



mary's
meals

a simple solution
to world hunger

Mary's Meals International

Annual report to Mary's Meals Spain

January - December 2018



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Contents

1. Executive summary
2. Strategic report
 - Feeding more children
 - Growing the global movement
 - Strengthening the organisation
3. Report on funding received during the year
4. Thank you

1. Executive summary

Mary's Meals International is pleased to present a report outlining the key developments made across the global movement throughout 2018.

It was another wonderful year for the global family. During the year, due to the ongoing commitment and dedication of thousands of supporters across the global family, we were able to:

- reach an additional 194,842 children with a nutritious school meal every day at school;
- expand into additional 2 programme countries: Madagascar and Zimbabwe
- welcome four national affiliates into the global network: Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic and France
- implement a new People Strategy and Learning and Development programme, including the Leadership Academy, management and leadership training and Programmes Academy
- Apply the findings of our first learning report to improve programme delivery.

At the end of 2018, Mary's Meals were being served to 1,425,013 children across 18 countries, supported by 15 national affiliates, over 80,000 volunteers and 511 staff.

We are delighted to be able to share the achievements made and milestones celebrated throughout 2018 and we greatly appreciate the contribution Mary's Meals Spain has made towards this.

In 2018 we retained focus on implementing the three primary aims of our 2018-2020 strategic plan, 'It's possible':

1. To feed more children in a place of education and help those suffering the effects of poverty in the world's poorest communities
2. To grow the global movement and enable more people to offer their money, goods, skills, time or prayer to advance the work of Mary's Meals
3. To strengthen the organisation and Mary's Meals global network in the furtherance of our vision, mission and values

This report details the significant progress we have made towards each of these aims.

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. During 2018, we were able to maintain our average growth rate of 15% per year. If we can maintain this rate of growth in the period of this strategic plan, we could be feeding two million children by 2020. We firmly believe this is possible!



2. Strategic report

Feeding more children

By the end of 2018 Mary's Meals was serving 1,425,013 impoverished children in 18 countries.

Number of children in each country		
Country	Number of children	Places of education
Benin	2,324	4
Ecuador	306	1
Ethiopia	8,024	12
Haiti	42,011	140
India	23,699	62
Kenya	37,710	139
Liberia	121,283	505
Lebanon	1,755	3
Madagascar	285	4
Malawi	1,010,984	984
Myanmar	728	10
Romania	17	1
South Sudan	24,413	45
Syria	2,962	9
Thailand	324	4
Uganda	10,438	11
Zambia	119,315	221
Zimbabwe	18,435	40
TOTALS	1,425,013	2,195

During 2018, Mary's Meals' global programmes grew by an amazing **194,842** children. In this time, we expanded our programmes to more children than ever before, responded to the crisis in South Sudan and delivered an emergency response for people affected by flooding in India. We were also excited to launch our feeding programmes in two new countries, bringing Mary's Meals to children in Madagascar and Zimbabwe.

[Zambia](#)



Our programme in Zambia, which began in 2014, doubled during 2018 with expansions in February, May and September. We are now reaching the majority of schools in the Mambwe and Chipata districts, providing a much-needed daily meal at school to 119,315 chronically hungry children.

With the steadfast support of our affiliate network, we are able to provide a nutritious meal every school day to children like Alfred, 14, (pictured left) who tells us of his aspirations: "I want to be a policeman when I finish school because I love the idea of working for the police. I come to school because I know I'll have a better future if I finish school."

Memory, 12, (pictured right) also told us of her hopes for the future: "I want to help others who are sick when I am older. I want to be a nurse. I come to school, so I can achieve my goals and help my family." According to our research, in Malawi and Zambia, 98% of teachers said children concentrate better in their classes since receiving Mary's Meals.



Malawi

In 2018, Mary's Meals successfully completed several expansions in Malawi, during March, April, May and September. During the year, we expanded into a further 144 schools and ECD's (Early Childhood Development Centres) in the Blantyre, Zomba, Neno, Mwanza and Chikwawa districts and reached an additional 76,117 children. We are now feeding more than one million children every school day in Malawi, representing 32% of the primary school population, which is a remarkable milestone. The programme continues to act as a social safety net for families living in extreme poverty and has come a long way from its humble beginnings, when we began feeding just 200 children in Malawi in 2002.

