

SPOTLIGHT

PHILANTHROPY AND PARTNERSHIPS MAGAZINE

ISSUE 1



mary's
meals

a simple solution
to world hunger



WELCOME LETTER

Launching the first edition of Spotlight is a proud moment, and I am grateful to everyone who has supported its creation. The Philanthropy and Partnerships (PAP) team was established in 2025, and in our first year, it has been inspiring to hear the motivations that drive our supporters to give to Mary’s Meals. Your generosity and dedication have shaped everything we do, including this magazine. You’ve asked for deeper insight into the programmes you support and the communities you’re impacting, and this publication is our way of sharing those stories and giving you that knowledge.

From feeding 200 children in Malawi over 20 years ago, Mary’s Meals now reaches more than 3 million children across 16 countries. As Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships, I witness the impact of your kindness every day. Whether funding an entire programme in Haiti, sponsoring a school in Malawi, or donating monthly to feed a child in Ethiopia, your support transforms lives, not just for individual children, but for entire families and communities.

As a fundraiser, I know that to ask others to give, you must believe in the cause with your whole heart. And so, my belief in education comes from my own story. My father fled the Lebanese civil war determined to continue his education and build a better future. Today, he is a university professor, a living testament to what becomes possible when a child is given the chance to learn.

Much of my family still lives in Lebanon, where ongoing conflict continues to deny children the chance to go to school. Joining Mary’s Meals was a natural choice for me. Even amid escalating violence, the organisation continued providing school meals, ensuring children could still access education.

Together, we all share this belief that school feeding programmes are a simple yet powerful solution capable of creating lasting change. Your support is especially vital in times of crisis, helping children stay in school when they are most at risk of missing out. Every meal you provide is more than food. It is an investment in education, opportunity, and hope. The stories inside this magazine are a window into that impact and the hope your support brings to families around the world.

On behalf of the Mary’s Meals family, our partners, and the communities we serve, the Philanthropy and Partnerships team would like to express our heartfelt thanks to you. *We hope you enjoy the first edition of Spotlight.*

A Houry

Amirah Houry
Head of Philanthropy & Partnerships



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Omne

Omne is the strategic and creative partner to the world’s leading foodservice and hospitality brands, and are proud to have partnered with Mary’s Meals to design their Spotlight magazine.

GLOBAL OVERVIEW

During 2024–2025, our work was shaped by a period of rapid expansion, through which we reached an additional 805,000 children. We also continued our commitment to sustaining and strengthening our existing programmes in countries listed.





SCALING WITH PURPOSE

Erin Pratley is Chief Programmes Officer at Mary's Meals. She leads a team that supports our partners in country to ensure the daily delivery of our school feeding programmes. They also help to identify areas for innovation and assess the impact of our work.

Expanding our feeding programme in schools requires comprehensive research, planning and assessment. We spoke with Erin about the key factors our teams consider when determining where and how to provide daily meals for children who need it most.

HOW DO WE CHOOSE WHERE TO WORK?

'THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS WE CONSIDER WHEN EXPANDING OUR PROGRAMME ARE NEED, PARTNERSHIP AND OPPORTUNITY.'

We look at indicators of hunger, food insecurity and access to primary education, as well as school feeding that may already exist in the region. We ascertain our ability to reach children in these locations, and the relationships and networks we have at local and national levels. And we consider our experience of implementing school feeding in neighbouring countries in the region.

We also look at challenges related to weather and climate, and how prone the region is to drought and flooding, which can make schools increasingly vulnerable and more difficult to access.

HOW DO WE DECIDE WHICH SCHOOLS TO TARGET?

We take a clustered approach to feeding and include all schools that demonstrate a strong need within a particular area. This helps us guard against children migrating between schools, where one has a feeding programme and another does not.

Our local partners use our assessment tools to collect the necessary information to make informed decisions on school selection, enabling us to effectively target the right schools, in the right areas from the start. We gather information on the type of school and the community's involvement, the existing school infrastructure (for operational and delivery purposes), to gauge the level of need in each individual school.



HOW DO WE CHOOSE OUR PARTNERS?

We identify potential partners by considering: does the partner's approach match our values? Have they previously carried out school feeding? What areas do they open up for us to work in? And are they operating in an area of high need?

