

OUR IMPACT STORY

2025

mary's
meals

a simple solution
to world hunger



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INTRODUCTION

A word from our founder

Since 2002, Mary’s Meals has been committed to providing children with nutritious school meals in areas of great need, breaking down barriers to education and offering a potential pathway out of poverty.

Our simple yet transformative approach provides daily meals within places of education, encouraging children into the classroom and giving them energy to learn.

Today, we are humbled to be among the largest non-governmental organisation providers of school meals globally, delivering locally procured meals at scale to those children who are most vulnerable, while working alongside communities, governments, and partners to create lasting change.



Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow
Founder & CEO of Mary’s Meals

Right: Magnus meets a young learner called Desire and his mother Fatra, Malawi



GLOBAL CONTEXT

Hunger drivers

Food insecurity, child hunger, and malnutrition continue to be persistent and critical global challenges, particularly in areas where we work. Of the 118 million children who experienced hunger in 2025, it is estimated that more than half were in this situation because of conflict rather than environmental issues or economic pressures.¹ Extreme weather events deepened food insecurity across Africa and beyond, exacerbating challenges for children and communities already living in poverty and vulnerable to hunger. Mary's Meals school feeding programmes provided a vital lifeline and social safety net for children and their families, reaching some of those communities worst affected by acute food insecurity, drought, flooding, and rising food prices.

Opposite: Dzunga Primary School, Malawi
Bottom left: Child beside abandoned tank, Ethiopia
Bottom right: Damaged crops, Zambia



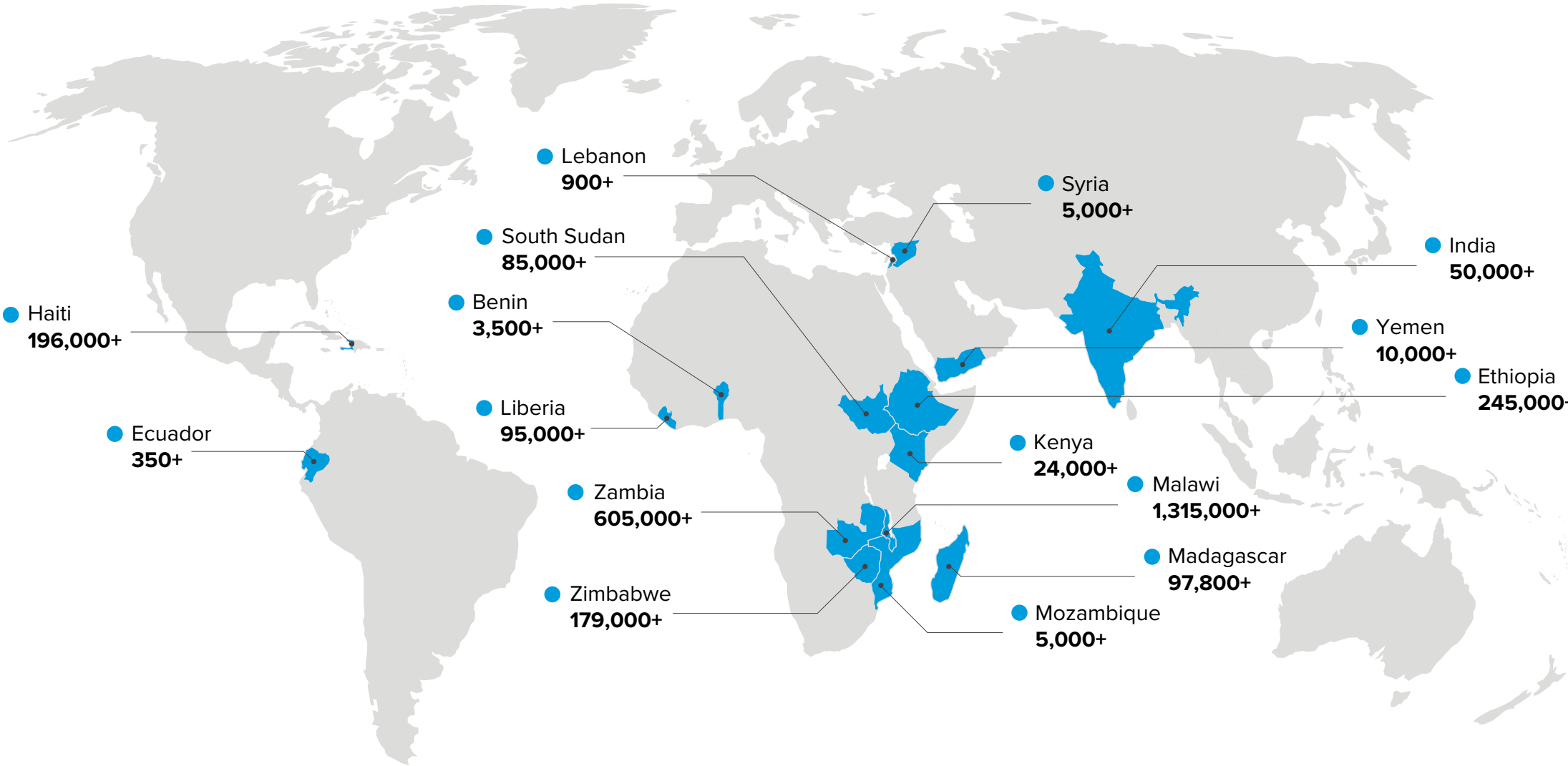
¹ Conflict Plunged 63 Million Children into Hunger in 2025 | Save the Children

