with a multi-year commitment is launched in 2024 and NAs are seeing a revenue lift across this donor segment. (% will vary across NAs). Increase in number of HNW donors across the NAs (% will vary across NAs)</p>
<p>UHNW Partnerships/Relationships are established with individual strategies based on the donors' needs. This includes a global corporate partnership strategy.</p>	<p>Strategic Relationship Strategy, designed to find new global UHNW opportunities will be developed and launched in 2024. Resources will be developed that are customizable based on the donor's requirements.</p>

Feed more children

4. Develop a clear programme transition framework, ensuring we steward each programme through stepwise pathways from start toward eventual successful transition, while ensuring need levels continue to guide our work.

Outcomes	Measurables
<p>Each strategic programme has a transition pathway that will regularly be reviewed, with identified stepwise progress made.</p>	<p>Each strategic programme has a defined pathway toward (usually long-term) transition. Within the strategic period, stepwise progress is made in each pathway as opportunities allow.</p>
<p>All new programmes have a transition pathway defined from outset.</p>	<p>Each new programme (or new element of a programme) has transition plans built in from outset developed in consultation with likely future programme owners, where feasible.</p>
<p>Mary’s Meals remains focused on those children and communities of greatest need.</p>	<p>Annual need assessments completed to identify non-strategic and lower need communities for exit or transition.</p>

5. Innovate our local food systems approaches to ensure we continue to keep our promise to children with reliable, quality and cost-effective food, while further increasing benefits to local communities, national economies and transition-readiness over time.

Outcomes	Measurables
<p>A global Food Systems strategy outlining priorities and aligned country-specific plans is developed and implemented.</p>	<p>Programme-specific plans are being implemented and meet defined outcomes including robust supply, cost-efficiency, increased benefit to local community and economy, increased transition potential, etc.</p>
<p>Innovations in our food system approaches are piloted, learned from and scaled as appropriate.</p>	<p>Diverse portfolio of innovations trialled, with scaling and/or cross-application of learning for successful innovations.</p>
<p>Robust but flexible approaches to procurement which are calibrated to our food systems innovations.</p>	<p>Improved year on year stability and predictability in pricing across key food contracts.</p>

Strengthen the organisation

6. Keeping our values at the front, attract, develop and retain, a values-driven, highly skilled global workforce who contribute to our unique culture and foster growth.

Outcomes	Measurables
<p>A diverse, skilled, global workforce of volunteers and employees who are motivated to give their best effort each day and are proud to be part of our movement.</p>	<p>Bi-annual culture survey will provide a number of key indicators of effective people practices, strong leadership and cultural alignment.</p>
<p>Teams and individuals across the network collaborating well for high impact.</p>	
<p>Strong, consistent understanding of MM’s values and culture and the importance of Service, Simplicity and Stewardship.</p>	
<p>Develop and implement consistent, context-appropriate safeguarding practices across the global family.</p>	<p>Best-practice safeguarding policies are implemented globally.</p>



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**mary's
meals**
a simple solution
to world hunger