



Mary's Meals speaking notes – medium presentation

We have created these speaking notes to help guide your presentation. Please don't feel you have to recite these word-for-word, it is important that your presentation is natural and focuses on the elements of our story that matter to you.

SLIDE ONE

Good [morning/afternoon/evening], my name is [NAME] and I am a community volunteer with the charity Mary's Meals.

I'd like to start by thanking those of you who already support the work of Mary's Meals. Your kindness and generosity are changing the lives of children around the world.

For those of you who have never heard of Mary's Meals before, I'm so grateful for this opportunity to tell you about our work today.

SLIDE TWO

I'm going to tell you a story and like many good stories, this one begins in a pub.

Let me take you back to a cold, dark evening in November 1992. Two brothers, Magnus and Fergus MacFarlane-Barrow, were sitting having a pint together in their local village pub in Dalmally. Their conversation turned to what they had seen on the television earlier in the evening.

A news report had shown the suffering of the people of Bosnia who had fled ethnic cleansing and were now housed in refugee camps. The brothers had previously visited Bosnia on a family holiday and felt compelled to help the people there, so they decided to appeal for aid, blankets and food from around their local community.

They hurriedly organised a week off work (they were both fish farmers at the time) and sourced a second-hand Land Rover. Barely three weeks after that conversation in the pub, the brothers found themselves driving to Bosnia as part of an aid convoy.

Magnus and Fergus safely delivered the aid and returned home to their day jobs. To their surprise, donations had continued to pour in, and their dad's old shed was now full of provisions.

Magnus took a 'gap year' to deliver the aid, and it's probably the longest gap year in history – as he never returned to his previous job!

The donations didn't stop – they still haven't. And so, in 1992 the work was registered as a charity named Scottish International Relief.

SLIDE THREE

The work of Scottish International Relief took a new turn in 2002. Magnus was visiting Malawi and the country was in the grip of famine. It was here he met Emma, a mother who was dying and who was surrounded by her six children.

Emma was lying on a straw mat. She was wrapped in an old blanket and was wringing her hands continuously as she spoke.

She whispered to Magnus: "There is nothing left now except to pray that someone looks after my children when I'm gone."

Emma's husband had died a year previously, killed by AIDS, the same disease that was now about to steal her from her children.

Magnus tried to lift the atmosphere by asking 14-year-old Edward, Emma's eldest child, what his hopes and ambitions were. Magnus did not expect that the response would change his life and the lives of more than three million others.

SLIDE FOUR

Edward replied: "I would like to have enough to eat and I would like to be able to go to school one day."

This was a call that could not be ignored. It led to the evolution of Scottish International Relief into Mary's Meals as it is today.

The shed where Magnus and his family stored donations all those years ago still serves as the global headquarters for Mary's Meals today!

SLIDE FIVE

Hunger remains the number one health risk in the world today. Tragically, hunger kills more people each year than AIDS, malaria and TB combined.

200 million children's lives are at risk because they are malnourished, and more than 71 million primary school-age children are out of school around the world.

Instead of sitting in classrooms, children are working in fields, begging on street corners or scavenging among rubbish to find enough food just to survive. Today, too many children will wake up and go to bed hungry, and I don't think that's right. That's why I'm here this [morning/afternoon/evening].

SLIDE SIX

Our vision at Mary's Meals is that every child receives one daily meal in their place of education, and that all those who have more than they need, share with those that lack even the most basic of things.

Working together with those who share our vision, we believe there is no good reason why this cannot be realised.

At the heart of Mary's Meals lies a simple idea which can transform the lives of millions of people around the world.

Providing a child with one daily meal in a place of education not only feeds the child's body, it helps feed their mind too and provides families with a greater incentive to enrol their children in school.

We believe that education is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty. Children receiving Mary's Meals today can grow up well-nourished and well-educated, to become the men and women who will lift their communities out of poverty and end their reliance on aid.

SLIDE SEVEN

Mary's Meals is now feeding hungry children living in 16 countries across the globe. We are reaching the world's poorest children who have no other safety net.

SLIDE EIGHT

Not only do we feed children in 16 countries every school day, we feed more than three million children in those countries.

SLIDE NINE

Mary's Meals is not only a powerful incentive to come to school, the daily meal also gives children the energy to learn and play.