WHERE WE WORK

Reaching those who need it most

During 2025, we worked alongside communities to provide consistent, nutritious meals to children in over 6,400 schools across 16 countries.

● CHILDREN SERVED BY COUNTRY



PROGRAMME METRICS

Key metrics to track keeping our promise in 2025

Despite working in challenging contexts, and through the generous support of our donors, the commitment of our staff and partners, and dedication of a huge network of volunteers in schools, we achieved:

91%
CONSISTENCY OF DELIVERY
We provided meals on 91% of school days.

400M+
MEALS SERVED
We served over 400,883,000 meals.

50:50
GENDER PARITY
Just over half (50.6%) of our meals were served to girls.



Reaching 3 million children

While working toward the significant milestone of reaching 3 million children, we successfully implemented ambitious expansion plans and had the largest year of growth in our programmes, adding more than 650,000 children in over 1,300 schools across Ethiopia, Haiti, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, South Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



* Percentage point change.

OUR IMPACT & EXPANSIONS

Tigray, Ethiopia: Expansion in a fragile setting



Child in Ethiopia enjoying their school meal

Left: Children playing in Haiti

In Tigray, Ethiopia, our school meals are playing a critical role in the rebuilding of the education system after years of brutal regional conflict. In this fragile context, the return to school has been slow, making school meals an especially important incentive for families to re-enrol their children.

In October 2025, our local partner Daughters of Charity – already serving more than 200,000 children across Tigray with nutritious meals every school day – expanded its programme to reach 11,500 additional children in over 35 schools. Parents shared that school feeding motivated them to send their children to school, and teachers noted that school meals contributed to a more peaceful classroom environment. The assurance of a daily meal made school more appealing for children, improving attendance and reducing absenteeism. In addition:

72%

HUNGER REDUCTION*

Before school feeding began, 72% of children felt hungry at school but once the children started receiving meals, this dropped to 0%.

68%

IMPROVEMENT IN ATTENDANCE*

Before meals were introduced, 68% of children reported leaving school early at least once per month because they were hungry, but after we started serving this dropped to 0%.

Children shared that the school feeding programme enabled them to shift from days shaped by hunger and irregular attendance to having consistent routines that support consistent learning, participation, and overall development.

OUR IMPACT & EXPANSIONS

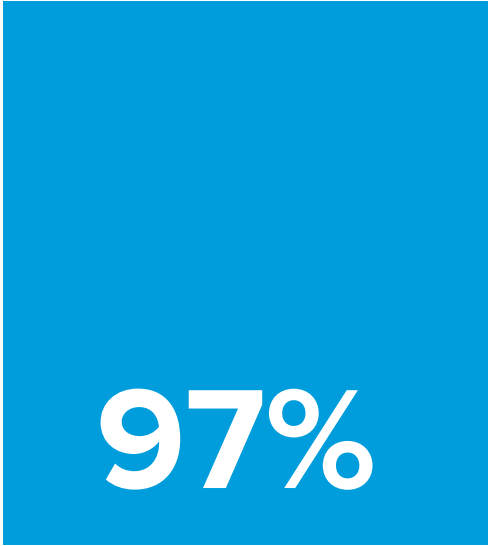
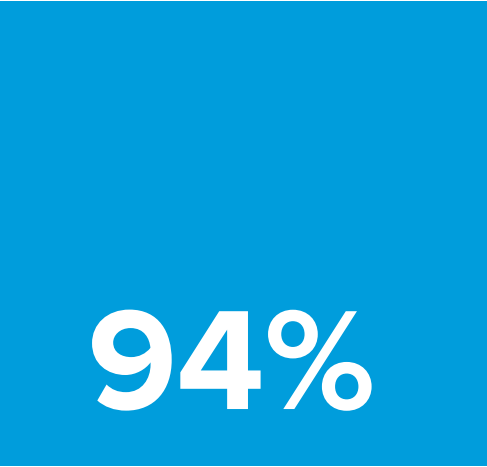
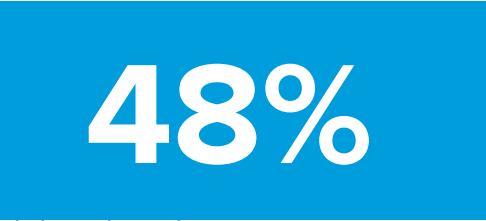
The impact of a daily meal in our programmes in 2025

In places of great need, we know that our community-led feeding programmes offer a simple yet powerful incentive for children to attend school, while reliable meals provide them with energy so they can concentrate, learn, and progress. This is demonstrated in the impact our work has on children and communities. Across our Malawi, Zambia, and Liberia programmes:

Before the meal, 40% of children reported that they can concentrate well in school. This increased to 94% after the meal was served.

