

For PCI, local capacity strengthening (LCS) means leveraging and expanding the existing capacity of local partners (community groups, organizations, networks, and/or governments) to achieve their mission and create sustainable impact.

LOCAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

Enhancing Nutrition & Educational Outcomes in Bolivia



AT-A-GLANCE

- **Goal:** Develop a sustainable school feeding program that will improve nutrition and literacy in Bolivia’s primary schools
- **Key Implementing Partners:** 102 municipal governments and over 2,200 schools in the departments of La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, Potosi
- **Stakeholders:** Parents, Teachers, Ministry of Education (MoE), Education Commissions (School Boards)
- **Approach:** Mobilization, engagement, and policy dialogue at the national, municipal & community levels

OUTCOMES

- 49 municipal governments are now independently providing school meals.
- 110,600 children attending more than 1,500 schools continue to receive daily school meal through local government funding and support.

With funding from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), PCI implemented a comprehensive school feeding program in Bolivia from 2002-2013. Conducted in partnership with local municipal governments, the Bolivia Food for Education (FFE) program was designed to enhance food security and nutrition, reduce the incidence of hunger, and improve literacy and primary education. PCI’s work to strengthen the capacity of schools, municipalities, and PCI staff has led to the program’s expansion and sustainability that continues to this day.



LCS APPROACH

In Bolivia, the law recognizes a daily school meal as a child’s fundamental right. Working with local partners to strengthen their capacity to understand and operationalize that law was therefore at the center of PCI’s LCS approach to implementing sustainable FFE programs in Bolivia.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

PCI’s efforts focused early on community and local government engagement and ownership. This was achieved primarily through two strategies: 1) The establishment of Parent-Teacher Food Committees at each school which were directly responsible for managing their school meal program while PCI field staff provided oversight and training on topics related to food storage and handling, meal preparation, hygiene, and nutrition. Over time, the Committees’ capacity was strengthened such that less technical support was required and could be transitioned to locally provided support (see below). 2) During bi-monthly PCI-guided site visits, School Board officials observed the work of the Food Committees and interacted with parents and teachers participating in the program. This intensive mobilization and engagement process was critical for generating local community support, political will and local ownership for the program, as it was the means through which local governments came to view school meals as a public policy priority demanded by their surrounding community, and budget resources accordingly.

PCI complemented the local government’s resource allocation via tailored technical training on commodity resource procurement, budgeting and management. As a result, local officials became both willing and able to independently administer school meal programs.

NATIONAL-LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE

Although the right to adequate food was established at the national level by the Bolivian Ministry of Health in the late 1990s, a common policy framework for implementing school meal programs was non-existent at the start of FFE. To this end, PCI worked closely with the MoE, the United Nations World Food Program and key government stakeholders to draft legislation, share best practices, participate in technical roundtables, and lobby Bolivian congressional support on the basis of the program’s local economic benefits. Such activities enabled the national government to develop the policy framework required for implementation which culminated in the December 2014 passage of Law No 622, which formally institutionalizes the practice of school meals at the municipal-level with national government oversight.

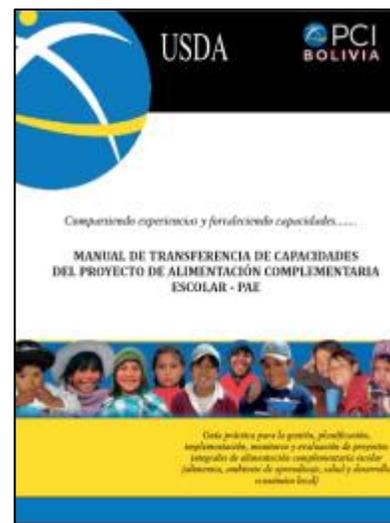
ACCOMPANIMENT & TRANSITION

PCI took a number of steps throughout project implementation to enhance local ownership and generate sustainable impact, including:

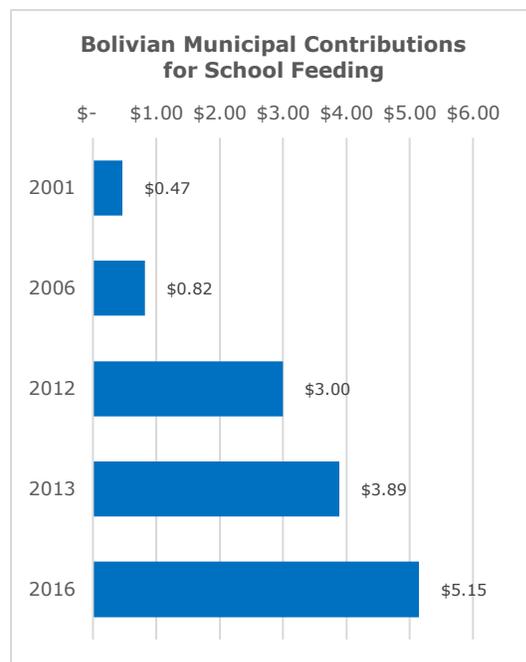
- ✓ Agreements negotiated between PCI and partnering municipalities that committed a set level of government’s annual operating budget towards school meal programs (with annual increases).
- ✓ Annual Department-level meetings and quarterly municipal-level Quality Circles to bring community, school and government stakeholders together to assess program performance, discuss challenges and engage with MoE representatives and PCI staff.
- ✓ Frequent opportunities for officials at the national and municipal level to shadow PCI staff so as to ensure their ability manage all aspects of the program.
- ✓ Transition of the administrative and programmatic oversight of all program responsibilities to local school board officials, providing technology and training materials and continuing to advise and provide technical support as needed until the end of the project.

By working with each municipality to develop a school feeding management structure that accommodated local circumstances while gradually increasing municipal government funding commitments (see graph on right for details), PCI ensured that the appropriate structures and resources were in place for local implementing partners to assume program responsibility once PCI’s support ended. An intentional focus on sustainability as well as increased support and budgeting for school feeding activities, ensured that 49 municipalities that previously participated in USDA-funded school feeding activities graduated from the program and continue to independently provide school meals.

PCI’s local successor organization, *Impacto Positivo en la Comunidad* (IPC), established by PCI Bolivia staff in 2012, continues to provide technical support to municipal governments as they implement school feeding activities and ensure compliance with emerging federal regulations. To date, IPC has worked with 24 municipal governments to implement FFE programs in over 750 schools. The ability of local partners to take positive action in response to evolving needs and opportunities post-PCI support exemplifies how LCS can generate sustainable impact and local ownership.



PCI-developed school feeding program management manual currently used to train local government officials



In 2013, PCI conducted a **Post-Project Sustainability Study** to assess the lasting impact of PCI’s efforts in the FFE program for 29 municipalities where project activities had been completed five years prior. The study found that all participating municipal government operational plans had budget allocations for school feeding programs; all but one municipality in the study continued to administer a school feeding program; and parents continued to provide complementary financial and food donations.