This is followed by a process of due diligence, which helps us get a feel for how they align with our values and low-cost approach.

Then we create a formal agreement and together design an efficient and effective programme. This includes co-designing logistics, local supplier planning and delivery implementation.

Our partners provide the local expertise, whilst Mary's Meals brings decades of school feeding experience to the table.

WHY IS COMMUNITY SUPPORT VITAL?

Community engagement is critical for school feeding success. We depend on volunteers in the community to prepare and deliver the meal each school day. We also rely on the local network and expertise of our partners to effectively engage community members from the very beginning, and to flag any issues as they come up.

Many of the schools we reach have never had a school feeding programme before. But the feedback we get from the local community reminds us of the great need for our programme, and the great joy that comes from our mission.

THE GLOBAL LOGISTICS POWERING MARY'S MEALS

Across Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East, large-scale logistics operations are taking place to make it possible for Mary's Meals to serve more than 3 million of the world's most vulnerable children every school day.



PLANNING AND COORDINATION

Every programme country represents a different logistical approach, and our team, led by Umberto Bosco – Planning and Coordination, work closely with local suppliers to distribute ingredients on our behalf and keep our supply chain safe and running to schedule.

Where possible, ingredients for the school meals are locally sourced, and differ from country to country, depending on local availability, cultures and tastes. Therefore, meals often consist of readily available ingredients that allow for us to purchase them consistently, keeping costs low, and preparation simple.

In some of our programme countries, like Liberia and Zambia, our suppliers have set up warehouses in different locations to aid with transportation and minimise disruption. These central distribution points create efficiencies by reducing long-distance deliveries and better serving regions where more schools are located. While in Malawi, food is delivered directly from the supplier's main location to the schools, to be sorted by volunteers.

CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS

In Malawi, our largest programme country, coordinating the operations and logistics to feed more than 1.3

million children is a critical role where forward planning is key. In the most isolated locations, our team transport deliveries by motorbike or truck. With the ever-growing threat of climate disasters, we place larger orders with suppliers for the hardest-to-reach areas during rainy seasons and robust stock management helps to keep food safe.

As for South Sudan, thanks to meticulous planning and an iron tight partnership, we remain one of the few organisations providing reliable and consistent school feeding in the country. To keep our promise to the children of South Sudan, most of our food must be sourced from neighbouring countries. This includes the painstaking process of arranging deliveries as we navigate hazardous road conditions and security threats including the high risk of hijacking.



PARTNERSHIP

Places of education can range from purpose-built concrete rooms to a patch of ground shaded by a tree. Our first requirement is that they can provide a safe, hygienic and properly equipped cooking space. Kitchen and storeroom construction is managed by the community, using whatever building resources are available to them, so they can differ greatly. Kitchens are usually located on school property, but this is not possible in certain contexts. In Syria, our meals are cooked in a central location that has reliable access to water and electricity and distributed to the different schools by volunteers.

Working in partnership is a vital and integral part of the ethos of Mary's

Meals as these organisations know the local culture, context and challenges that allow us to successfully deliver meals every school day.

Partnerships take many forms, from direct programme partners to government advocacy, and community engagement. We look to partner with organisations, government ministries, School Feeding Committees, and individuals who share the Mary's Meals values.

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

Our logistics operation is essential to the efficient delivery of our school feeding programme, but we are also blessed by incredible individuals who go above and beyond to ensure children receive their meals.

In Liberia, our team was once forced to decline a request for Mary's Meals because there was no feasible way for them to transport supplies to the school. On hearing this news, the local community came together and within a few weeks the Mary's Meals team returned to a newly constructed concrete bridge, towering over the once impassable river to the main road.

Whilst in the Central Plateau region of Haiti, community volunteers carry bags of ingredients across three hills using trusty donkeys to ensure Mary's Meals can be served to children at the hilltop schools.



This dedication from local communities has allowed us to continue serving meals to rural schools, reach regions experiencing climate crisis, and be a constant presence in areas affected by conflict and unrest.

FEEDING DURING CONFLICT AND CRISIS

When conflict erupts or a climate disaster strikes, children are often the first to lose access to education, safety and stability. Schools close, families become displaced and hunger deepens. Yet it is precisely in these moments of uncertainty that school feeding programmes becomes not just relevant but critical.

