

mary's  
meals

# Little Acts Make A Big Difference

Learning resource: sessions



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# A simple solution to world hunger.

This session uses the film **Child 31** to introduce the issue of world hunger and explain how it impacts children in three of the countries where Mary's Meals works: Malawi, India and Kenya.

Through reflection, discussion and research tasks, learners can build on the knowledge gained from the film and consider their relationship to children around the world with greater empathy and understanding.

## Learning intention:

I will learn how hunger and poverty impacts children around the world, and how the work of Mary's Meals helps improve the lives of children affected by these issues.



## Content notes:

**Child 31** explores child hunger and poverty and includes scenes referring to drug use and homelessness. Some young people in your group may find the film distressing, particularly if they have experience of these issues. We would recommend that teachers/group leaders watch the film before the session.

If your group includes young people who have moved to the UK from one of our programme countries, or have other shared experiences with the children in the film, speaking to them beforehand about the content can empower them to choose whether to share their own experiences with the group or whether they would be more comfortable not taking part in the session.

## Starter questions:

- What do you already know about Mary's Meals? From its name, what do you think the charity does?
- Think of a time when you were truly hungry – how did it make you feel and act?

## Watch Child 31 with your class or group.



CLICK TO PLAY



## Following the film, choose from the discussion questions and activities below.



### Discussion questions:

- Did anything surprise or shock you when watching Child 31? Please give examples.
- Do you think it is important for people in the UK to help children like Lette? Why, or why not?
- How are children's lives in the UK different to the lives of the children we meet in the film? Are there any similarities?
- There are different reasons that some children in the places that Mary's Meals work don't go to school. What do you think these reasons might be?

### Activities:

- Take notes on one of the countries featured in the film. What can you find out from the film? Using the Mary's Meals website, find out how many children the charity feeds in this country, what the children eat, and any other interesting facts. Create a poster or a fact file with this information.
- Write about a day in the life of a child receiving Mary's Meals for the first time. How are they feeling? How does it compare to their life before?

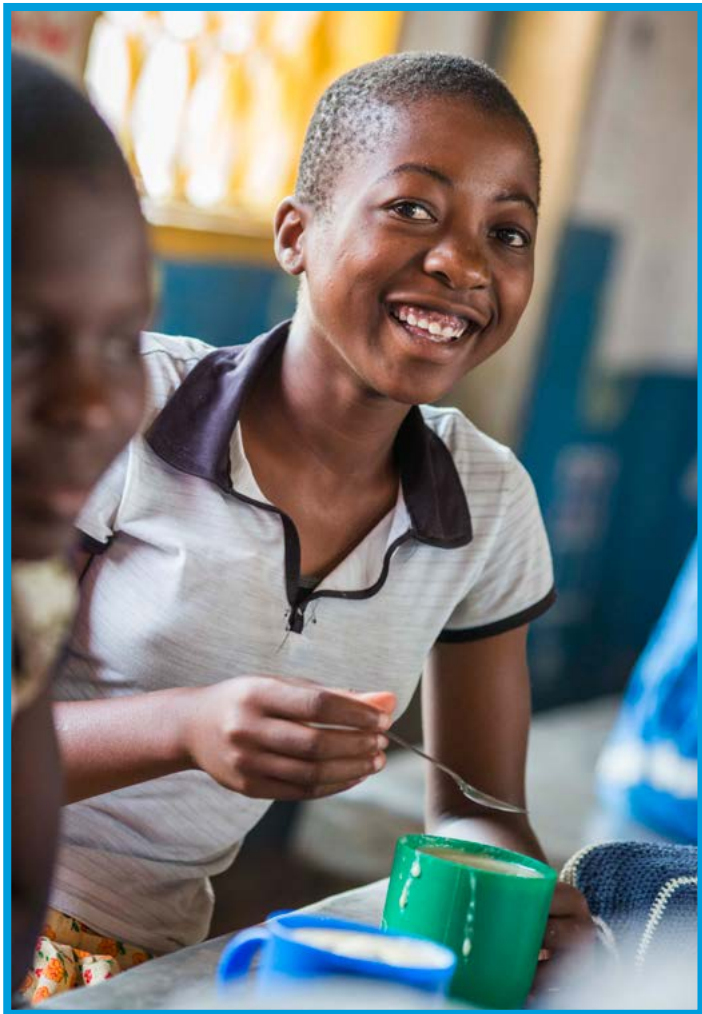
# The role of school meals.