Before the meal, teachers reported that only 12% of children were focused in the classroom. After the meal, this increased to 97%.

Hunger levels nearly halved, decreasing from 88% to 48%.



Right: A young girl enjoys her meal, Malawi

OUR IMPACT & EXPANSIONS

10 years of impact on education outcomes in Zambia



Left: A teacher in his classroom, Zambia

Mary’s Meals has been providing reliable school meals in Zambia’s Eastern Province for just over a decade and, during this time, there has been a transformation in the educational outcomes of children in the region.

22% INCREASE IN PROGRESSION*

Since the launch of our school feeding programme in Zambia, there has been a 22% increase in the percentage of children progressing from primary to secondary school.²

While this shift cannot be solely attributed to our meals, government officials, school administrators, and community members all note that Mary’s Meals has played a vital role in this improvement.

“Mary’s Meals and the Ministry of Education have a very good relationship and fantastic partnership. [In places of education] where we introduce school feeding, dropout rates reduce, and enrolment levels increase. Mary’s Meals is predominantly [serving children] in Eastern Province, and Eastern Province for a long time has been doing very well in terms of examination results. So, we are very, very grateful and happy with the support that we’ve been getting through the Mary’s Meals programme.”

– School Health and Nutrition Director at the Ministry of Education

Bottom: Community volunteers prepare school meals, Zambia



* Percentage point change.
² This study evaluates the impact of Mary’s Meals Zambia’s (MMZ) school feeding programme on learner pass rates and progression rates in Eastern Province in Zambia. Using secondary data, the analysis compares trends before and after the start of the school feeding programme’s implementation over a 10-year period to assess its influence on educational outcomes.

OUR IMPACT & EXPANSIONS

Transitioning programme ownership

We believe governments and communities are the rightful owners of school feeding, and our model empowers longer-term transition. In 2025, we conducted a post-exit study in schools where we noted high community capacity to take on the school feeding implementation. This helped us to understand, identify, and learn how the Mary’s Meals model enables continuation of school feeding post-exit. Our research highlighted that our approach helped enable continuation of school meals via:

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

We found that schools continued to rely on the same volunteers, School Feeding Committee model, and volunteer contributions towards the running of the programme.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

In some schools, parents agreed to contribute towards a school-led feeding programme, which allowed a key principle of Mary’s Meals’ model – that every child in the school will receive a meal – to be maintained by school stakeholders.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL ITEMS

The infrastructure, structures, equipment (e.g. cooking equipment) established by Mary’s Meals continued to be used to support the school-led programme following Mary’s Meals’ exit.

GENERATING AND MOBILISING RESOURCES

Schools shared how they developed a ‘cost per child’ budget post Mary’s Meals’ exit, with some schools mobilising donations from international networks to provide food for all children.

Change in implementation in Turkana, Kenya

With the Kenyan national government taking on the commitment to school feeding in primary schools in Turkana County, and an increased involvement of the Turkana County Government in providing meals in Early Childhood Education Centres, Mary’s Meals undertook a review of its approach to implementation in Kenya. In line with our aim to maximise local capacity and community empowerment, we ended our direct delivery of school feeding in Turkana, Kenya, redirecting resources to invest in our existing

local partner as the sole implementer of Mary’s Meals in schools of high need across the county. This change localised delivery of our programme, while encouraging our partner to strengthen its capacity to reach more children of highest need.



OUR IMPACT & EXPANSIONS

Our contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Mary’s Meals’ school feeding programme contributes directly to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). By addressing children’s hunger through the provision of daily school meals (SDG 2), we help to break down barriers to accessing education as well as improving attendance, participation, and learning outcomes (SDG 4). Our meals help to boost children’s health and happiness (SDG 3) and encourage girls to engage in education (SDG 5).

Mary’s Meals also contributes indirectly to SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Research shows that our daily meals can reduce financial pressure on families by enabling households to redirect

resources, which can potentially ease the effects of poverty (SDG 1). Our school feeding programme creates jobs and invests in local economies (SDG 8), while helping to reduce inequalities by reaching the most vulnerable children (SDG 10).

