

mary's
meals

a simple solution
to world hunger

Mary's Meals Monitoring and Evaluation 2014 – 2017

Mary's Meals provides a daily meal at school in some of the world's poorest communities, where hunger and poverty prevent children from gaining an education.

Mary's Meals is committed to providing the most effective help to those suffering the effects of extreme poverty and we strongly believe in the good stewardship of resources entrusted to us.

As such, we regularly assess the impact and effectiveness of our work, enabling us to achieve our goals, learn from our experiences and deliver our programmes as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Mary's Meals approach to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is based on the following key principles:

Participation

Our beneficiaries and stakeholders are meaningfully involved in the M&E process as much as possible and should feel empowered to contribute freely, recognising our belief that they are the people who can become the principal builders of a new, more human future for everyone.

Learning

We critically analyse and learn from information gained from our programmes and will always be willing to adapt and improve our methods as necessary.

Accountability

We are accountable to the thousands of supporters and donors who are part of the global Mary's Meals movement and believe in the importance of transparent programme management and reporting.

Efficiency

We believe in maintaining low costs, ensuring that funds can be used to maximum effect. Mary's Meals' M&E is therefore realistic and focused on our needs, gathering data that is useful and necessary.

Distinctiveness

Mary's Meals has a unique approach to development and we believe that our M&E should recognise this, using innovative approaches and tools which suit our ways of working.



This paper sets out Mary's Meals' global monitoring and evaluation strategy for 2014-2017, providing an overview of Mary's Meals' key outcomes and a summary of M&E timescales for the three year period 2014-2017. It has been collated following consultation with a range of stakeholders and staff from across the organisation and has been approved by the Board.

Outcomes

Mary's Meals believes that every child has a right to an education¹. Education allows children to develop key life skills² and knowledge and improves their opportunity to gain employment and provide for themselves and their families in future.³ Children want and need to go to school and children around the world have been giving us this message since Mary's Meals began.

Yet, sadly, millions of children are prevented from gaining an education because of hunger.⁴ Many children have to work; at home, in fields or businesses or have no choice but to search or beg for food. Many more struggle to concentrate and learn when they are at school, because of the debilitating effect of hunger.⁵

Mary's Meals' programmes are focussed on providing a daily meal at school to help remove the barriers which prevent children accessing school and engaging in their education, working directly children but also at community and national levels.

The key changes our school feeding programmes seek to achieve are:

- 1.** Reduced hunger for children living in poverty who attend school
- 2.** Increased access to primary education for children living in poverty
- 3.** Improved engagement in primary education of children living in poverty
- 4.** Increased progression within primary education by children living in poverty
- 5.** Improved health and well-being of children living in poverty



Our strong emphasis on community ownership encourages local support for education and by purchasing local food wherever possible, we aim to contribute to the national economy and improve local livelihoods. By providing a lasting physical infrastructure, establishing and training strong school feeding committees which own and manage each project and working closely with national governments on school feeding design and policy, we are working to ensure that our projects are sustainable for the long-term.

At a secondary level, we therefore aim for our programmes to impact on:

- 6.** Increased support for education within vulnerable communities
- 7.** Improved livelihoods for disadvantaged smallholder farmers
- 8.** Support and replication of effective school feeding programmes by Governments

¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Article 26. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 28.

² 2013. OECD. What are the social benefits of education? January 2013.

³ Global Partnership for Education: <http://www.globalpartnership.org/who-we-are/the-value-of-education/> 2009. School Feeding Policy. Informal Consultation. World Food Programme.

