

PROJECT REPORT FEBRUARY 2015

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY IN BOLIVIA



Poverty disproportionately affects Bolivian women, who face widespread discrimination and violence. The country ranks 113th in gender equality out of 187 countries evaluated (U.N. Development Program, 2015). With your support, this situation is changing for the better in two World Vision project areas near Cochabamba. Together, we are empowering women entrepreneurs and inspiring a culture of greater respect and value for women.

IMPROVING INCOMES AND GENDER EQUALITY

As a part of the *Strong Women, Strong World* initiative, World Vision launched the Women's Entrepreneurial and Gender Equality Project in Bolivia in July 2013. This three-year project is taking place in the Colomi and Wiñaypaj area development programs, where World Vision has been partnering with communities to address the root causes of poverty. By 2016, planned project outcomes include:

- Increased income and employment for 300 women and their families through vocational and business development training
- Equitable participation among women and men in social and family life through programs that address gender roles and relations, gender-based violence, and human rights

Through September 2014 in the municipalities of Colomi and Soracachi, 279 women have received vocational and business training, and 205 women and 204 men have participated in workshops on gender equality. So far, 126 women have developed small enterprises that have increased their incomes by an average of 6 percent. Meanwhile in more than half of the targeted households, a survey found that the roles of income generation and providing for children's health and education are now shared, even if this is not yet fully recognized and valued by some of the men.

Project participants in Colomi and Soracachi are grateful for the improvements. "We know how to do business with our own products to bring revenue to our homes," said Teodora Blanco, who has started a bakery. The household distribution of labor is also more equitable in many families. "We (previously) did all the housework without help," said Karina Aranda, a member of a textile cooperative. "Now we say those tasks have to be done by all the children and the husband."

This project is taking place outside of Cochabamba in the municipalities of Colomi and Soracachi, where women such as those pictured at left are generating income through sales of baked goods, textiles, peppers, and guinea pig meat.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
— Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)



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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

With your generous support, the Women's Entrepreneurial and Gender Equality Project achieved the following in Bolivia between October 2013 and September 2014:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 279 women and four men improved their productive and entrepreneurial skills through training in baking, textiles, agriculture, and raising guinea pigs.
- Seven producer cooperatives were developed and strengthened through leadership training and the provision of production-related equipment.
- The cooperatives increased their access to credit and markets, obtaining more than \$87,000 in credit from local sources and participating in four trade fairs.
- Three cooperatives obtained multiple contracts from local customers for locoto peppers, carrot bread, and sports clothing.

GENDER EMPOWERMENT

- 205 women and 204 men participated in workshops on gender roles, equitable relationships, causes and consequences of gender-based violence, and parenting with affection and equity.
- Among participating women, 34 are now in leadership positions in producer cooperatives, and five are leaders of community-based organizations.
- Beneficiaries formed two support groups that reported 10 cases of abuse to local law enforcement agencies, resulting in improved relations in four of the cases.

THANK YOU

On behalf of women and girls in Colomi and Soracachi who are being empowered economically and socially through this project, World Vision extends deep gratitude for your support. May God richly bless you.

Workshops have helped improve vocational skills and change attitudes about gender roles. "Before, I didn't value the work I did at home," said Paulina Lopez Montecinos, a member of a textile cooperative. "I thought it was my destiny as a woman, but now I know that everyone can do everything."

NEXT STEPS

For the producer cooperatives, improved incomes are dependent upon optimal product quality, efficiency, and production capacity. This will be emphasized in future training sessions.

Meanwhile, changing the attitudes of men takes time and requires more direct intervention. Family retreats and radio broadcasts are part of the next phase.



You are creating a brighter and more equitable future for Bolivian girls and boys.