



## Daily meals, lasting change.

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 \$31.70 CAD.

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."

What started as a small school feeding program serving just 200 children in Malawi in 2003 now provides daily meals to more than 3 million children every school day in 16 countries, including Haiti, Syria, Zambia, Madagascar, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.

Today, we are among the largest non-governmental organization 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 program. Our experience shows that equal, trusting partnerships between schools, communities and Mary's Meals are essential for effective school feeding.

Driving our work forward are fundraisers, volunteers, and supporters around the world who share their money, time, and skills.



mary's  
meals

To find out more about Mary's Meals and for ways to get involved, please visit [www.marysmeals.ca](http://www.marysmeals.ca)

# Lettie

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mary's  
meals

a simple solution  
to world hunger

Screening Pack

# Top tips for hosting a film screening

## Screening Pack

### Choose your venue

You can host a screening at your home, office, church, school, club or local cinema. Wherever you choose, make sure it is easy to find, accessible and welcoming, and that it has sufficient capacity and suitable audio-visual equipment.

### Choose a suitable date and time

Consider the most convenient time for your audience. Are evenings or weekends more suitable? If you are hosting at an office or school, maybe lunchtime the best option. Don't forget to think about how long the screening will last and allow time for a welcome and introduction as well as the film (Lettie is approximately 38 minutes long), and any other activities you have planned.

### Ensure your audio-visual equipment is fit for purpose

The equipment you need will depend on the location of your screening. For example, the requirements for a living room differ from those of a large church hall. Is your TV suitable, or do you need to borrow a projector? Don't forget speakers and check for any potential glare on the screen. Always test your equipment ahead of the screening.

### Consider a fundraising element

Film screenings are a great way to raise funds for Mary's Meals. You could organise a raffle, host a quiz or pass around a collection bucket during the screening. If your event is held at a school or workplace, you could host a lunchtime screening and invite people to donate the value of their lunch to Mary's Meals. Your local Mary's Meals office can support you with fundraising ideas, so don't hesitate to get in touch.

### Be prepared to answer questions

People attending your screening may want to learn more about Mary's Meals. There are many useful resources available on our website to help you answer questions about our work. You can also request a Mary's Meals volunteer speaker to attend your screening event by contacting your local office.

Get your guests to scan the QR Code on the event poster and they can donate right on their phones!



# Lettie

## Create a schedule for promoting your screening

Planning and promoting the event in advance will help increase attendance. Included in this screening pack are posters for advertising your screening. Sending personal invitations by post, email, or via social media is another great way to build momentum.

## Recruit some volunteers

Lighten the load by getting others involved. Ask someone to lay out chairs or greet guests as they arrive. Could someone help display posters in local businesses or around your local area? Is there someone who could send out invitations? Can you task someone with promoting the screening at work, school or church? The extraordinary generosity of volunteers all over the world is just one of the things that makes our work so unique – recruit some of them to support your event!



## 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.



## Mary's Meals in Malawi

- Mary's Meals has been serving daily school meals in Malawi since 2003, when our first feeding program began. It remains our largest school feeding program, reaching **more than 1,315,000 children every school day**.
- Our school meals reach more than a **quarter of all pre-primary and primary children** in Malawi (based on data from the [2025 GCNF report](#)).
- School feeding is delivered directly by Mary's Meals Malawi and by two local partners, the Missionary Community of St Paul the Apostle (MCSPA) and Tafika.
- A typical school meal served to children is CSB+ (a corn-soya blend porridge fortified with essential vitamins and minerals).
- Mary's Meals has a strong presence in Malawi and delivers school feeding all over the country, working alongside tens of thousands of volunteer cooks from local communities. We also engage with all levels of government, ranging from regular collaboration with District Education Managers to contributing to national government strategy on school feeding.

## Need in Malawi

6.8 million people (37.6% of the population) are experiencing insufficient food consumption. (Source: *WFP, Hunger Map, 2025*)

34.8% of children under five are affected by stunting, and 2.8% by wasting. (Source: *Global Hunger Index, 2024*)

The out-of-school rate for primary-school-age children is 6%, and less than half of children complete primary school (completion rate is 49%). (Source: *UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2025, SDG4 scorecard progress report on national benchmarks: focus on the out-of-school rate.*) In Malawi, primary education normally begins at the age of six and lasts for eight years, progressing from Standard 1 to Standard 8.