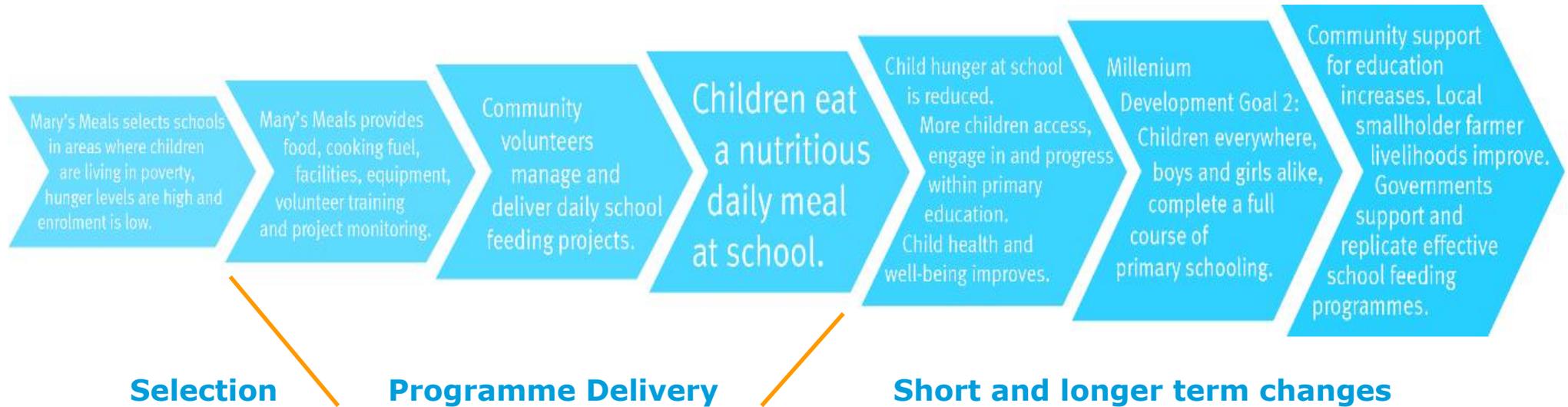
2013. WFP. State of School Feeding Worldwide.

⁴ "66 million primary school-age children attend classes hungry across the developing world, with 23 million in Africa alone." <https://www.wfp.org/hunger/stats>

⁵ 2006. World Food Programme. World Hunger Series 2006: Hunger and Learning.

Theory of Change

The diagram below summarises how Mary's Meals' school feeding programmes - delivered through our field offices and partner staff, plus thousands of volunteers; work to bring about these eight changes in the lives of children and their communities:



Mary's Meals monitoring and evaluation assesses our programmes at every stage in this process. Over the next three years, our strategy will focus on different aspects of our work at different times, prioritising selection, programme delivery and short-term changes (outcomes one to five) within our country programmes, and systematically moving on to evaluating the wider impact of our programmes (outcomes six to eight) and our work through partner organisations. Monitoring and evaluation of each stage will also be established as standard in the initial development of new country programmes, beginning with Zambia and Kenya in 2014.

Selection

Clusters of schools selected in areas where children are living in poverty, hunger levels are high and enrolment is low.

Our programmes focus on reaching the poorest and most vulnerable children, targeting areas of high food insecurity, poverty and child malnutrition as well as low enrolment and attendance rates. Our M&E will therefore map available national poverty, food security and education data in line with our programmes, to monitor changes in local context and trends in programme impact.

We will also gather and maintain detailed information on every school we work in, looking at school location, type, facilities and background context, school staff and PTA, programme set-up and delivery etc. This will be gathered annually and regularly updated by monitors and project staff, beginning with our larger programmes and gradually moving on to larger and then smaller partners.

Programme Delivery

Mary's Meals provides food, cooking fuel, facilities, equipment, volunteer training and project monitoring.

Community volunteers prepare food for children to eat at school.

Children eat a nutritious daily meal at school.

Our M&E will continue to monitor programme inputs, looking at our contribution to our programmes, as well as the contributions of others, such as volunteer school cooks. We will also continue to track programme delivery, assessing how well each project is implemented through from volunteer training, food delivery, preparation and consumption to Mary's Meals monitoring and Government engagement. Mechanisms for staff and stakeholder feedback will be established as standard and as with all of our M&E we will continually strive to learn from our results and modify our programmes accordingly.