How we do this work is also important. Our unique approach is powered by strong collaboration with governments, partners, and the communities we serve – partnerships that make our work possible and reflect our commitment to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Through our collaborative model, we support the positive development of local food systems, advancing SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

1

NO POVERTY

2

ZERO HUNGER

3

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4

QUALITY EDUCATION

5

GENDER EQUALITY

8

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

10

REDUCED INEQUALITIES

12

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

13

CLIMATE ACTION

17

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



INTRO TO KEY THEMES

The power of school meals

Our school feeding programmes do more than simply provide food. Locally procured school meals delivered at scale provide an integrated approach to improving outcomes for children, their families, and communities. School meal programmes are recognised as one of the most cost-effective interventions available, addressing immediate hunger while strengthening educational outcomes, improving health, and contributing to broader social equity and long-term economic development through strong partnerships.³

At a global level, our work seeks to contribute to more than half of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.⁴ Every school day, beyond the mugs and bowls that we fill, by reliably serving a daily meal in a place of education, our programmes directly benefit children’s education and wellbeing; provide a social safety net for families and households; and support community social cohesion and system strengthening.



EDUCATION
We improve children’s access to quality education and learning by reducing hunger-related barriers to participation and supporting attendance, concentration, and learning outcomes.



SOCIAL SAFETY NET
We provide a vital social safety net, protecting vulnerable children and families from food insecurity and economic shocks through the stability offered by a daily school meal.



HEALTH & WELLBEING
We enhance children’s health and wellbeing by ensuring reliable access to nutritious food that supports growth, energy, and overall development.



SOCIAL COHESION
We strengthen social cohesion by fostering trust, collaboration, and shared responsibility within schools and communities engaged in delivering the programme.



SYSTEM STRENGTHENING
We contribute to system strengthening by building sustainable, multi-sectoral capacity across education, agriculture, health, and social protection systems to facilitate long-term development.

³ Why School Meals | School Meals Coalition
⁴ For a breakdown of how Mary’s Meals contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals, see p11 of this report.

KEY THEMES

Education

From our 2025 research, we strengthened our evidence that school meals improve children’s educational outcomes by increasing readiness to learn through reducing worry about hunger and lowering hunger levels in the classroom. Our meals support daily attendance and reduce early departures caused by hunger, while improving energy, concentration, and engagement.

We also found that school meals contribute to improved academic achievement by supporting higher pass rates, decreasing dropouts, and improving progression to higher educational levels.

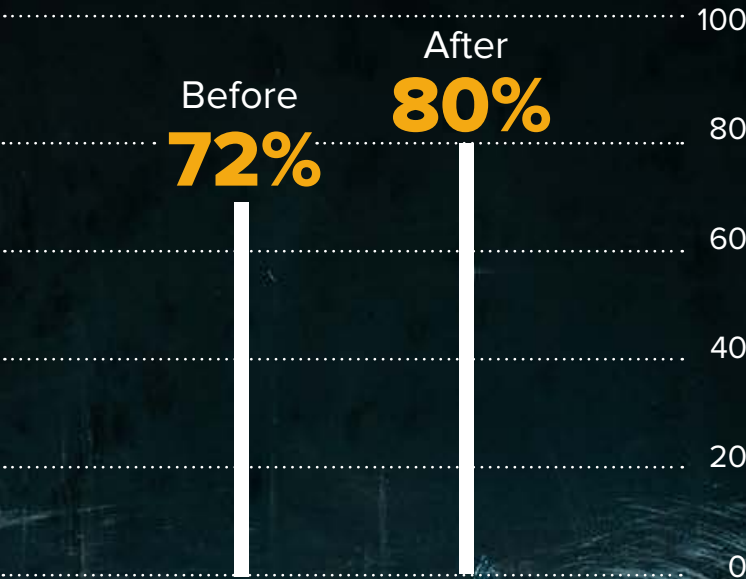
In South Sudan, teachers shared that students stay longer, participate more, and concentrate better after receiving meals, with teachers noting improvements in engagement and attendance: “the meals help learners stay longer in class and participate very well.”⁵

22%
DECREASE*
in children reporting that they left school early because of hunger after the introduction of the school feeding programme.⁶

44%
INCREASE*
reported by teachers in energy levels of children in class after they started receiving our meals.⁷

REDUCED DROPOUT
In Madagascar, children are more than twice as likely to drop out of school when there is no school feeding programme in place.⁸

The average pass rate across schools where children now receive our meals in Malawi increased from **72%** before the school feeding programme to **80%** after its introduction.⁹



* Percentage point change.
⁵ 2025 impact study results from our expansion with Mary Help Association (MHA), our partner in South Sudan.
⁶ Across our programmes in Ethiopia, Haiti, Malawi, South Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
⁷ Across out programmes in Ethiopia, Haiti, South Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
⁸ This study examines the impact of Mary's Meals' school feeding programme on academic performance in schools in Madagascar. Using secondary data and a control group, it compares schools with our school feeding programme with schools without school feeding over the same reporting period.
⁹ This study examines the impact of the school feeding programme in Malawi comparing the same group of schools 10 years before and 10 years after the introduction of the programme covering a 20-year period.

