

BOLIVIA



THE NEED

Bolivia is the poorest country in South America. Almost two-thirds of its people live in poverty, working as farmers, miners and traders. Preventable diseases claim the lives of thousands of infants and children every year, and the number of women who die from complications during pregnancy and childbirth is extremely high. Conditions are particularly dire for Bolivia's indigenous people who live in rural areas where there is little access to health services.



REGIONAL FOCUS: La Paz, Oruro, Potosí and Cochabamba

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE: Livelihoods; Economic Empowerment; Education; Nutrition, Maternal, Neonatal & Child Health; Local Capacity Building



OVERVIEW

PCI has been working in Bolivia since 1980, improving the health and well-being of children and families living in poor, rural communities. Today, PCI continues to increase the quality of life for Bolivia's indigenous populations through targeted interventions in health, agriculture, the environment, education, water and sanitation, income generation and youth programs. In 2013, PCI invested in the development of a local NGO – *Impacto Positivo en la Comunidad* (IPC) – to further promote local capacity building and deepen program impact.

FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS

For nearly a decade, PCI's MIS Llamas (Integral and Sustainable Management of Llamas) project helped Bolivian llama producers to significantly improve their livelihoods through improved llama husbandry. PCI trained farmers on ways to improve the production and value of their llamas, including better management of native prairies used for foraging; llama nutrition and health; protection during infancy and from harsh weather conditions through corral construction; and improved quality of llama by-products. These efforts have reduced llama mortality by 64% since 2004.

PCI also expanded its efforts to help llama farmers and their families increase the sale and commercialization of llama by-products by forming nearly 40 producer committees, which sell products that include leather purses and briefcases; fresh and preserved meats; llama fiber (wool) clothing; and finished handicrafts. These grass-roots groups have helped to foster new business skills and sources of income for MIS Llamas participants, particularly rural women, who have begun to travel to regional and national fairs to sell their products. Their ability to innovate and improve the quality of llama products has helped the "MIS Llamas" brand make a name for itself in the Bolivian marketplace.

From 2004-2011, annual income from the sale of llamas and value-added llama products increased more than three-fold as a result of PCI's training and education activities.

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT & NUTRITION

In partnership with local municipal governments and the USDA, PCI is reducing malnutrition rates and improving learning among rural Bolivian schoolchildren in the departments of La Paz, Oruro, Potosi and Cochabamba. By improving the capacity of schools to provide students with a daily hot meal, PCI's school breakfast program helps alleviate



PCI (Project Concern International) is an international nonprofit on a mission to enhance health, end hunger and overcome hardship worldwide. Founded in 1961, PCI impacted the lives of more than 19 million people last year alone through programs in 15 countries spanning Asia, Africa and the Americas.



student's hunger, thereby enabling them to concentrate and learn during class. Each school participating in PCI's school breakfast program creates a parent-teacher association through which parents donate their time to prepare the meals and learn about proper nutrition and ways to sustain the program long-term, including through engaging students in cultivating school based vegetable gardens and chicken farms. Sustainability is a key component of the program; to this end, PCI has successfully equipped 49 municipal governments with the know-how to procure food from local markets, ensure proper storage and handling, as well as program monitoring at the school level. **Today these municipalities continue to provide daily meals to over 110,600 schoolchildren.**

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

PCI's innovative, savings-led self-help group model called Women Empowered (WE) - or 'Yanapacuna' (We Help Ourselves) in Bolivia's native Quechua - is a community-led economic and social empowerment model which increases livelihood opportunities for vulnerable households. Through the groups, men and women gain financial literacy skills and business training, and learn how to start sustainable businesses of their own. In addition to financial gain, group members report numerous other benefits, such as increased community leadership, greater self-efficacy and tangible benefits for women in reproductive, maternal and child health.



Photos courtesy of Jeffrey Lamont Brown

Once established and operational, WE groups become a sustainable, ongoing business and economic development platform that is entirely directed and administered by the members themselves, without outside management, resources or long-term external support. **To date, 910 Yanapacuna groups comprised of over 17,600 members have collectively saved over \$216,300 of their own money and have increased their self-esteem, leadership and sense of possibility for change in their own lives and in the community overall.** PCI's local NGO, "IPC", is leading the implementation and expansion of this initiative throughout Bolivia.

RECENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH:** PCI has worked for decades to reduce maternal, infant and child mortality in the most vulnerable Bolivian communities. PCI's programs mobilize community-based groups, municipal services and families to jointly plan, coordinate and strengthen community-based health services, as well as recognize obstetric danger signs and respond effectively to health emergencies. *Since 2011, PCI's "Healthy Moms, Healthy Children" program has more than doubled rates of breastfeeding and decreased chronic malnutrition from 45% to 32%.*
- **COMMUNITY ACTION TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY:** Youth leadership, gender rights and violence prevention have been a major focus of PCI's work over the last ten years. With support from USAID's Health Policy Initiative and the PROCOSI Network, PCI's facilitated action planning with women and adolescent youth around the topic of preventing GBV. Out of this participatory process, the "Citizen's Movement for the Advancement of Peace" was created, which to date has 240 members (men, women and youth) participating in the Domestic Violence Care and Support Network of El Alto. These have mobilized broad-reaching activities to advance dialogue and effective action to reduce GBV.

PCI/BOLIVIA

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