Shorter-term changes



**Child hunger at school is reduced.
More children access, engage and progress within primary education.
Child health and well-being improves.**

Our staff and partners will monitor standard indicators on each of these shorter-term outcomes to help us understand and quantify the impact of our programmes, looking at:

- 1.** Reduced hunger for children living in poverty who attend school
 - Numbers of children receiving daily meal at school
 - % of school days school feeding programme delivered as planned
 - Number of kitchens built at schools.
- 1.** Increased access to primary education for children living in poverty
 - % absolute enrolment rate
 - Ratio of enrolled girls and boys.
- 2.** Improved engagement in primary education of children living in poverty
 - Monthly attendance % rate
 - Ratio of attendance rate for boys and girls.
- 3.** Increased progression within primary education by children living in poverty
 - Grade/standard 4 class size as % proportion of grade/standard 1 class size
 - Ratio of female to male grade 4 class size as % proportion of grade 1 class size
 - % completion rate of students enrolled in final available grade of primary school
 - Ratio of female to male students completing final available grade of primary education.
- 4.** Improved health and well-being of children living in poverty
 - Number of reported absences due to ill health
 - Levels of child participation in after-school activities and play.

We will monitor all of these indicators using a variety of methods and use data from samples of schools before the introduction of feeding to provide comparison with schools where feeding is established. The level and extent of analysis will vary, depending on the scale and capacity of each programme/project. All results will be regularly analysed and the focus of each outcome may be narrowed or widened dependent on these results.

In addition to this, we will conduct objective quasi-experimental impact evaluations spanning all of these changes, which will assess the shorter-term outcomes in more detail, looking at additional more complex qualitative indicators such as children and parents reporting the meal as incentive to enrol at school and levels of engagement (concentration and participation) in class reported by teachers and pupils. This will include consultation with samples of all relevant stakeholders and will begin in Malawi in 2014, with a similar study to be carried out in Liberia or Zambia in 2015/6.

Longer-term changes



**Community support for education increases.
Local smallholder farmer livelihoods improve.
Governments support and replicate effective school feeding programmes.**

We are also committed to assessing our wider impact and the changes which our programmes bring about at the local and national level. We will therefore monitor and evaluate the following additional indicators as standard, beginning in our larger programmes and widening our scope to all of our programmes over the three year period:

6. Increased support for education within vulnerable communities

- Number of volunteers who have participated in Mary's Meals training and community sensitisation
- Number of schools with active school feeding committee/PTA (minimum 5 members managing volunteer rota)
- Volunteer participation in delivering feeding programme (Number of volunteers who assist with preparing food on a weekly basis at each school).

7. Improved livelihoods for disadvantaged smallholder farmers

- % of food procured which is locally-produced
- Number of smallholder farmers who sell locally-produced food to Mary's Meals suppliers.

8. Support and replication of effective school feeding programmes by Governments

- Demonstrated national Government knowledge and understanding of Mary's Meals model (Number of occasions Government staff visit Mary's Meals programmes or shadow Mary's Meals staff, plus qualitative feedback)
- Engagement of Mary's Meals in national Government working groups/task forces on education (Number of Government working groups/task force meetings attended by Mary's Meals staff)
- Incorporation of Mary's Meals SFP model into national school feeding planning, documents and strategies
- Number of children fed by external bodies as replication of Mary's Meals model
- Number of additional external beneficial projects implemented through utilising Mary's Meals project platform within schools and surrounding communities.



Mary's Meals' commitment to ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning also includes a commitment to continuing to nurture and strengthen our collaboration with academic institutions and the wider international development community. We will continue to work in close partnership with other actors within school feeding and will explore options for joint working on specific aspects of our programmes - such as social return on investment, with a view to producing published papers on the evidence of our impact.