Community volunteers are crucial to the success of our programmes, not least in Malawi where more than 80,000 volunteers contribute to the daily running and management of the programme. Miriam Limbani, 41, looks after her younger sister's four children and has two grown-up sons of her own. Like many mothers in Malawi, Miriam (pictured right) depends on farming to survive. She owns a piece of land where she grows maize, ground nuts and pigeon peas.



Last year she harvested six bags of crops, which is not enough to see her family through the year. When their harvest runs out, Miriam has to take on piecework (casual labour) to earn money for food. During the lean season when supplies are running low, she eats just once a day so that the children don't have to go without meals.

Despite the grave situation at home, Miriam manages to remain upbeat. She has seen first-hand the difference daily school meals can make to children's lives.

As chair of the Mary's Meals feeding committee at Lirangwe Primary School, Miriam oversees volunteers from 15 villages to ensure the food is cooked and served to the children each day.

"The programme has encouraged many children to come to school," Miriam says. "Now they will learn with full bellies. Even if they don't eat at home, they know they will eat here. The children are healthy, and they are doing well in class. They are full of energy, and they don't fall asleep anymore."

Miriam understands the importance of education, particularly for young girls hoping for a future free from hunger.

"If there wasn't any porridge here, many children would get married early, especially the girls," she says. "School is important because it makes them literate, and it moulds the children's future."

In Malawi, the percentage of teachers reporting strong parental involvement in school activities increased from 57% to 70% after three years of serving Mary's Meals.

Ethiopia, Haiti, South Sudan and Myanmar

In February, we were able to reach an additional 6,216 in 9 schools in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. We have been working with our partner, Daughter of Charity Tigray, since October 2017 in this semi-arid and impoverished region.

In Haiti, we began a new partnership with Summits Education, feeding at 26 new schools in the Central Plateau region in March, welcoming a further 5,884 children into the Mary's Meals global family. Mary's Meals has been operating in Haiti since 2006, a country in which 24.9% of the population lives below the international poverty line of \$1.90 (PPP) a day.¹ Haiti is still recovering from natural disasters such as the 2010 earthquake and, more recently, Hurricane Matthew. A daily meal in a place of education offers the chance of a brighter future for some of the country's poorest children.

In June we took action to respond to the ongoing crisis in South Sudan. One in every three schools in South Sudan has been destroyed or forced to close since conflict began in 2013 and an estimated 2.2

¹ World Bank, *Poverty & Equity Data Portal: Haiti*, 2010. (<http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/HTI>)

million school-age children across the country are not attending school.² The generous response to Mary's Meals' South Sudan Crisis Campaign allowed us to reach children at a further five schools, meaning that we are now reaching a total of 24,443 children in 45 schools through our partner, the Diocese of Rumbek.

In June, we were also able to expand our programme in Myanmar, reaching an additional 254 children in the remote and impoverished rural Kayen state.

[Kenya](#)

Mary's Meals has been working in Kenya, since 2005, our programme is delivered directly to primary school children in Uasin Gishu county and Kisii county in western Kenya. We also work with our partner, Diocese of Lodwar, to provide school feeding in ECD's in Turkana, north-western Kenya.

Mary's Meals Kenya's own directly delivered programme in Turkana began in July 2018, welcoming an additional 3,419 children into the programme and expanding to a further 3,008 children in September.

Families in Turkana have considerable issues to overcome because of high levels of poverty, conflict, and harsh terrain. Increased incidence of drought and flooding is making nomadic-pastoralist livelihoods less viable. Schools are dispersed sparsely across the region and children in hard-to-reach areas often have no access to any form of education. In Turkana South, 12% of children under five now suffer from severe acute malnutrition.³

The meals provided through the Mary's Meals programme in Turkana are vital, with many of the children relying solely on Mary's Meals' food for their daily nutritional intake.

Children in Turkana receive a daily school meal consisting of maize and beans. For many children in the region, this is the only time they will eat in a day.

One of the highlights of the recent expansion in Turkana was the introduction of Mary's Meals to St Luke's early childhood development (ECD) centre, which had previously been closed for an entire year because of low enrolment. When the programme was introduced, after only two weeks of serving meals, 38 children were enrolled at the centre.

Samuel Eregae, Director of Early Childhood Development in the Turkana County Government recently told us: "Mary's Meals School Feeding Programme is very beneficial to the needy child of Turkana...From experience and being a beneficiary of a feeding programme myself, I can say the food is what brings children to school every day...The food in the school changed my life and I know it will change so many children's lives. Mary's Meals is indeed important, there is even a slogan of *no smoke no school* that proves how important the feeding programme is."

