

Mary's Meals : A Simple Solution to World Hunger



About Mary's Meals

Now in its 24th year, [Mary's Meals](#) is a global movement that sets up school feeding programs in some of the world's most vulnerable communities, where conflict, poverty and hunger often prevent children from gaining an education. Mary's Meals works with local volunteers to provide one daily nutritious meal in a place of learning to attract children into the classroom to receive an education. This simple solution to help end world hunger also enables children to lift themselves from the cycle of hunger and poverty.

Mary's Meals began by feeding 200 children in Malawi in 2002. Today, the organization feeds more than 3 million children every school day in over 5,800 schools across the following countries: Benin, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Mary's Meals is part of the School Meals Coalition, an emerging initiative of governments and partners to drive actions that can urgently reestablish, improve, and scale up food and education systems. For more information about Mary's Meals, visit marysmealsusa.org.

Supporters can follow Mary's Meals USA on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Tagline: Mary's Meals: A Simple Solution to World Hunger.

Vision: That every child should be able to receive at least one nutritious meal every day in their place of education.

Mission: 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 Story

Since 1992, [Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow](#) had been collecting and delivering relief supplies from Scotland to Bosnia for a decade when a trip to Malawi became the spark for his life's work that ignited a global movement.

In Malawi in 2002, Magnus met Edward, one of six children, quietly surrounding their dying mother on an earthen floor. As Magnus spoke with Edward, his words became the catalyst for Mary's Meals.

"I asked him, 'What are your hopes, what is your ambition?' recounts Magnus. He said, 'I want to have enough food to eat, and I want to be able to go to school one day.' And that was it. That was all of his ambition at 14 years of age."

Adds Magnus, "And it was really his words that prompted the birth of Mary's Meals." By feeding children where they learn, they can gain an education that can help break the cycle of poverty.

Current Hunger and Education facts

- A World Bank Report shows that in 2025, an estimated [831 million people](#) were living in extreme poverty: less than \$3 per day.
- In 2025, the World Food Programme's State of Food & Nutrition Report estimates [638-720 million people](#) – about 8% of the global population - faced hunger.
- According to the 2025 UNESCO Report, [78 million primary-school-age children](#) and a total of 272 million children of all ages are out of school worldwide.
- The [2025 Global Report on Food Crises](#) estimates 37.7 million children in 26 countries/territories suffer from acute malnutrition.
- Africa has the world's youngest population, with over 40% of people in Sub-Saharan Africa under age 15 ([Statista](#)).
- According to UNESCO 2023 report, 98 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa are out of school ([UNESCO](#) 2023).
- In 2025, Mary's Meals [expanded](#) across Africa, reaching 450,000 more children with daily school meals. It now serves 2.7 million children every school day through [10 \(of 16\) programs](#) in sub-Saharan Africa.

Milestones

- Mary's Meals feeds 3 million children in over 5,800 schools across 16 countries.
- In 2025, Mary's Meals scaled its program in 8 countries to reach 462,000 more children.
- In February 2025, Magnus addressed world leaders at Pope Francis' Summit on Children's Rights at the Vatican, where he introduced the concept of a child's "[Right to Hope](#)."
- In fall 2024, Mary's Meals doubled its program to feed [110,000 children](#) in Tigray, Ethiopia.
- In 2023, Mary's Meals received Spain's prestigious [Princess of Asturias Award for Concord](#) for its work in defending and advancing human rights.
- [Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow](#) was honored as one of [CNN's Top Ten Heroes in 2010](#).
- In 2015, Time Magazine recognized Magnus as one of the [Top 100 Most Influential People](#).
- [Pope Francis](#) blessed the work of Mary's Meals and urges school feeding to continue.
- The charity is named after Mary, the mother of Jesus, and is a fruit of [Medjugorje](#).
- Magnus is the [best-selling author](#) of The Shed That Fed 2 Million Children and Give.
- Mary's Meals USA is one of 20 national affiliate countries supporting school feeding programs in 16 countries.
- Where possible, locally-sourced food, suppliers, and fuel is used to help the local economy.
- This simple, local-managed school feeding model is scalable and cost-effective. It costs just [\\$25.20](#) - .13 cents per meal - to feed a child for an entire school year.

Quick Links

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- Links to our [blogs](#) & stories & our [films](#) & books
- [Make a Difference](#)
- Mary's Meals USA [media center](#)

[To arrange interviews and media assets, please contact:](#)

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