In Haiti, escalating gang violence has severely disrupted daily life, prompting our Crisis Appeal to sustain our existing school feeding programmes and ensure children continue to receive nutritious meals and access to education.

In Madagascar, where communities face an increasing number of climate-related shocks that threaten agriculture and livelihoods, school feeding remains a vital source of stability and resilience.

Delivering school feeding programmes in fragile, crisis-affected contexts is not only complex operationally, but also profoundly human. Our partners are deeply rooted in the communities they serve, and the impacts of conflict and climate change are felt personally and immediately.

Yet these very conditions underscore why our work is more vital than ever.

CRISIS APPEAL: HAITI

**196,000 CHILDREN
RECEIVE A NUTRITIOUS
MEAL IN OVER 670
SCHOOLS EVERY
SCHOOL DAY**

As gangs wreak havoc across Haiti, Mary's Meals continues to feed the children who need us most and through our Crisis Appeal you can directly ensure this happens.

Mary's Meals started serving hungry children in Haiti in 2006. Today, thanks to your support, more than 196,000 children receive a nutritious meal in over 670 schools every school day – encouraging them off the streets and into the classroom with the promise of a good meal.

The poorest country in the Americas, Haiti has been plagued by escalating violence and insecurity since 2018. Large areas are controlled by armed gangs, schools are frequently forced to close, and essential services are disrupted. The cost of basic food has soared, deepening hunger among families already affected by unemployment and the repeated destruction of homes.

Delivering aid in this context is extremely challenging. Food storage carries the risk of looting, while deliveries are vulnerable to hijacking.

A joint UN report, published in 2025, has highlighted Haiti as a hunger hotspot, meaning people are expected to face extreme hunger in the coming months due to the persisting conflict.

Alarming, recent figures suggest children now make up half of all gang members. Rob Padberg, founder of our partner, Bureau de Nutrition et Developement (BND) explains the difficulty in keeping children away from gangs:

“They try to get the children who have nothing to do, who have no income, and they pay them to be their soldiers. If you create a situation like that, it's very difficult to get those children out. They are ending up in situations where it is very difficult to create a better life for themselves as adults.”

Rob's BND colleague, Emmline Toussaint, Director of Finance, sees that Mary's Meals is making a real difference to children. She says:

“Food is the biggest incentive. To prevent children joining a gang, we need to focus on the poverty. It is the poverty that is killing them. They are living a nightmare. Mary's Meals is needed now more than ever. We are doing our best to make sure that the children are eating every day because if we don't have the school feeding programme, the children won't have anything.”



At Verena II Primary School in Port-au-Prince, volunteer cook Chantrelle Paul sees the difference every day. Her youngest son, Walker, 11, attends school in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince:

“The fact that Walker eats a meal every day at school is a blessing. If I don't have any money, I don't have to think about what's going to happen because I know he is going to eat a good meal at school.”

On 31 March 2025, Mirebalais, near Port-au-Prince and home to another Mary's Meals partner, **Summits Education**, was attacked and taken over by armed gangs. Roadblocks, restricted movement, and power outages disrupted daily life. Yet, despite these dangers, school feeding continued, Cassandre Regnier, Program Director at Summits Education, explains why:

“The meals are crucial to get kids enrolled and to keep kids in school. Once the food is at those schools, then they can feed on a daily basis. So, then the school children do not miss school days, because we know that this is what keeps them going. The safety, security and hope that Mary's Meals provides is extremely crucial to the students that we serve.”

But the impact goes beyond nutrition or attendance. School feeding sends a powerful message to children facing instability – that they matter. “The school feeding programme is really saying that there are people thinking of them (the children), there are people that believe in them.” Cassandre says “We are here to support them in this journey because those children, they are the future of Haiti.”

This sentiment is echoed by Emmline, who describes it aptly as: ***“School feeding is the best way, because we are sure that the children are taking their notebooks – not guns – to class.”***

Despite the chaos, Mary's Meals continues to operate in the vast majority of schools where we work in Haiti. Innovations such as sourcing ingredients locally in the Central Plateau help sustain programmes while supporting communities.