[India](#)

Also in July, we were able to expand our programme in India to a further six schools in Delhi, Bihar and Jharkhand to support an additional 2,191 children. In India, Mary's Meals is focused on including children who are disadvantaged by caste, disability, gender or HIV status. While primary education is compulsory in India, children from scheduled castes and tribes often find it difficult to access government schools. Mary's Meals operates in informal education centres, most of which are located in urban slums, which encourage children living in the slums to attend school regularly and have a safe place to learn and play.

In August, the state of Kerala in India experienced the worst flooding to hit the region in more than a century, which left hundreds of thousands of people homeless and in desperate need of immediate help. Once the flood waters receded, many people throughout the region returned from temporary camps to find their homes severely damaged and their crops and livestock devastated.

² UNICEF (2018). Global Initiative on Out of School Children: South Sudan Country Study.

³ Reliefweb <https://reliefweb.int/report/kenya/severe-malnutrition-rates-shoot-across-kenya-leaving-more-70000-children-risk-death>.



In the aftermath of the disaster, Mary's Meals worked with BREAD, our longstanding partner in India, and around 60 volunteers, to deliver essential food supplies and cooking equipment to families in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, Mary's Meals was able to distribute emergency food parcels containing rice to a total of 13,000 families in two villages – Kainakary and Nedumindi – in the flood-ravaged Alappuzha District, in the Kuttanad region of Kerala. Many roads were flooded, but volunteers

persevered and were able to deliver 25kg bags of rice to hungry households by truck and boat. Mary's Meals also distributed 2,000 cooking kits and 1,000 portable gas stoves to families that were identified by their communities as being most in need.

Father Joson, who leads BREAD in India, said: "The local people are very grateful for this bag of rice and essential cooking items from Mary's Meals. At this time of great need, the hope provided by Mary's Meals has made a massive difference to the lives of those people most affected by the flooding."

We were also able to expand our programme in Aleppo, Syria, to a further four schools reaching approximately 1,500 additional children in September. As a result of the country's ongoing conflict, many families struggle to find enough food. Mary's Meals allows families to send their children to school, where they can experience some normality and also learn, play and enjoy a meal.

[Liberia](#)

By the end of 2018, we were reaching 121,283 vulnerable children at 505 schools across five counties in Liberia. Our impact research in Liberia shows that absence rates are high at schools that are yet to be reached by Mary's Meals – 37% of parents said that hunger was the main reason for their children missing school and 38% of children said they often left school early because they were hungry. In contrast, at schools where children receive Mary's Meals, not a single parent or child gave hunger as the reason for missing class. The research in Liberia shows that – at schools where Mary's Meals are served – enrolment increased significantly within a year of introducing school feeding, and children, parents, and teachers said that children attend classes more regularly.

Through our work, we aim to increase local and national capacity to deliver school feeding and improve access to education. Our enduring partnership with the Government of Liberia at national and local levels ensures that our work is aligned with national development priorities.

Marthaline, who attends a village school a long way from the main road in Montserrado county, receives Mary's Meals. When she grows up she would like to be a doctor. She said: "There is no doctor in this community. It's a long way to be treated and get medicine. Once, when I got sick, they took me there. I had a pain in my head and my stomach. That's where I saw a doctor working. So, if I become a doctor, I will stay here to work, because the community needs it."



Marthaline lives with her grandmother, as her mother died during the outbreak of Ebola and her father is not around. Her grandmother had 13 children and more than 10 of her children and grandchildren live with her. Marthaline is president of her school's health club. The club encourages

good hygiene, amongst many other activities. The school principal told us that Marthaline lives for the health club. Mary's Meals makes life a little easier for Marthaline and her family and gives her the opportunity to work hard at school, which she is grabbing with both hands.

In neighbouring Benin, we welcomed a further 610 children into the Mary's Meals family in October 2018. We have been working in Benin since 2011 with our partner Soeurs de Marie Médaille Miraculeuse to provide a daily school meal to 2.324 hungry children.

[Reaching even more children – Madagascar and Zimbabwe](#)

In addition to expanding our programmes in existing countries, we were excited to launch Mary's Meals in two new countries, Madagascar and Zimbabwe. In Madagascar we are now reaching 285 children in prison with daily meals through our partner, Grandir Dignement, which provides education and vocational training. The children, as young as eight, are living in dire conditions and there is no consistent food provision. Mary's Meals programme is supporting some of the country's most vulnerable young people with vital nourishment and a chance to learn.