EDUCATION CASE STUDY

Unlocking academic potential for children in Zimbabwe

Gugulethu is 10 years old and lives with her grandparents, uncle, and two sisters in Zimbabwe. Her parents migrated to South Africa four years ago, so Gugulethu and her siblings depend largely on the care and limited resources of their elderly guardians.

Before the introduction of daily meals at Gugulethu’s school, hunger frequently kept her at home. “I didn’t come to school every day because we didn’t have food in the morning,” she says. “I would only go to school three days a week. My grandmother would tell us to stay at home because she was worried we would fall asleep in class.”



Bottom left: Gugulethu at school, Zimbabwe
Top right: Gugulethu with classmates, Zimbabwe



Without breakfast, it was difficult for her to concentrate and absenteeism became routine. Each missed lesson caused her to fall behind in her learning and Gugulethu’s performance at school declined.

Access to a consistent school meal is helping to change Gugulethu’s story. The daily meal not only provides essential calories but academic stability – improving her attentiveness, participation, and knowledge retention.

“I come to school every day now because I know I will have something to eat,” she explains. “I can listen to my teacher and concentrate because my tummy isn’t rumbling.”

The impact on Gugulethu’s academic performance has been significant. Regular attendance is helping to strengthen her literacy and improve her grades – she now ranks first in her class.

“When I used to miss school, I would fall behind and my grades went down,” she says. “That doesn’t happen anymore. I want to become a teacher, and going to school will help me achieve that dream.”

In a family struggling to overcome uncertainty and poverty, daily meals not only alleviate Gugulethu’s immediate hunger – they are helping Gugulethu to unlock her potential and build strong foundations for a positive academic future.

KEY THEMES

Social safety net

During our 2025 studies in Ethiopia, Haiti, Malawi, Zambia, Liberia, Yemen, and Zimbabwe, parents consistently reported that children return home less hungry, lowering food consumption and easing household expenditure. Although savings remain modest, especially during inflation, parents shared that the school meals programme acts as a buffer from economic instability, climate shocks, and temporary periods of food insecurity.



ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, families shared that the programme improves household efficiency by reducing meal preparation, allowing parents to focus on work and childcare.



MALAWI & ZAMBIA

Parents in Malawi and Zambia note reduced food needs at home and the ability to reallocate money to other essentials such as school supplies, soap, and healthcare.



LIBERIA

In Liberia, parents describe cooking fewer cups of rice because children return home from school less hungry.



YEMEN

In Yemen, the meal is viewed as a nutritional safety net and remains critical amid economic hardship and prolonged educational disruption.



ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe, children shared that the school meal is crucial in supplementing their diet. It often serves as the most reliable or nutritious meal of the day, easing some of the burden on food-insecure households.

Before

After



In Haiti, prior to the school feeding programme, 61% of children reported not having enough food to eat at home in the past week. After meals were introduced, this dropped to 50%.

SOCIAL SAFETY NET CASE STUDY

A social safety net for Ethiopia’s most vulnerable families

In Tigray, Ethiopia, the scars of war are not only visible on the region’s rugged landscapes, but also on its survivors. Kidan, a mother of three children, was widowed during the conflict that broke out in 2020, which also meant the family lost their main provider.

Since her husband’s death, Kidan has faced an uphill battle. Without a home of her own, she and her children live with her mother-in-law, trying to rebuild their lives while overcoming the physical and psychological burden of poverty and hunger.

“After my husband died, I struggled to provide for my children. We had days when there was no food at home,”

she says. “For a mother like me, the situation was desperate. We were forced to send my older daughter to work or sell items just to get money for food. But our economic situation remains fragile and the struggle is constant.”

Kidan’s three children attend the local primary school where they receive a reliable daily meal. This reduces the financial pressure on Kidan and allows her meagre earnings to stretch that little bit further.

“By guaranteeing a meal every day for [my children], the programme protects me from the fear of rising grain prices and the uncertainty of my modest

income,” she says. “I can now save what would have been their breakfast and serve it for lunch or dinner.”

Kidan’s story is a testament to how school meals can act as a safety net for vulnerable families, helping a single mother to rebuild her livelihood while ensuring her children are healthy, happy, and educated.



Top left: Kidan at home, Ethiopia
Top right: Kidan’s children, Ethiopia
Bottom: A tank in a rural landscape, Ethiopia

KEY THEMES

Health & wellbeing

Consistent school meals significantly improve children’s health by reducing hunger, boosting energy, and reducing illness. Children across our programmes report increased happiness and better ability to learn and play. Parents and teachers observe children being healthier, more energetic, and less likely to miss school because of sickness. In turn, household stress is reduced, as parents worry less about hunger, malnutrition, and fluctuating food availability, leading to greater wellbeing and some relief from financial and emotional pressure.