When Mary's Meals starts at a school our research shows that hunger is reduced, there is improved school enrolment and attendance levels, improved attainment, increased community support for education, and children are happier!

SLIDE 10

Our research shows that Mary's Meals reduces children's hunger at school. In Malawi, the percentage of children who said they felt hungry 'most of the time' or 'always' reduced from 42% to 1% after one year of receiving Mary's Meals.

Three years after the introduction of our programme in Zambia, 98% of children told us that they have energy after eating Mary's Meals porridge. At Mary's Meals, we believe in the power of porridge!

Our research also shows that enrolment increases in schools where Mary's Meals provides school meals, and surrounding communities report fewer children being out of school. In Malawi, enrolment increased by 39% in schools we surveyed in the first three years of the Mary's Meals programme.

SLIDE 11

In many of the contexts where we work, girls are often less likely to go to school. Girls are also disproportionately affected by safety risks in travelling to school and early pregnancy and marriage. Yet we can proudly say that around 50 per cent of all the children we feed are girls.

By providing a daily meal at school, we encourage girls to access education and enable them to concentrate and learn once they are there, so that there can be a brighter future for them and their communities.

SLIDE 12

While the majority of our programmes support children in primary school, we also feed in pre-school education facilities. In many of the places we work, these are referred to as Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres – here we would call them nurseries. ECD centres help with children's health, development and primary school readiness.

Pre-school aged children are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition and can suffer its effects in later life. Early interventions for disadvantaged children have been proven to lead to increased survival rates, and better health, growth and brain development.

Children who receive assistance in their early years are more successful at school and, as adults, have higher employment rates and better health.

SLIDE 13

We are beginning to see a new generation, once fed by Mary's Meals, finding its voice. We call them 'Generation Hope' – these are the young people who have completed their education and are going on to become doctors, teachers and even professional athletes.

These inspirational young women (point at powerpoint image) Angelina and Mary received Mary's Meals at school, and now work as auxiliary nurses in South Sudan.

Mary told us: "Without Mary's Meals we could not have continued, we would have given up. Angelina and I are proud of ourselves and our achievements. We can be role models to other children."

SLIDE 14

It costs just £19.15 to provide a child with Mary's Meals every school day for a whole year.

We keep our running costs low to maximise the good we can do with the donations entrusted to us.

This is only possible because most of our work is done by a global network of dedicated volunteers who carry out lots of little acts of love on behalf of Mary's Meals.

Here in the UK, people like me give our time to spread the word about this important work.

And overseas, loving volunteers rise early to prepare our nutritious meals for hungry children. All our school feeding programmes are owned by the community and run by local volunteers, with Mary's Meals providing the food.

Now I'm going to tell you about the different ways you can get involved in our work.

SLIDE 15

You could choose to fundraise for Mary Meals.

Our supporters never fail to amaze us with their inspiring and original fundraising ideas.

Inspiring nine-year-old Madison Burns (pictured on the left) hiked for five days, reaching the summit of five of the highest mountains in the UK and raising £700 for Mary's Meals.

Could you take on a sponsored cycle, or organise a fundraiser in your local community? By raising funds for us, you can help Mary's Meals make a lasting difference to the lives of children in some of the world's poorest communities.

SLIDE 16

Or you could choose to volunteer – like I do.

We welcome everyone into the Mary's Meals family and believe each of us has something to contribute towards the realisation of our vision – that every child receives a daily meal in school.

Our work is mainly carried out by our wonderful army of volunteers who contribute in all sorts of different ways.

We're always in need of more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering your time to our work, you can find out more by contacting info@marysmeals.org.

SLIDE 17

Or you could make a donation.

If you are a UK tax payer, please consider signing a Gift Aid form which allows us to claim, at no extra cost to yourself, an extra 25% from the government.

Stephen Clark from Leeds donates monthly to Mary's Meals by Direct Debit.

He told us: "A regular donation helps keep me organised! It is a relief to know that the money is always going to those who need it, providing hope for some of the world's poorest children."

SLIDE 18

Your regular donation can help to change a child's story – the promise of a monthly donation, whatever size, means we can plan our work and reach more children with Mary's Meals. Each meal costs 10p on average, so even small regular gifts can make a big difference.

SLIDE 19

You can find lots more information and resources about our work on our website.

Thank you so much for your listening today, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Then go onto next slide with logo and website URL while you take questions.

SLIDE 20

Answer any questions.

