



More than one million children feed every day in thirteen countries across four continents thanks to Mary's Meals (which, in Spanish, means ' Mary's Meals '). This foundation, which finds in the Virgin Mary its greatest inspiration, opens its doors to show us how "in their name, they give to eat these children".

Emma, a mother of six children, who was sick with AIDS and from Malawi, had only one concern: who would take care of her little ones when she was missing? she prayed that God would apiadara of them, and that's when Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, creator of Mary's Meals, crossed his path. Recently, we have known the wonderful Solidarity Project that was born from the experience of faith that MacFarlane-Barrow had in Medjugorje and found his raison d'être in Emma and her children: Mary's Meals.

Elisalex Lowenstein, a member of the Council of this Foundation in Spain, tells the story of MacFarlane-Barrow, a Scotsman who, in the early 80, made a pilgrimage to Medjugorje along with his family, an experience that marked it deeply.

In the early 90, the war broke out in Bosnia, and MacFarlane-Barrow, who felt a special union with this land after that experience, decided to organize, along with his brother Fergus, a local campaign to send clothes, food, and medicine to Medjugorje. The success of the initiative pushed MacFarlane-Barrow to create the Scottish International Relief (SIR). During the years 90, the foundation expanded and began to build homes for abandoned children in Romania, helped many refugees return to Liberia, and continued to transport humanitarian aid to Croatia and Bosnia, as well as funding other projects.

In the year 2002 MacFarlane-Barrow met Emma in Malawi. This mother of six children, who was sick with AIDS, told her that she only had to pray for someone to take care of her children when she died. And then, one of them, Edward, uttered the words that inspired MacFarlane-Barrow to create the Mary's Meals Foundation: "I want to have enough food and one day go to school". At that time, MacFarlane-Barrow realized that the main problem of the poorest children in the world and one of the causes that prevent them from leaving their extreme misery is the lack of nourishment. The idea of providing a daily meal to every child in the school

environment arose. Thanks to this, many children have left the streets and begging and have been able to go to school, where, in addition to education, they now also receive a plate of food.

### **Much more than food**

Mary's Meals daily eats more than one million children in thousands of schools in countries as poor as Liberia, Malawi or Haiti. The foundation buys food from indigenous farmers to help the local economy, and the mothers of the children who come to the schools are the ones who cook, daily, the food that Mary's Meals provide to them. In each region, the products that abound in the area are chosen (cereals, vegetables, and vegetables, mainly) and, with them, a dish will be made, for most of these children, the only food they eat in the day. All this gear favors that they are the beneficiaries of the project (mothers and farmers) who carry it out.

Lowenstein, who has traveled to several of the schools where Mary's Meals collaborates, tells us that the children "thank you," and says, "Parents thank you for giving their children a future. That's when you realize that what Mary's Meals provide to these children is much more than food". All this for the insignificant amount of 14.50 per child a year, money that Mary's Meals collects through its subsidiaries in different countries and that, for the most part, are particular contributions of people committed to this cause.

Since they began their journey, Mary's Meals has made millions of children have a meal a day. Many of them are now adults who collaborate with the foundation and whose stories are collected by the documentary Generation Hope (in Spain, the generation of Hope), which will soon be available on the official channel of Mary's Meals on YouTube.

However, the day-to-day of this foundation is not without difficulties. Mary's Meals has to deal with conflicts, extreme droughts, and epidemics, like the one that caused the Ebola crisis, for which countries like Liberia were virtually paralyzed. The high incidence of this disease caused massive eviction of the streets and the closure of schools, work centers, and hospitals. Faced with this situation, the head of Mary's Meals in that country decided to go out, door to door, the food that the children were not receiving. Gestures like this reflect the spirit of Mary's Meals and the commitment of those who drive this cause.

However, the people who collaborate in some way or another with Mary's Meals radiate happiness, tenderness, and absolute dedication. "How can this be?" asked Lowenstein. "Very simple", says smiling, "Mary's Meals is a great family."

The shed that fed a million children, tells the exciting story, full of miracles and shocking events, of Mary's Meals. The book, written by Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, creator of the Foundation, makes a tour of its history from its origins. An incredible

testimony that shows how the hard work, the illusion and the faith of a person can make the world a little better place. The book is available in English and is expected to arrive in Spain at the beginning of 2017.