REDUCED ILLNESS

In Zambia, parents reported a reduction in children having common illnesses like colds and coughs during the school year.

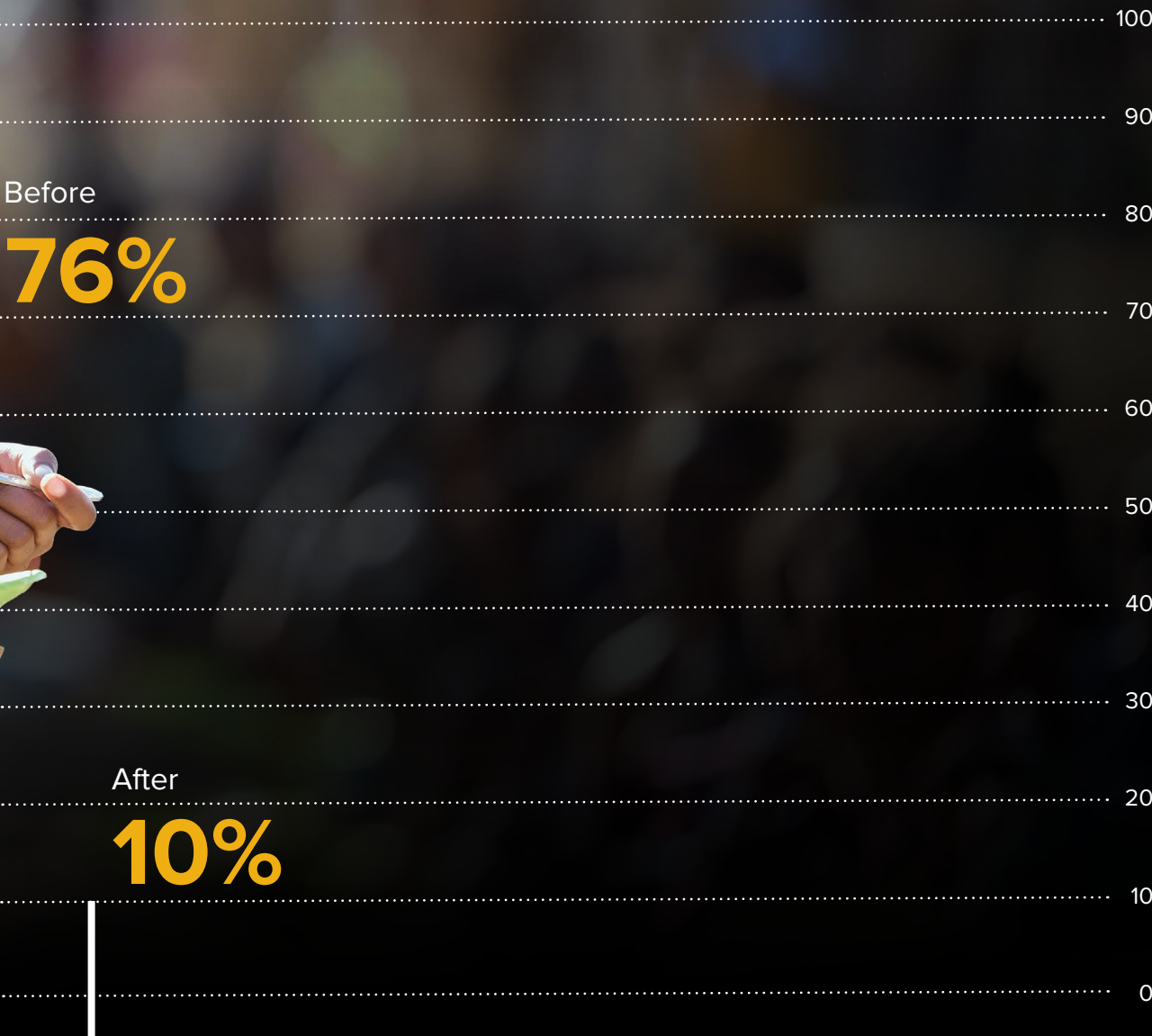
BETTER HEALTH

In Ethiopia, parents shared that the school feeding programme improved health and wellbeing by ensuring children receive nutritious meals, reducing stress and intra-household conflict.

IMPROVED HAPPINESS

92% of children reported being happy, with the school meal and the opportunity to learn identified as the main contributors to their happiness.¹¹

Children reporting that they worry about hunger at school dropped by 66%* once they started receiving meals.¹⁰



* Percentage point change.
¹⁰ Across our expansions in Ethiopia, Haiti, Madagascar, Malawi, South Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
¹¹ Across our programmes in Liberia, Malawi, and Zambia.