In Zimbabwe, with the help of volunteers from the local community, we are now feeding 18,435 vulnerable children at 40 schools in the impoverished Tsholotsho District of Zimbabwe. Once referred to as the 'breadbasket of Africa', years of violent upheaval, forced land distribution and drought have had a devastating impact on many farming families, leading to widespread hunger in parts of the country.

Magnus, said: "Every child welcomed into our Mary's Meals family gives cause for celebration and I am delighted that we are now reaching children in Zimbabwe for the first time. It is incredible to think that more than 1.4 million children in 18 countries now enjoy these meals, served with love, each day at school.

[Growing the global movement](#)

Throughout 2018, we continued to develop an infrastructure of support in areas such as fundraising and grassroots growth, governance, budgetary planning and communications. Within our National Affiliates, staff were appointed in Italy, Germany, the USA and the Czech Republic, and the Mary's Meals International Affiliate Development team was restructured to facilitate continued growth, relationship-building and engagement.

In summer 2018, Mary's Meals opened a new information centre in Medjugorje which provides information about the impact of world hunger and the simple solution offered by Mary's Meals.



We also welcomed four new National Affiliates to the growing Mary's Meals network. Mary's Meals Australia, Mary's Meals Belgium, Mary's Meals Czech Republic and Mary's Meals France all registered and signed the governing documents – the Covenant of Participation and Trade Mark Licence – and have been warmly welcomed into the family.



The 2018 Mary's Meals International Conference, held on 10 and 11 September, was entitled "Walking Together." We were delighted that the Mary's Meals Day in Glasgow, hosted by Mary's Meals UK, coincided with the conference this year.

The conference focused on the principles of the global Covenant of Participation, with interactive sessions to promote understanding, solidarity and cohesion across the Mary's Meals network. The first day focused on governance and building support in National Affiliates while the second featured presentations from our Programme Affiliates. The conference was the largest to date, with more than 60 representatives from National Affiliates, Programme Affiliates and Programme Partners attending.

We were also delighted to be able to continue to grow the global movement by introducing Mary's Meals to new audiences in 2018, including speaking at the Christ Our Life conference in the USA, Mladifest in Medjugorje and the Global Child Nutrition Forum in Tunisia, and building new relationships with a range of Foundations and major donors.

[Expanding our communications](#)

Communications are a key element of the growth of the global movement. The communications team launched two urgent campaigns in 2018 – one in response to the crisis situation in South Sudan, and another in response to the worst flooding for a century in Kerala, India. Both campaigns received strong support from across the Mary's Meals network and were highly effective in raising global awareness of the crises and raising much-needed funds. They also helped to bring life to the wider stories of the children receiving Mary's Meals around the world.

We recently completed a subtitling project so that our short film *Hunger to Hope* is available in ten different languages for use internationally. A new film based on Mary's Meals' presence at the annual Medjugorje Youth Festival was also produced during the year, specifically for use with young audiences. This year, Joyce and Vanessa (pictured right) who attend Jacaranda School for Orphans in Malawi took to the stage at the Festival.



In November 2018, Hollywood actor and Mary's Meals supporter Gerard Butler undertook a high profile visit to Haiti with Magnus. Working with a professional film company, the team were able to capture a large amount of high-quality film content. Two short films have been released from Gerard's visit: a film for Thanksgiving based on the meal he shared with the children in Haiti and another which captured some of the children who receive Mary's Meals performing a Nativity play for their classmates under his direction. We hope to be able to launch a new film documentary from the visit, during 2019.

Magnus' bestselling book, *The Shed That Fed A Million Children*, was published in French at the end of May. Opportunities to have the book published in Polish are still being explored and we are hopeful this may happen in 2019.

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Around the global network, Mary's Meals Spain undertook a trip to Malawi with celebrity chef Samantha Vallejo-Nágera, which featured in *OK Magazine Spain*, Mary's Meals Italy travelled to Zambia to film a documentary with TV2000, Mary's Meals Germany and Mary's Meals Austria each organised highly successful gala concert evenings, Mary's Meals USA organised a "Run Locally, Feed globally" Thanksgiving campaign and Mary's Meals UK launched its Double The Love campaign in December, with all donations made between December 2018 until March 2019 being doubled by the UK government.

[Strengthening the organisation](#)

[Mary's Meals Strategic Plan 2018-2020](#)

Throughout 2019 we continued to focus on our 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, and to work towards our strategic aims.