This session uses an extract from the book **The Shed That Fed A Million Children** to look at the particular importance of school meals in tackling child hunger and poverty.

While using their skills in reading, writing, listening and talking, learners will be challenged to put their own experience of school meals in context and consider how cost, access to food locally and other factors impact the experiences of young people around the world.

## Learning intention:

I will learn about the provision of school meals around the world, and consider the reasons for the differences between my own experience and the experience of children in countries where Mary's Meals works.



## Starter questions:

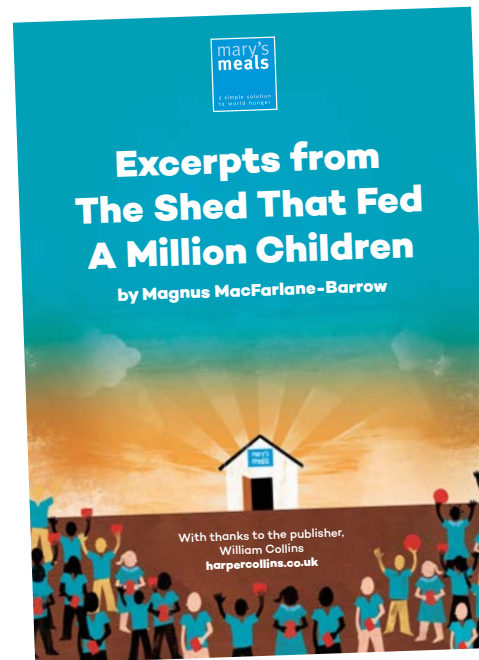
- What do school meals make you think about?
- What are your favourite and least favourite school meals?
- What memories do you have of school meals?

Read 'Where to begin', from the excerpts from **The Shed That Fed A Million Children** on [our website](#).

You could choose to ask a young person to read the extract, or [watch the extract](#) being read by the author and founder of Mary's Meals, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow.



## Read the extract from **The Shed That Fed A Million Children**, ‘Where to begin’, on page four.



 [Download: The Shed That Fed A Million Children resource](#)

After reading or listening to the extract, choose from the discussion questions and activities below.



## Discussion questions:

- If you were planning what food Mary's Meals should serve in a country it hasn't worked in before, what would be important factors to consider? You could think about the kind of food that is available in the country as a place to start.
- Why do you think it's important to serve Mary's Meals in schools?

## Activities:

- Research school meals around the world. You can use the Mary's Meals website to find out what food it serves in different countries, as well as other sources.
- You might be surprised by how much it costs Mary's Meals to provide school meals for a child for a whole year. As a class, look on the Mary's Meals website to find out exactly how much. In small groups, work out how many meals could be bought at your school using the same amount of money. What about other items – how many children could Mary's Meals feed for the price of a smartphone? Use what you have found out to make a poster, sharing these facts with other young people in an impactful way.
- In the extract, Magnus speaks about his memories of school meals. Write a short piece, either focusing on a memory you have of a particular school meal, or place yourself in the shoes of one of the children the charity serves – how would they think about their meal?



# A brighter future.

This session uses the film **Generation Hope** to explore the hopes of young people around the world, and the opportunities that are available to them because they have access to education.

Learners will meet children who received Mary's Meals at school and find out what this has helped them to achieve. Our tasks refer to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, connecting the rights of children in the film to those living in the UK.

## Learning intention:

I will learn about how school meals help children in poverty to gain an education, and how this impacts their future and the future of their communities.



## Content notes:

**Generation Hope** includes references to grief, gang violence, child hunger and poverty. Some young people in your group may find the film distressing, particularly if they have experience of these issues. We would recommend that teachers/group leaders watch the film before the session.

If your group includes young people who have moved to the UK from one of our programme countries, or have other shared experiences with the children in the film, speaking to them beforehand about the content can empower them to choose whether to share their own experiences with the group or whether they would be more comfortable not taking part in the session.