HEALTH & WELLBEING CASE STUDY

Daily school meals are improving children’s health in Malawi

Bottom left: Tawina in the classroom, Malawi
Bottom right: Tawina and her family, Malawi
Opposite: Hard at work, Malawi



In Malawi, 13-year-old Tawina lives in a family of four. Her parents rely on subsistence farming, and the family faces hunger during the dry season when food shortages are common.

“At home sometimes we only eat once a day and we have nothing to eat in the morning before we go to school,” she explains.

Before the introduction of daily school meals, Tawina’s health was fragile. Her diet lacked essential nutrients, and persistent hunger often left her weak and disengaged. She frequently experienced stomach pain caused by hunger and missed school because she was too weak to walk the long distance.

“I used to feel very hungry in class and I could not listen properly to the teacher,” she says. “I felt sick all the time.”

Receiving daily school meals has played an important role in Tawina’s improved physical health and wellbeing. Consistent nutrition has improved her energy levels and helped her put on weight.

“When I eat at school, I have strength and energy that allows me to play with my sibling, and I can learn better,” she says. “I don’t feel weak or complain of stomach pains anymore.”

The benefits of school feeding also extend to Tawina’s mental and emotional health. She reports increased happiness, confidence, and motivation. Her concentration and academic performance have also improved, and she interacts more positively with her classmates.

“I am happy to go to school now because I know the cup of porridge will give me enough strength to get through the day,” she explains.

Daily school meals are supporting Tawina to grow up healthy and giving her the opportunity to receive an education, which is having a positive effect on the whole family.

KEY THEMES

Social cohesion

Our research across Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, Yemen, and Zambia in 2025 expanded our understanding that our school feeding programme strengthens social cohesion at community level by creating opportunities for parents and teachers to work together and collaborate on decision-making. Parents also reported stronger peer connections brought about by teamwork and shared responsibility, enhancing social cohesion through joint activities and encouraging collective support for education.

At school level, meals bring children together regardless of background, ethnicity, religion, or socio-economic status. By eating the same meal together, social barriers are reduced and children feel an increased sense of belonging.



MALAWI

In Malawi, parents shared that, because of the school feeding programme, there were stronger ties, improved communication, and joint participation in cooking and community meetings.



ZAMBIA

In Zambia, parents reported increased participation, greater interest in school affairs, and more frequent interaction at school because of parents' involvement in the programme.



LIBERIA

In Liberia, parents and caregivers confirmed that community motivation for schooling increased because of spending more time at the school in delivering the school meals.



YEMEN

In Yemen, the meal was viewed as a social anchor as shared meals strengthened peer relationships, contributing to calmer, more peaceful classrooms.

In Ethiopia, before the school feeding programme, only 12% of students played with friends at school every day. After meals were introduced, this increased to 58%.

Before



12%

After



58%

SOCIAL COHESION CASE STUDY

Strengthening social connections between Yemen’s children



Left: Mr Yasser, school supervisor, Yemen
Opposite: Thumbs up for Mary's Meals, Yemen



Mr Yasser works as a school supervisor at Idris Hanbalah School in Aden, Yemen. He has seen first-hand how hunger can prevent children growing up in vulnerable households from building friendships and creating social bonds.

Prior to the introduction of daily school meals, the children would often be withdrawn and isolated during their break time due to hunger.

“Before the meals, the children simply did not have the energy to play,” Mr Yasser says. “They would sit exhausted and the schoolyard was often a very quiet place. When they did interact, the frustration of hunger often led to arguments. There was very little teamwork or laughter because they were simply trying to survive the day.”

Mary’s Meals has been an essential step in the transformation Mr Yasser now sees at the school. After eating the meal, the

children pour into the schoolyard with a renewed sense of motivation and energy.

“The change is visible the moment the bell rings,” he says. “Once their hunger is satisfied, their energy returns. They rush to the yard to play sport. The meal fuels their play and play builds their friendships. They learn to collaborate and trust each other, and they aren’t burdened by hunger or divided by who has food and who doesn’t. They are free to laugh, play, and make friends. It allows them to just be children.”

In a community shaped by hardship, the schoolyard has become a thriving example of strengthening social cohesion and collaboration – something that Mr Yasser believes is essential for the children to be able to develop socially and build lifelong friendships.

KEY THEMES

System strengthening

In 2025, as part of our commitment to strengthening local food systems, we delivered over 28,600 metric tonnes of locally procured food for our school meals globally.

One example of work to strengthen local food systems is our commitment to supporting smallholder farmers in Zambia through our partnership with COMACO.¹² Mary’s Meals Zambia (MMZ) has a long-standing partnership with COMACO, a supplier that supports conservation and works with cooperatives made up of smallholder farmers in Zambia.

