

Mary's Meals to Begin School-Feeding Program in Mozambique

Innovative program will reach thousands of children impacted by hunger and climate change

BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES, May 15, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This month, the global school-feeding charity Mary's Meals will begin delivering its first school-feeding program in Mozambique. The organization is adding Mozambique to the network of countries it serves as crisis levels of acute food insecurity increase and climate change impacts hunger in the country.

Working with in-country partner, the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative (MSLI), Mary's Meals will begin providing meals to more than 5,000 children in 30 primary schools across the Mabalane district of the Gaza province in southwest Mozambique. The program will begin on May 20 with many children receiving a school meal for the first time.

Mary's Meals currently provides daily school meals to more than 2.4 million children in 17 countries where many factors hinder access to learning, including hunger, conflict and climate change. In southern Africa, more than 1.5 million children are already benefiting from Mary's Meals in neighboring nations Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, all of which have declared a state of emergency in recent months because of drought.

A recent report by the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET) indicates that the Mabalane district is experiencing stressed and crisis levels of acute food insecurity, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classifications (IPC). Hunger and access to adequate food are ongoing challenges for the people of Mozambique where almost 65% of the population live below the international poverty line (\$2.15 per day).

Mozambique, identified as one of the world's most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change, has been hit by 11 tropical cyclones since 2007. In March, just one year after Cyclone Freddy, which ravaged the country and left millions in urgent need of support, Tropical Storm Filipo made landfall across the central and southern provinces, affecting tens of thousands of people.

"As drought and flooding continue to devastate so many countries in southern Africa, our program in Mozambique will provide important ongoing support to children whose lives are deeply affected by hunger, poverty, and extreme weather events. Much of Mozambique's population rely on farming to survive, so the recent irregular rainfall and the constant threat of

cyclones mean that many families just don't have enough food to sustain them. Our consistent school meals will bring much needed relief, stability, and nutrition to children at a time of uncertainty and help to ease the worry of their parents, many of whom will be actively partnering with us as volunteer cooks," said Mary's Meals Founder and CEO, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow.

The Mozambique School Lunch Initiative has been delivering school feeding in the province for more than eight years and has extensive experience working with local schools and food producers, as well as relevant authorities and community leaders. Like Mary's Meals, MSLI is passionate about cost-efficient school feeding with a focus on building strong community engagement and ownership of the program.

Roberto Mutisse, co-founder and executive director of MSLI, explained, "When we met with children in the Mabalane district, we saw just how much hunger affects their lives. During one conversation, I asked a six-year-old girl how many times they ate at home. She said, 'If dad can't sell a bag of charcoal, we don't eat at home.' To hear such a young child have this notion of hunger really hit home. The Mozambique School Lunch Initiative is so excited to partner with Mary's Meals to serve these learners and provide a new source of hope and support for vulnerable children and their families. Not only will children know they can rely on a nutritious meal at school, but their parents will also have relief knowing their kids won't go hungry even if they come home empty-handed."

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About Mary's Meals

Now in its 22nd 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 in-country 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 2,429,182 hungry children every school day in more than 5,000 schools in the following countries: Benin, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Mary's Meals is part of the global 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.

About Mozambique School Lunch Initiative

Founded in 2016, the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative (MSLI) is a nonprofit organization that invests in community-owned school lunch programs to improve child nutrition and stimulate agricultural development. It is a team of Mozambicans and Americans who are passionate about creating opportunities for children to live healthy, productive lives. MSLI works with local farmer groups at schools to grow crops for school lunch programs and continues to iterate around the best ways to deliver home-grown school lunches and improve child nutrition in Mozambique.

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