

A young child with dark skin and short hair is smiling broadly, showing their teeth. They are holding a bright red plastic cup with both hands. The child is wearing a light-colored, possibly beige or cream, long-sleeved shirt with some faint pink and blue markings. The background is a warm, out-of-focus orange-brown color.

mary's  
meals

a simple solution  
to world hunger

# Mary's Meals

An introduction to our life-changing work

Mary's Meals is a global movement that sets up school feeding projects in some of the world's poorest communities, where poverty and hunger prevent children from gaining an education. Our idea is a simple one that works. We provide 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.

Our vision 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 who lack even the most basic things. We believe that in this world of plenty, where there is enough food for everyone, this bold vision can be realised.

Our mission is to enable people to offer their money, goods, skills, time, or prayer, and through this involvement, provide the most effective help to those suffering the effects of extreme poverty in the world's poorest communities.

Our values are:

- We have confidence in the innate goodness of people.
- We respect the dignity of every human being and family life.
- We believe in the good stewardship of the resources entrusted to us.



## Our origins



Mary's Meals was founded by Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow from the village of Dalmally Argyll in Scotland.

Magnus first became involved in international aid during the Bosnian War in the early 1990s, when he and his family appealed to friends and neighbours for donations of food, medicine and blankets to help those suffering as a result of the conflict. What started out as a one-off delivery of aid grew into an international charity.

In 2002, Magnus visited Malawi during a famine and met a mother-of-six who was dying of AIDS. When he asked her eldest son Edward about his hopes for the future, Edward replied simply: "I want to have enough food to eat and to go to school one day."

In response to Edward's modest ambition, we began providing school meals to around 200 children in Malawi. Since then, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of supporters around the world, our school feeding programme has expanded significantly.

The family shed, used to store donations for Magnus' first aid deliveries, still serves as the global headquarters of Mary's Meals – and his office as Global Chief Executive – to this day.

## Mary's Meals today

Today, 64 million children miss school because of poverty. Instead of sitting in a classroom, they are working in fields, begging on street corners, or scavenging among the garbage just to survive. Millions more attend school so hungry that they are not able to concentrate and learn.

Under-nourished children lack the energy needed to participate fully in lessons, fail to progress through the grades and are often required to repeat years.



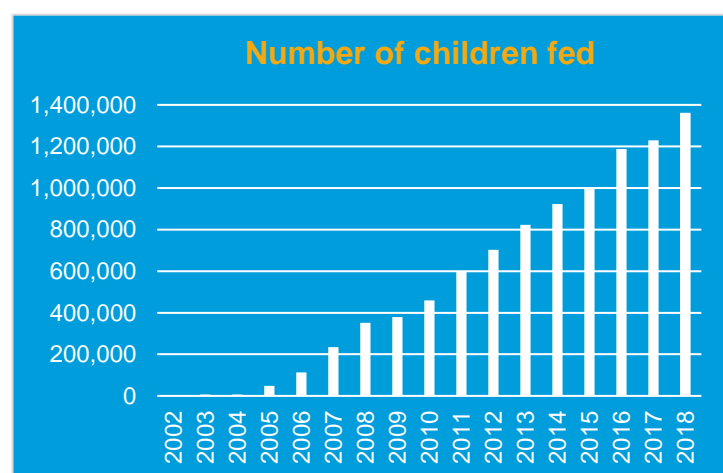
# An introduction to our life-changing work

Mary's Meals is now serving life-changing school meals to **1,504,471** hungry children at **2,358** places of education in **18** countries: Benin, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Myanmar, Romania, South Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

We are determined to keep our promise of a nutritious daily meal in school to those children already enrolled in our school feeding programme and – as funds allow – reach out to the next hungry child waiting for Mary's Meals.



Mary's Meals is a grassroots global movement – an intrinsic part of our work is to involve as many people as possible, recognising that each of us has a unique part to play in this mission. We work extremely hard to keep our running costs low and to ensure that at least 93% of donations are spent on our charitable activities.



Our global cost to feed a child for an entire year is budgeted at only £13.90, which demonstrates the efficiency of our high impact, low cost delivery model.

Since 2012, the number of children being supported by our programmes has grown by an average of 12% each year.

We hope to maintain this growth and be reaching 2 million children by the end of 2020.

We believe that this is possible.

## Where we work

Mary's Meals has a deep resolve to reach some of the world's most vulnerable children. While there are contextual difficulties to overcome in many of the countries in which Mary's Meals operates, we remain committed to supporting children living in particularly challenging, unstable and food-deficient contexts – often during conflict or post-conflict – where we can do so safely and effectively.

Our work is strongly focused on education. All our programmes provide children with one free daily meal in their place of education, contributing to their daily nutritional needs, alleviating immediate hunger, and supporting children's education. In each school, trained volunteers from the local community take responsibility for the daily management and delivery of the feeding programme, as they believe so passionately in its importance for their children.

This approach promotes the inclusion of the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalised children and helps foster a spirit of community within the school.

Number of children in each country		
Country	Number of children	Places of education
Benin	2,511	4
Ecuador	306	1
Ethiopia	16,068	24
Haiti	52,427	169
India	26,241	67
Kenya	47,442	211
Liberia	120,621	496
Lebanon	1,515	3
Madagascar	295	4
Malawi	1,028,817	984
Myanmar	728	10
Romania	17	1
South Sudan	36,035	55
Syria	4,268	13
Thailand	233	4
Uganda	9,320	11
Zambia	134,956	251
Zimbabwe	22,671	50
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,504,471</b>	<b>2,358</b>

## Veronica's story

"My name is Veronica, but my friends call me Vero, and I think of Mary's Meals supporters as my friends because they are part of my story.

