

Lettie

Daily meals,
lasting change.

mary's
meals

a simple solution
to world hunger

Screening Pack

Lettie

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After losing both her parents at the age of nine, Lettie left school to care for her two younger brothers. All three of them faced severe hunger.

In 2012, Lettie met Mary's Meals Founder and CEO Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow while he was filming *Child 31*, the first Mary's Meals documentary, in Malawi. Shortly after, Lettie was able to join her brother Anderson at school and complete her primary education – fuelled by daily school meals. Although she had her sights set on secondary school, the cost of fees meant the next stage of her education was out of reach, until her life took an unexpected turn.

Lettie's story continues to resonate with audiences of all ages. This 2026 feature film reflects on her life and the experiences that shaped her, including the school feeding programme that played such a vital role in her childhood. She meets past and present recipients of Mary's Meals and volunteers who prepare and serve the meals every school day.

Lettie also explores the ongoing need for school meals in Malawi and beyond and accepts a special invitation to share her testimony before an international audience.

About Mary's Meals

Mary's Meals provides nutritious daily meals to children living in areas of great need, where poverty and hunger often hold them back from education. Our idea is simple: serving daily meals in places of education brings children into the classroom and gives them energy to learn.

Our approach is low cost and high impact: the cost to feed a child for a whole school year with Mary's Meals is just £19.15.

The idea for Mary's Meals was born in 2002, when Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow (Founder and CEO) visited Malawi during a famine and met a mother dying from AIDS. When Magnus asked her eldest son Edward about his dreams for the future, he replied: "I want to have enough food to eat and to be able to go to school one day."

Mary's Meals started as a small school feeding programme serving just 200 children in Malawi and in 2027 we will celebrate our 25th anniversary. We now provide daily meals to more than three million children every school day in 16 countries, including Haiti, Syria, Zambia, Madagascar, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Malawi.

Today, we are among the largest non-governmental providers of school meals, delivering meals for children at scale using locally procured food and working alongside communities, governments, and partners to generate lasting change. Community



commitment is key to the long-term success and sustainability of our programme. Our experience shows that equal, trusting partnerships between schools, communities and Mary's Meals are essential for effective school feeding.

Our work is only possible because of our many dedicated volunteers and supporters across the globe – from those in the UK who raise awareness of our work in their networks and set up awe-inspiring fundraisers, to those in the countries we serve who rise early to cook nutritious meals for their children.

Thanks to people from all walks of life who give their time freely to volunteering for us, we can reach more hungry children with the promise of a daily meal in school.

mary's
meals

To find out more about
Mary's Meals and for ways
to get involved, please visit
www.marysmeals.org.uk

Top tips for hosting a film screening



Choose your venue.

Whether you're gathering people in your living room, office, church, school, club or local cinema, choose a venue that is comfortable, easy to get to and accessible for everyone. Make sure there's plenty of space for your guests and suitable equipment to show the film.

Choose a suitable date and time.

Think about what time will work best for the people you'd like to bring together. An evening or weekend might make it easier for many to attend, while a lunchtime screening could be a great fit for a workplace or school. When you're planning, remember to allow time not just for the film itself, but also for welcoming your guests, introducing the screening, and any discussion or activities you'd like to include. Lettie is approximately 38 minutes long, so be sure to leave plenty of time for everyone to enjoy the experience.

Ensure your audio-visual equipment is fit for purpose.

What equipment you need will vary depending on the location of screening; requirements for your own living room will be different to those of a large church hall. Consider whether your television will suffice, or if you'll need to borrow a projector. Remember to test the equipment in the venue ahead of the screening. Don't forget speakers and check for any potential glare on the screen. The film will be available to stream from YouTube, so please ensure that Wi-Fi is available. Otherwise, it may be a good idea to have the film downloaded to your device or memory stick should you not be connected to the internet.

Consider a fundraising element.

You may like to fundraise as part of your event. You could organise a raffle, host a quiz, or simply invite guests to make a contribution. Schools and workplaces might choose to hold a lunchtime screening and encourage people to donate the cost of their lunch. At the end of your screening, you'll be able to share our thank you cards with your guests.

Each card includes a QR code that makes it easy for people to make a donation, learn more about Mary's Meals, or find out how they can continue supporting our work.

Do some research about Mary's Meals.

Those who attend the screening are likely to want to find out more about Mary's Meals and our life-changing work. There will be an FAQ available for anyone hosting a screening.

Create a schedule for promoting your screening.

Planning and promoting the event several weeks in advance is likely to increase attendance. Please let us know about your screening, we are happy to list it on our Lettie screening webpage. You can download assets such as a film poster from our website.

Recruit some volunteers.

Hosting a screening is much easier, and often more enjoyable, when you share the experience with others. Invite friends, family, colleagues or members of your community to get involved. Someone might be happy to welcome guests as they arrive, help arrange the venue, put up posters locally, send invitations, or spread the word at work, school, church or within local groups. Mary's Meals is built on the kindness, generosity and dedication of volunteers around the world, and your screening is a wonderful opportunity to bring that same spirit to life.

Invite guests to get involved.

There are many ways people can get involved and support our work by offering their money, time, skills or prayer. Your event is a perfect opportunity to highlight them – especially for those who are new to Mary's Meals. Ask attendees if they are interested in hosting their own screening or if they have other interests that could turn into fundraising activities. Encourage them to sign up for updates on our website and to speak to their friends and family about ways they can help you to raise funds such as taking part in Mary's Meals' flagship fundraising campaign, Feed A School.

