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Duncan Bannatyne backs campaign to transform the lives of hungry children in Zambia

Fitness entrepreneur Duncan Bannatyne is backing a Mary's Meals campaign which sees £1 doubled to become £2!

Before 1 March 2019 public donations to the charity's Double The Love campaign are being matched by the UK government, up to £2 million, to transform the lives of hungry children in Zambia.

Duncan is a long-time supporter of the school feeding charity and has visited projects in Malawi and Romania. Following the catastrophic Haiti earthquake in 2010, he travelled to Port-au-Prince to meet some of the children who were relying on the food provided by Mary's Meals.

Duncan said: "When I first came across Mary's Meals, they had just started feeding 200 children in Malawi, and now they reach more than 1.3 million children all around the world. I am amazed at how much they can do with even the smallest donation and having seen their work in action, I know how life-changing the meals are for the children, their families and communities.

"With the match-funding from the UK government, every donation right now will go even further – in fact, a donation of just £13.90, when doubled by the government, will feed two hungry children for a whole year. It really is a great time to get involved and do something fantastic."

As well as sharing Double The Love news with his 750,000 Twitter followers, Duncan is promoting the campaign to thousands of new and existing members of Bannatyne Health Clubs and spas across the UK.

Mary's Meals has been working in Zambia since 2014 and is now reaching more than 92,000 children there every school day.

The country has high rates of malnutrition, poverty and food insecurity, with more than 360,000 primary school age children out of education. Many can be found working in fields, begging or scavenging through rubbish dumps to survive, while those who do attend classes are often so hungry they don't have the energy to concentrate and learn.

By providing one good meal every day in school, Mary's Meals brings hungry children to the classroom and makes it possible for them to attend school regularly, so they can gain an all-important education and look with hope towards a brighter future.

Executive Director of Mary's Meals UK, Daniel Adams said: "Duncan has been a great friend to Mary's Meals for many years and like so many people, he is inspired by the simplicity of our vision that every child receives one daily meal in their place of education.

"The work of Mary's Meals is only possible because of the kindness of people of all ages and from all walks of life. Right now, with match funding from the UK government, we have this wonderful opportunity to transform the lives of many, many more hungry children in Zambia and around the world with the gift of food and education.

"Even the smallest gift will go a long way to bring joy to children and help them look with hope towards a brighter future."

For further information about the Double The Love campaign and to find out how to get involved, please visit www.marysmeals.org.uk

Watch Duncan describe why he supports Double The Love [here](#).

— ENDS —

Notes to Editors

- The short film of Duncan describing why he supports Mary's Meals Double The Love campaign is available on YouTube [here](#).
- Mary's Meals is a simple idea that works. The charity provides one daily meal in a place of learning in order to attract chronically poor children into the classroom, where they receive an education that can, in the future, be their ladder out of poverty.
- Mary's Meals feeds 1,361,586 children every school day, across five continents, in 17 countries: Malawi, Liberia, Zambia, Haiti, Kenya, India, South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Benin, Lebanon, Syria, Myanmar, Thailand, Ecuador, Madagascar and Romania.
- The average global cost to feed a child with Mary's Meals for a whole school year is just £13.90.
- Independently verified research from Malawi, Liberia and Zambia shows that in schools where children receive Mary's Meals, hunger is reduced, enrolment increases, attendance improves, drop-out rates fall, absences dwindle, concentration in lessons is heightened, attainment levels increase, parents are less anxious, and children are happier.
- The Mary's Meals campaign was born in 2002 when Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow visited Malawi during a famine and met a mother dying from AIDS. When Magnus asked her eldest son, Edward, what his dreams were in life, he replied simply: "I want to have enough food to eat and to go to school one day."
- Public donations to Double The Love, with the support of the UK government, will reach more hungry children in Zambia with life-changing meals in school. Money raised above the £2 million match funding threshold will not be matched and will go to general funds, enabling children in impoverished communities across 17 countries to receive Mary's Meals.
- Mary's Meals is committed to spending at least 93% of donations directly on its charitable activities. This is only possible because much of the charity's work is done by an army of dedicated volunteers – including more than 80,000 in Malawi alone.
- Please visit www.marysmeals.org.uk to find out more about the work of Mary's Meals.

UK Aid Match

- UK Aid Match brings charities, the British public and the UK government together to collectively change the lives of some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.
- It is designed to provide opportunities for the UK public to engage with international development issues and have a say in how UK aid is spent, whilst boosting the impact of the very best civil society projects to reach the poorest people in developing countries.
- For every £1 donated to a UK Aid Match campaign the government will also contribute £1 of UK aid, to help these projects go further in changing and saving lives. UK Aid Match is funded from the international development budget, for donations made by individuals living in the UK.

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