Rob says: ***“The whole basis of Mary's Meals and BND is to take care of and help your neighbour. We have the same goal – to help children to develop and grow into a new generation that can help the future of Haiti. We don't only believe in giving children food but also helping them to develop. Development means going to school, staying in school, and finishing school. From that, you build up a new generation.”***

In fragile and conflict-affected settings like Haiti, school meals do far more than address hunger. They offer protection, routine and a reason to hope, helping children stay in school, stay safe, and believe in a different future.



Using your camera, please scan the QR code to find out more about our Crisis in Haiti Appeal or visit marysmeals.org.uk/Haiti

CHILDREN, CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY IN MADAGASCAR

SINCE 2018, MARY'S MEALS HAS REACHED MORE THAN 97,800 CHILDREN IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND CHILD DETENTION CENTRES IN MADAGASCAR THROUGH LOCAL PARTNERS.

Madagascar, the world's oldest island, is renowned for its extraordinary biodiversity. Yet its location makes it highly vulnerable to climate-driven disasters. Rising sea levels, cyclones, and prolonged droughts are increasingly frequent and severe, damaging agriculture, infrastructure and community livelihoods.

MORE THAN 80% OF THE POPULATION LIVES ON LESS THAN \$2.15 A DAY, AND NEARLY 40% OF CHILDREN SUFFER FROM CHRONIC MALNUTRITION.

MARY'S MEALS IN MADAGASCAR

Our partner, Feedback Madagascar, help communities in the rural Southeast to live sustainably, tackle climate change and manage the forest habitat, providing emergency relief, installing water boreholes, and building schools. Through their support of Mary's Meals, the organisation is also working towards improving education, health and livelihoods in 450 primary schools across the region. As CEO Jamie Spencer explains:

"The Mary's Meals partnership is gold. It feeds children who otherwise wouldn't get proper meals. It brings them to school and enables them to study with full stomachs. School feeding also acts as a catalyst for other important development work."

SUPPORTING CHILDREN IN DETENTION CENTRES

Mary's Meals also reaches some of Madagascar's most marginalised children through four programmes in detention centres, in partnership with Grandir Dignement. Many of these children are living in harsh conditions, with some as young as eight still awaiting trial. Grandir Dignement defends the rights of children in conflict with the law, while providing structured education, extracurricular activities, medical, social and legal support.

Since Mary's Meals was introduced, mealtimes now provide stability and reassurance in otherwise uncertain lives. Fetra, an educator at Grandir Dignement, explains how vital the support from Mary's Meals is, meaning the children can focus and concentrate more: "I've seen how their food provision has evolved over time. The children are healthier since we started giving them complete meals, thanks to Mary's Meals."



"Our environment continues to deteriorate, [but] the children are the future generation. It's us who will shape them to have the mindset of preserving the environment. If we could shape these children, the destruction of the environment will be reduced in the future for this generation."

Gervais, School Technician

MORE THAN A MEAL: STRENGTHENING HOUSEHOLDS AMID CLIMATE SHOCKS

The impact of Mary's Meals stretches far beyond meeting a child's immediate need for food, contributing to systematic development change. We spoke to more than 40 people, from 37 different households in Madagascar, about the impact of Mary's Meals on a child's whole household. Our findings highlight how school meals influence various aspects of daily life and reveal three interconnecting themes: **food security, livelihoods, and health and wellbeing.**



LIVELIHOODS

The consistent promise of a meal alleviates financial pressures and worry for parents. Some interviewees explained that they no longer have to cut their working day short to come home to their children at lunchtimes, meaning their earning potential can increase too. One mother shared that, as a farm labourer, being able to work longer days has improved her income.

Gervais, a school technician, runs an agroecology programme at one of Mary's Meals schools, where pupils grow produce in school gardens that helps supplement their daily meals. Through this hands-on learning, children gain practical skills and an understanding of sustainable farming. Which supports future livelihoods and reinforces the importance of protecting natural resources.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Climate change also affects children's wellbeing by disrupting educational routines. Headteacher of Antifotena Primary School, Ginette, explains that dry seasons are now far harsher, making it difficult for pupils to care for school gardens. At the same time, during cyclone periods, schools may be forced to close for up to two weeks at a time. Despite these challenges, tree planting has become a daily priority, helping children feel empowered to care for their environment.