Speaking notes for film screening

We have created this short script to help guide your presentation of Lettie at your screening. Please don't feel you have to recite these word-for-word, it is important that your presentation is natural and focuses on the elements of Lettie's story that matter to you.

Before the film

Welcome to this special screening of Lettie, a new film produced by Mary's Meals in which a young woman called Lettie Saidi (pronounced 'Si-e-de') shares her remarkable story.

Any housekeeping announcements e.g. location of fire exits and toilets, and a thank you to the venue hosting the screening. If you're planning to take photographs during the event, please announce that at this time so guests can opt out.

Today's film begins in Malawi, and this is where Mary's Meals also began over 20 years ago. During a famine in 2002, Mary's Meals' founder, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, travelled from Scotland to Malawi to find out about the crisis and what support was required. Meeting a 14-year-old boy called Edward, who told Magnus that he dreamed of having enough food to eat and the chance to go to school, was the catalyst for setting up a small, community-led school feeding programme in two schools. Mary's Meals started serving school meals to around 200 children in 2003 and has since grown to reach more than three million children in thousands of schools across 16 countries. Magnus first met Lettie in 2012 when making a Mary's Meals film called Child 31 – she had lost both of her parents and was living a difficult life caring for her younger brothers and struggling to support them. Now, many years later, she tells us her story: how Mary's Meals has changed things for her and her family, through food, education and compassion.

We are privileged to share Lettie's story with you.

After the film

Thanks for watching. I'm sure you'll agree the film gives a very moving insight into how school meals can make a big difference for children experiencing poverty.

Lettie was propelled into adulthood when she lost both parents while still a young girl, and suddenly the wellbeing of her young brothers became her responsibility. Understandably, it was a huge struggle. School meals made a different reality possible, with the security of a reliable daily meal and the chance to continue at school bringing hope.

We saw that Lettie now works as a Communications Assistant, sharing the stories of children receiving Mary's Meals today, and inspiring people around the world to support this mission.

Lettie's is just one story. Mary's Meals is currently serving meals to more than 1.3 million children in Malawi. Since Mary's Meals began, millions of children have eaten billions of meals. And, as a result, many will have used their education to be more successful farmers, or tradespeople, or set up businesses to help support their families. Others have passed exams, progressed on to secondary school and even further or higher education. In today's film, we saw a small number of these 'children' who are now young adults, studying at college and making their way in the world as independent men and women. There are many more stories we may never hear, but there is joy in playing our part to help children fulfil their potential. We are so thankful to our supporters for helping to make this possible: incredible individuals, families, churches, schools, and companies giving what they can to Mary's Meals.

Mary's Meals provides daily school meals to more than three million children in communities where hunger, poverty and limited access to education affect children's lives. Across our 16 programme countries there are children waiting for Mary's Meals to arrive in their school, their village, their town. 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. On average, it costs us just £19.15 to provide a child with Mary's Meals for a whole school year. This works out at just 10p per meal – small amounts of money can make a huge difference to children living in poverty and experiencing hunger, and can help make a better future – like Lettie's – possible.

I know many of you will be moved to act by what you have seen today. For that, and your presence tonight, I would like to say a huge thank you.



Calls to action

Please share these calls to action with your audience as appropriate, as different ways that they can support Mary's Meals.

Give.

If you would like to give a donation to help us continue providing life-changing school meals to children around the world, we have buckets available on your way out. If you would like to donate online, or to find out more about setting up a regular gift or fundraising, you can speak to us or visit our website.

Feed A School.

Individuals, families, churches or groups can choose to fund meals for a whole school through our Mary's Meals Feed A School initiative. This is a great way to support children and make a difference to a whole community, and you will receive a personal report from your chosen school in Malawi or Zambia. If you're interested in finding out more, please speak to a member of our team.

Volunteer.

You can give your time to support Mary's Meals by becoming a volunteer. Our work would not be possible without our volunteers and their various contributions. Whether you can help with raising awareness, fundraising, administration or have other skills to share, we would love to hear from you. Please speak to me or a member of our team.

Pray.

Please support our work in prayer, asking Our Lady to intercede for the work of Mary's Meals so it may continue to grow and flourish in her name.

Legacy/Gift in will.

In Lettie's story we saw the long-term impact of Mary's Meals for one child, and how this continues to live on as she works to support her own son and tells the stories of today's children receiving hope in the form of Mary's Meals porridge. Leaving a gift in your will is a powerful way to give hope to future generations, helping Mary's Meals to continue to provide life-changing school meals to children impacted by hunger and poverty. If you are interested in finding out more, please speak to me or a member of our team.

Spread the word.

You can help Mary's Meals to grow by spreading the word! Share our posts on your social media, share a leaflet with a friend, organise your own screening of Lettie or invite us to give a talk about Mary's Meals to a group, school, church or company.

You could bring your film screening to an end by saying something like:

Please come to speak to us if you have any questions about our work or about the film, and we would be delighted to have a chat with you.

Thanks again for coming tonight, and for your support of the mission of Mary's Meals.

Contact details

For support on running a screening or for more information, please contact our Supporter Experience team or your Regional Development Officer.

Supporter Experience

Email: info@marysmeals.org

Phone: **0800 6981212**

Regional Development Officers

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