## Starter question:

- The film we are going to watch is called **Generation Hope**. What makes you hopeful about the future or about your generation?

## Watch Generation Hope with your class or group.



CLICK TO PLAY



## Following the film, choose from the discussion questions and activities below.



### Discussion questions:

- “Access to education is a privilege” – do you agree with this statement? Why, or why not?
- How can we promote the rights of all young people to receive an education?
- What are your hopes for your future career? What factors do you think have impacted this? Think about your education, family, role models and opportunities.

### Activities:

- Which of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) do you think are relevant to the work of Mary’s Meals? Research the goals, choose one of them and make a poster showing how the work of Mary’s Meals can contribute to reaching this goal.
- Write a letter to your future self – what do you hope to have achieved this year, in five years or in 10 years? Have the people you met in the film made you feel differently about your education or your future? Share your insights with your future self in the letter to help you remember.
- Make a video or presentation about why education should be a right for all young people, drawing on your own experiences and the experiences of the people in Generation Hope.



# What's the emergency?

This session uses case studies to demonstrate how Mary's Meals responds to emergencies. Learners will discover the numerous challenges faced by the communities Mary's Meals works with – from conflict to the Covid-19 pandemic – and how Mary's Meals has responded to these challenges to help communities and safeguard school feeding.

Mary's Meals grew out of a response to the Bosnian conflict in the early 1990s. Since then, it has been involved in emergency relief work in many countries – including Myanmar, Haiti, Liberia, India, South Sudan and Ethiopia.

At the heart of any emergency relief work Mary's Meals undertakes is always the principle of feeding vulnerable children in a place of education. In many cases, Mary's Meals has been able to extend its support to those in need in the wider community. This often takes the form of providing emergency food aid.

## Learning intention:

I will learn about the impact of emergencies on the work of charities like Mary's Meals, how developing countries are particularly vulnerable in the face of emergencies, and how Mary's Meals adapts to continue to help communities.



## Content notes:

The case studies include references to the Covid-19 pandemic and natural disasters. We would recommend that teachers/group leaders read the case studies before the session.

## Starter question:

- Mary's Meals works in schools in many countries around the world. Can you think of any emergencies or difficulties in recent years which might have an impact on its work?



## Explore case studies from Mary's Meals with your whole group or in smaller groups.

If learners will not have access to computers during the lesson, case studies for each group can be printed in advance. You can choose from the following:

**Community distribution in Malawi during Covid-19**

**An update on our work amid the Covid-19 pandemic**

**Good news about our work during the Covid-19 pandemic**

**The children of South Sudan need our help**

**Christmas in Malawi's first refugee camp**

**Mary's Meals is back on the menu in India**

**After exploring the case studies, choose from the discussion questions and activities below.**



### Discussion questions:

- In what ways did the work of Mary's Meals change due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and in what ways did it stay the same?
- Compare the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children in the UK with the experience of children in countries where Mary's Meals works – what are the similarities and what are the differences?
- “Emergency situations have stopped the work of Mary's Meals from happening and from growing.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement, and what is the evidence?
- Mary's Meals works in Haiti, a country that has experienced a lot of upheaval in recent years, including natural disasters and political unrest. Discuss how different countries might find it more or less difficult to recover from these challenges.

### Activities:

- Research the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on other charities and organisations.
- Explore the Mary's Meals website to find out if there are any emergency campaigns or responses happening at the moment. If you find a current campaign, make a plan with your class or group to spread the word in your school or community.

## Faith and values in action.

This session uses the film **Love Reaches Everywhere** to explore the values at the heart of Mary's Meals.

Learners will meet a range of people connected to Mary's Meals, including children who receive school meals, their parents, supporters and fundraisers, and find out about the factors that motivate and inspire them – from religious faith to love for the global family. There is an opportunity for young people to reflect on their own values, and how to put these into action.

### **Learning intention:**

I will learn about the values of different people involved in Mary's Meals, and how these are put into action. I will reflect on my own values and beliefs.