By sourcing maize and soya beans for our school meals from cooperatives practising conservation farming, our Zambia programme boosts local production capacity, farmer incomes, and gender-inclusive leadership. COMACO’s traceability systems and continuous farmer training further enhance supply chain reliability and sustainable agriculture in Zambia. Together, this reinforces Mary’s Meals’

contribution to sustainable, multisectoral development across agriculture and education, enhancing livelihoods and community resilience.

The ingredients used for the meal served in Mary’s Meals’ Zambia programme were supplied by over 22,000 smallholder farmers, and more than half of them were women. These smallholder farmers belonged to 16 cooperatives, nine of which were headed by females.

As part of the partnership, all the smallholder farmers that contributed to our school meals received training in conservation farming, including soil fertility improvement, land preparation and post-harvest handling, as well as cooperative governance and leadership development training.

GLOBALLY WE DELIVERED
28,600 MT
OF LOCALLY PROCURED FOOD



¹² This study focused on mapping cooperative participation, production volumes, traceability, socio-economic contributions, and capacity-building using COMACO data covering a 6-month period from January to June 2025.

SYSTEM STRENGTHENING CASE STUDY

School feeding strengthens sustainable development of farming communities in rural Zambia

In Zambia, our partnership with food supplier COMACO is strengthening sustainable, collaborative development in rural communities by supporting smallholder farmers to grow and sell their crops for school meals.

The meal we serve to children in Zambia is a vitamin-enriched corn and soya blend porridge, known as CSB+. Longstanding Mary’s Meals supplier COMACO sources the raw ingredients to make CSB+ from local farmers, working with more than 350,000 smallholder producers in Zambia’s Eastern Province. These farmers grow modest quantities of maize and soy, using most of their harvest to feed their families before selling any surplus at a guaranteed market rate to COMACO.

“Once we receive orders for Mary’s Meals, we make the CSB+ and take it back into the communities,” says Smith Kapeya, Chipata Hub Manager at COMACO. “So, the same small-scale farmers who are producing what COMACO is [using], their children are also benefiting through Mary’s Meals’ feeding programme. Whatever proceeds we get through the sale of CSB+ to Mary’s Meals are also actually helping promote conservation in our rural communities.”

To manage the logistical challenge of collecting small amounts of crops from widely dispersed producers, COMACO organises farmers into cooperatives where they receive

training in sustainable agriculture that helps to improve yields and protect the environment. Women hold around half of all leadership positions in these cooperatives, strengthening gender-inclusive participation in local agriculture.

For rural communities in Zambia, this integrated approach strengthens livelihoods, enhances long-term resilience, and supports sustainable development by linking outcomes in agriculture and education.

Bottom left: Tilling the ground, Zambia
Bottom right: Food preparation, Zambia



Right: Smith Kapeya,
Chipata Hub Manager
at COMACO

Looking ahead: feeding hope in 2026

In 2026, Mary’s Meals will focus on deepening the quality, reach, and influence of its school feeding work in line with the newly revised Strategic Plan. Our aim is to strengthen the consistency and impact of the meals we deliver each school day, while expanding responsibly to reach the most vulnerable children, and sharing our expertise more widely to support sustainable government-led school feeding systems.

KEEPING OUR PROMISE

We will strengthen programme quality and sustainability to ensure every child we serve receives a high-quality daily meal. Enhanced needs assessments, monitoring, and evaluation will support data-driven decisions and continuous improvement. We will continue to test and scale proven innovations and continue our commitment to reduce environmental impact and support safer meal preparation.

REACHING THE NEXT CHILD

With so much need globally, we are committed to ensuring we are reaching children in contexts of greatest need, where we can deliver high-quality implementation. Rolling needs assessments will inform targeting and maintain readiness to scale. At the same time, we will support structured transitions and exits where our role is no longer required, applying learning from recent approaches to ensure positive impacts and gains are sustained. We will remain agile and prepared for emergency response, rapid scaleup or responsible contraction when needed through contingency planning.

BROADENING OUR REACH

We will refine and strengthen government engagement to support policy uptake, institutionalisation of school feeding and long-term sustainability. This includes clearer objectives, tailored strategies and stronger partnership mechanisms at national and subnational levels. We will engage more deliberately in global forums and collaborate with civil society to share learning, influence system-level change and expand our indirect impact. Localisation and community ownership will remain central, with increased focus on strengthening community leadership, participation, and accountability.

Right: A girl smiles in class, India



GET INVOLVED

Together, we can keep the promise of a daily meal

There is enough food for everyone in this world, yet millions of children are still going hungry and being denied the chance to learn or build a future. Mary's Meals is a global movement of people with a shared mission: to provide a daily meal in a place of education for children living in some of the world's poorest communities.

To find out more about how you can get involved, visit www.marysmeals.org.

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Charity number: SC045223
Company number: SC488380