The plan sets out our strategic objectives and high-level milestones that will ensure we can continue to grow as we have in recent years and respond to new opportunities as they arise.

[Developing our people and systems](#)

Throughout 2018, Mary's Meals continued to build staff capacity and strengthen the growing global movement. The first group of 22 leaders attended and graduated from the inaugural Mary's Meals' Leadership Academy, launched in March. This collaborative training programme is offered to individuals throughout the global family, with graduations taking place in December 2018.

We made good progress with the global integrated constituent relationship management (CRM) system which will enable Mary's Meals to develop more sophisticated supporter relationships and improve administrative efficiency across the movement. The CRM system was launched in August 2018 for Mary's Meals International. We are working to roll-out the system to four affiliates during 2019 and will continue implementation across all affiliates in future years.

The programme operations team also began work on the school feeding delivery model project, aimed at refining some of the key systems, processes and tools involved in Mary's Meals' in-country programmes. This has included improving our monitoring evaluation and learning (MEL) database, which is used to capture core indicators such as school enrolment and attendance, and to improve our stock tracking processes. Dissemination and training on these improved processes is now complete and, since September 2018, staff have begun testing these tools, with very positive feedback.

Our programmes have proven to bring about positive changes in the lives of children and their communities. In 2018, we completed year three of our impact assessment data collection in Malawi and Zambia and year two of our data collection in Liberia. Our impact assessment is demonstrating a consistent reduction in hunger, increase in school enrolment, attendance and learning, and improved health and wellbeing.

[Risk and assurance](#)

During 2018, we continued to enhance and develop a programme on Internal Audit. The audits cover both financial controls and wider operational controls and form part of a 3-year programme of internal audits. In addition, we continue to enhance and improve security across our programmes, through security audits and continual review of policies and practice.

In addition, the Mary's Meals Global Data Protection policy was approved and implemented across the whole Mary's Meals Network during 2018. This new policy introduced a global standard for Marys' Meals, which is compliant with GDPR and other relevant legislation.

An audit of the global IT infrastructure was undertaken during 2018. The report was generally positive, and a number of improvements were recommended to further strengthen the network. A programme of enhancements is underway and we are working towards the organisation being accredited by Cyber Essentials, a recognised HM Government backed cyber security standard.

3. Report on funding received during the year

We continue to be grateful for the financial support of Mary's Meals Spain and confirm that the total amount of funding received during 2018 was €217,240. Funding was allocated to individual country programmes according to your direction. Information on the amounts received and their allocation is presented in Appendix A on page 10.

The number of children supported in each country is summarised in the table below. Calculations are based on global cost per child of €15.60. Your generosity allowed us to provide a nutritious meal every school day to more than 13,000 children living in some of the world's poorest communities.

Mary's Meals Spain	
Country programme	Number of children fed
India	413
Liberia	2,199
Malawi	7,752
South Sudan	386
Zambia	393
Global feeding*	2,783
TOTAL	13,926

4. Thank you

Throughout 2018, support for the global movement continued to grow. We celebrate the progress and developments of 2018 and continue to strive towards our vision of ensuring that every child receives a daily meal in their place of education.

We remain focused on our promise to feed each child enrolled in schools receiving Mary's Meals and the next child who is waiting for Mary's Meals to arrive.

With the ongoing support of Mary's Meals Spain and the growing family of national affiliates, we will continue to fulfil our promise to the vulnerable children of this world. We look forward to working alongside you to further our vision in the coming year.

Appendix A

Information on the amounts received during the year and their allocation is presented in the table below.

Mary's Meals Spain – funds received												
Country programme	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Total funds
India							€ 5,000		€ 1,446			€ 6,446
Liberia	€ 2,389		€ 5,101	€ 2,561	€ 4,571	€ 1,770		€ 17,909				€ 34,301
Malawi		€ 52,886		€ 17,201		€ 8,752	€ 12,652		€ 7,394	€ 22,044		€ 120,929
South Sudan						€ 6,023						€ 6,023
Zambia						€ 6,131						€ 6,131
Global feeding*	€ 10,611										€ 32,800	€ 43,411
TOTAL	€ 13,000	€ 52,886	€ 5,101	€ 19,762	€ 4,571	€ 22,676	€ 17,652	€ 17,909	€ 8,840	€ 22,044	€ 32,800	€ 217,240

* Mary's Meals International carries out school feeding programmes in 18 countries as shown on page two.