I was one of the first children to receive Mary's Meals at school in Malawi and I am delighted to say that I have just graduated from university with a BEd in Business Studies!

My parents died when I was young. Growing up without my mum and dad was very hard. I would go to sleep without supper and, in the morning, get up and go to school on an empty stomach.

Eating Mary's Meals at school helped me concentrate and listen to my teachers. I worked very hard and was so happy to be one of the few people chosen to go to public university in Malawi. It felt great to get my graduation papers!

I'm a little nervous when I think about the future but I'm proud of what I have achieved and hopeful for what is to come.

I would like to thank you and ask you to keep helping Mary's Meals so that they can help other children around the world to have the chance of a better life and fulfil their dreams like I did."



## Our approach to school feeding programmes

The success of Mary's Meals' school feeding programme is largely dependent on our effective delivery model. We pride ourselves on providing consistent, high-quality school feeding programmes, ensuring that each child safely receives the correct meal every school day, and is respected, listened to, and protected.

Equal, long-term partnership between communities, schools and Mary's Meals is at the heart of our model. These trusting, long-term relationships provide the essential basis that underpins our work.

### Our model includes the following key principles:

- We work with poor and vulnerable children, providing every child with a daily meal in their place of education
- We work with communities and schools as equal partners in the delivery of our programmes
- We provide consistent, high-quality school feeding programmes
- Our programmes are low cost and offer value for money
- We buy locally grown food where possible and seek to minimise the environmental impact of our programmes
- We make a long-term commitment in the countries where we work, working with governments to support sustainable school feeding programmes
- We are committed to learning and improvement.

Local communities own and run Mary's Meals. Before we begin to implement a school feeding project, we work with the school and community to ensure that they can commit to supporting it. We encourage the establishment of a school feeding committee – made up of parents, teachers and volunteers – which is responsible for managing the project, resolving any issues that arise, and promoting school feeding within the community.

Mary's Meals staff and partners provide schools and volunteers with resources, monitoring, support and training on a range of topics, including safe serving, hygiene, stock management and inclusion, to ensure they have the skills and knowledge they need to provide the meals, for example.

Worldwide, thousands of community volunteers provide resources and commit their time to organise, prepare, and serve our meals because they believe so strongly in the importance of school feeding. By taking this time to work directly with communities, we help to strengthen community ownership, build capacity for sustainable local delivery of the project in future, and increase understanding about the role and importance of education.



## Making a life-changing impact among impoverished children

By directly addressing classroom hunger, Mary's Meals is giving impoverished children the chance of a brighter future. Our programmes meet the immediate needs of the hungry child whilst also tackling the underlying cause of their poverty by enabling them to go to school and receive an education, unlocking better health and job prospects and breaking the cycle of poverty.



Our school feeding programme provides a social safety net for communities affected by chronic hunger. Families can send their children to school, safe in the knowledge that they will receive something to eat there.

Since her mother passed away, 13-year-old Theresa, pictured right, has lived with her aunt in Neno, southern Malawi

She said: "My life would be very difficult without Mary's Meals. There are so many days when I come to school hungry. Phala [porridge] gives me strength and makes me full."

"I like school because I want to learn and be able to work someday. My favourite subject are Maths, English and Chichewa."

Theresa's aunt Egrina added: "Theresa looks much better since getting porridge at school. Teachers are saying she's doing very well. Mary's Meals helps the children to be strong and healthy so they can learn properly in class."

## Measuring our impact

Mary's Meals is conducting long-term impact assessments on our school feeding programmes in Malawi, Zambia and Liberia. Our research compares the experiences of children in schools with Mary's Meals, with schools where we are not yet providing meals.

The results are based on a total of more than 12,000 surveys with children, teachers, parents, guardians, and volunteers across all three countries, over several years.

Our findings have been externally verified and the final year of research is being carried out in all three countries this year.



As well as telling us a lot about the specific impact of school feeding in each country, we are delighted that our results across all three programmes demonstrate that:

- Children have more energy after eating Mary's Meals.
- Enrolment increases in schools where Mary's Meals provides school meals (see Figure 1 below on the left).<sup>1</sup>
- Surrounding communities report fewer children being out of school.
- Children's attendance improves in schools receiving Mary's Meals.
- Children in schools receiving Mary's Meals find it easier to participate in lessons.
- Children's performance in class improves in schools with Mary's Meals.
- Mary's Meals reduces children's hunger at school (see Figure 2 below on the right).<sup>2</sup>
- Fewer children drop out of school or repeat grades in schools with Mary's Meals.
- Children's happiness increases when their school begins serving Mary's Meals.



## Conclusion

We are humbled and heartened by the support we receive from people all over the world who refuse to accept that any child in this world of plenty should endure a day without a meal. As a result of the good deeds of our supporters, thousands of children, who would otherwise be working or begging for their next meal, are instead sitting in a classroom with a full stomach, learning how to read and write.

And we firmly believe that the children who are receiving Mary's Meals today can one day 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. We call them 'Generation Hope'.

Thank you for your interest in our life-changing work. For more information, please visit our website at [marysmeals.org](http://marysmeals.org).

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our work with you in greater detail and invite you to join our global movement by giving your support.



<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 – Impact research from Malawi, Zambia and Liberia found that school enrolment increased by 20% after one year of Mary's Meals.

<sup>2</sup> Figure 2 – Impact research from Malawi, Zambia and Liberia found that the proportion of children who said they were hungry 'Most days' or 'Always' fell by 71% after one year receiving Mary's Meals.