Mary's Meals supports children's wellbeing through reliable nutrition and healthy routines. Caregivers report fewer illnesses and improved hygiene at home.

The reduction in stress at a household level was also clear. A mother of six with two grandchildren receiving a daily meal at school said: "I worry less from Monday to Friday because I know that my grandchildren will eat at school." As one grandmother shared: "Before, the children were often sick, but since they have been receiving a meal at school, they are rarely sick."

HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY

The feedback shows that the school feeding programme enables families to adjust food consumption and reallocate resources, helping them to navigate the hardships caused by climate challenges, alongside lean harvest seasons or rising inflation.

A mother of five shared that before her children received Mary's Meals, they had to buy two bags of rice each month during the lean harvest season; now they only need to buy two bags for the full lean season. A grandmother also reported that she and her daughter skip fewer meals themselves, now that two of her children eat Mary's Meals at school.

The programme also reinforces longer term food security through education on environmental stewardship. Deputy headteacher at Ankarinombo School, Jean, explains that by understanding how protecting the forest preserves soil fertility and supports crop productivity, children develop habits that benefit both the environment and their families' food supply.



FEEDING THE FUTURE: HOW TO SUPPORT MARY'S MEALS



THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFTS TO MARY'S MEALS GOES FAR BEYOND THE CHILDREN SITTING IN CLASSROOMS TODAY, IT REACHES INTO THE FUTURE AND CHANGES THE STORY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

For those wishing to support our mission at a deeper level, we offer thoughtful, discreet ways to create lasting impact. Our model ensures every pound, dollar, or euro goes as far as possible reaching more children, more efficiently, year after year.

Our Philanthropy and Partnerships team provides personalised support to help you achieve the greatest possible impact. Whether you have a defined philanthropic vision or are exploring new ways of working together, we guide you every step of the way, alongside your wealth manager, philanthropy advisor, and corporate responsibility teams.

OUR COMMITMENT

Simplicity in impact: A proven, community-led, cost-effective approach to school feeding.

TRANSPARENCY: Clear reporting and responsible stewardship.

DISCRETION: Respect for privacy at every stage.

Supporters receive tailored insights and clear impact reporting, with recognition handled according to personal preference, including full anonymity. These strategic partnerships enable donors to drive lasting change at scale while ensuring programmes remain effective, resilient, and sustainable over time.

STRATEGIC & TRANSFORMATIONAL PHILANTHROPY

We partner with major donors to align philanthropic ambitions with high-impact principal and transformational gifts, reaching thousands of children every school day.

Opportunities for partnership may include:

- Sustaining school feeding programmes in conflict or climate-affected countries, regions, or communities
- Funding the expansion of school feeding programmes into new countries or underserved communities
- Supporting core organisational costs to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience
- Underwriting major growth or innovation initiatives that provide additional benefits to the communities we serve.

STRUCTURED & PLANNED GIVING

For those seeking a more structured approach, we can shape giving around your personal and family values for long-term giving. This may include:

- Donor-advised funds
- Gifts of shares or assets
- Legacy and bequest giving
- Charitable Family Trusts and Foundations

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

For those seeking a more tailored corporate approach, we can shape giving around your business operations and CSR ambitions. This may include:

- Direct funding for programmes in supply chain locations
- Regional sponsorship across multiple schools and educational institutions
- Full-country programme funding commitments
- Profit share pledges
- Industry collaboration funding – bringing together sector leaders to co-fund programme delivery

THE TEAM



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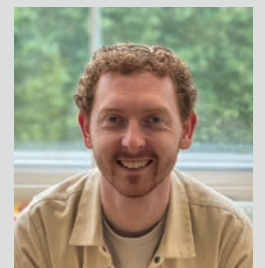
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To help us respond to your enquiry as effectively as possible, please contact our team via philanthropy-uk@marysmeals.org. Depending on your area of interest or support, the most relevant member of our Philanthropy and Partnerships team will be in touch directly.



mary's
meals

a simple solution
to world hunger

“Even good deeds that seem very tiny
to us can reverberate across oceans
and even down through generations.”

Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, Give