## Content notes:

**Love Reaches Everywhere** includes references to war, child hunger and poverty. Some young people in your group may find the film distressing, particularly if they have experience of these issues. We would recommend that teachers/group leaders watch the film before the session.

If your group includes young people who have moved to the UK from one of our programme countries, or have other shared experiences with the children in the film, speaking to them beforehand about the content can empower them to choose whether to share their own experiences with the group or whether they would be more comfortable not taking part in the session.

## Starter question:

- “Love reaches everywhere” – share why you agree or disagree with this statement.

## Watch Love Reaches Everywhere with your class or group.



CLICK TO PLAY

## Following the film, choose from the discussion questions and activities below.



### Discussion questions:

- What evidence was there in the film that religion and faith can play a part in guiding and motivating people? How can religious faith impact how people face difficult situations?
- Family is a recurring theme in the film – how important is family to the people we meet in the film, and what example made the biggest impact on you?
- What moment did you find most inspiring, and why?
- What do you think it is about the Mary's Meals mission that has encouraged so many people from all around the world to support it?
- What 'little act of love' could you do to help a child like Whistler to gain an education?



### Activities:

- Values are principles which guide an organisation in its work. Can you research the [values](#) of Mary's Meals? Choose one of the values and talk or write about what you think it means. Present your reflections to your class or group.
- What kind of values would you choose if you were starting a charity? Brainstorm this question in small groups. Perhaps have a look at the values or mission statement for your school. How can you live these values in your own community?
- Why are fundraisers so important for Mary's Meals and how could you – as an individual, or as part of a group – help the charity? Make an action plan of your idea.

## The difference a meal makes.

This session consolidates the message that school meals can make a huge difference for children living in poverty.

Learners will discover the changes that happened for Lette, who also featured in **Child 31**, as a result of Mary's Meals and will reference findings from the Mary's Meals Impact Report. The activities encourage learners to support Mary's Meals.

### Learning intention:

I will learn how school meals have made a difference to children living in poverty, and contribute to this positive change through my own actions.



## Content notes:

**Lette's Story of Hope** includes references to child hunger and poverty. Some young people in your group may find the film distressing, particularly if they have experience of these issues. We would recommend that teachers/group leaders watch the film before the session.

If your group includes young people who have moved to the UK from one of our programme countries, or have other shared experiences with the children in the film, speaking to them beforehand about the content can empower them to choose whether to share their own experiences with the group or whether they would be more comfortable not taking part in the session.

## Starter question:

- What meals have been important in your life? Were these important because they happened on special occasions, included memorable food, or were with people who you love?



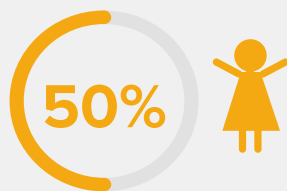
## Watch Lette's Story of Hope with your class or group.



CLICK TO PLAY

## Following the film, choose from the discussion questions and activities below.

### Key statistics from impact report:



of the children enrolled in Mary's Meals programmes are girls.

Research found a marked reduction in the numbers of children leaving school early during the school day. Most importantly, the incidences of this linked to hunger disappeared completely.

29% → 0%

98% of teachers said that children pay more attention in class since Mary's Meals started feeding at their school.

### Discussion questions:

- What difference has Mary's Meals made in Lette's life?
- Do you find Lette's personal experience, or the statistics to be more persuasive? Why do you think this is? Can you think of situations when each would be more appropriate if you were spreading the word about Mary's Meals?

### Activities:

- Organise an event in your school or community to raise money for the work of Mary's Meals. Be as creative as you can – it could be a bake sale, sponsored walk or cycle, quiz, talent show, concert, breakfast or film screening!
- Try conducting your own research inspired by the statistics from the impact report. You could survey parents to find out how they view education, or try to measure the difference in learner participation before and after lunch. What other factors could you measure?
- Imagine that you are organising a media campaign to raise awareness of the impact of child hunger and encourage people to support Mary's Meals. What material would you choose to include? How would you spread the word? What factors might you have to consider when making these decisions, such as audience and cost?
- Can you organise a version of this campaign in your school or organisation? You could make a video to show on screens around the school, create posters and write posts to include on school social media accounts.