Most families rely on smallholder farming and rain-fed agriculture, meaning that an increase in droughts and cyclone-induced flooding has left little time for recovery and hampered adequate food production. (Source: *World Food Program, Malawi, 2025*)

Our 2025 research in Malawi highlighted that food insecurity remains a significant challenge for many households: 62% of children said their families experienced days in the past week when there was not enough food, and 71% reported that their families skipped meals. (Source: *Mary's Meals, Internal annual impact study for Malawi, 2025*)

## The impact of our school feeding program in Malawi

The statistics included in this section were collected as part of our 2025 annual impact study in Malawi. If you would like to include them in your communications, please reference: 'Mary's Meals, Internal annual impact study for Malawi, 2025'.

In schools where children receive Mary's Meals, 90.5% of children never leave school early during the school day because of hunger. [Malawi]

Across our program schools, 97% of teachers reported improvements in literacy and numeracy over the past year, attributed to better attendance, longer time-on-task, and reduced hunger. [Malawi]

100% of teachers reported that our school feeding program has contributed to reduced dropout rates and improved retention over time. [Malawi]

Before the meals, 57% of children said they found it difficult to concentrate on lessons. After meals were served, 90% said they can concentrate well on lessons. [Malawi]

### **Lettie – from Child 31 to today**

In 2010, at the age of nine, Lettie lost both parents. By age 10, her and her brothers were battling severe hunger, and Lettie had to drop out of school to care for her younger siblings. In 2012, when Lettie was 11 years old, she met Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow who was in Malawi filming *Child 31*.

After meeting Magnus, Lettie and her brother Anderson began attending primary school in Malawi. They received daily meals until Lettie completed primary school, but her education was cut short because she was unable to afford the fees for secondary school.

The staff at Jacaranda School for Orphans in Malawi heard about Lettie's situation and invited her to join the school where she continued her learning and later graduated, fuelled by daily mugs of Mary's Meals porridge. Since 2022, she has worked for Mary's Meals Malawi and is a Youth Ambassador for Mary's Meals. She is also a mother to one son, Phillip.

Lettie's story – first told in *Child 31* – captured audiences around the world, and interest in her journey has continued over the years. In 2026, we revisit her life and legacy in this new feature film.

*Lettie* is a powerful and deeply moving film that tells the story of one woman's journey through hunger, hardship, and hope. Through Lettie's experiences, the film highlights the daily realities faced by millions of children and families living in poverty, while also revealing the life-changing impact that access to education and school meals can have. These discussion questions are designed to encourage reflection on the themes explored in the film, including resilience, compassion, community, and the role each of us can play in helping to build a world where no child goes hungry.

These questions are suitable for classrooms, parish groups, youth groups, fundraising screenings, or post-film reflection sessions.

## Questions for Adults

1. What part of Lettie's story impacted you the most, and why?
2. How did hunger affect Lettie's childhood beyond simply not having enough food?
3. What does the film reveal about the relationship between education and poverty?
4. How did community support influence the direction of Lettie's life?
5. What responsibilities do wealthier nations or individuals have in addressing global hunger?
6. The film shows the long-term impact of school meals. Why do you think such a simple intervention can be so transformative?
7. How did Lettie demonstrate resilience in the face of overwhelming challenges?
8. What role did dignity and hope play in Lettie's journey?
9. The film suggests that small acts of compassion can create generational change. Where do you see this in the story?
10. After watching the film, what actions — personal, community-based, or global — do you feel inspired to take?

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## Questions for Children

1. What did you learn about Lettie's life as a child?
2. How do you think Lettie felt when she had to leave school to care for her brothers?
3. Why is having food at school important for children?
4. What are some ways people helped Lettie in the film?
5. How would your school day be different if you were hungry?
6. What does kindness look like in Lettie's story?
7. What are some things Lettie never gave up on?
8. How did education help change Lettie's future?
9. What can children do to help others in their own communities?
10. What message do you think the filmmakers wanted people to remember after watching *Lettie*?

# Lettie

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FEATURING:

Lettie Saidi

DIRECTOR AND EDITOR:

Amor Aditya

PRODUCERS:

Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow

Felicity Read

Bethany Alice Barry

Mona Lisa Bandawe



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LOCATION

CONTACT

DATE

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a simple solution  
to world hunger



★ **EVENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_  **TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **VENUE:** \_\_\_\_\_

★ **FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:** \_\_\_\_\_

This event raises funds for Mary's Meals, which sets up school feeding programs in some of the world's poorest communities, where hunger and poverty prevent children from gaining an education.

Mary's Meals feeds more than 3 million children every school day in 16 countries.

