



# Student Lodging with Families

The Village Foundation  
Bolivia



NACIONES UNIDAS  
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CEPAL





## Student Lodging with Families

The Village Foundation  
Bolivia

Second Place  
Experiences in Social Innovation  
in Latin America and the  
Caribbean

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# 1

## ■ Introduction

While the Latin American and Caribbean region has experienced a strong process of urbanisation, driven by the industrial development of several countries, a large part of the population still lives in rural areas. This population faces great exclusions. According to the population projections of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC- CEPAL in Spanish), 20.5% of the population of the region lived in rural areas in 2010, while this percentage was 29% twenty years ago (CEPAL 2005). This average hides great differences among countries. While the rural population was less than 10% in 2010 in Argentina and in Uruguay, in other countries, such as Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras, it was more than 40%. Specifically, in Bolivia the rural population was 33.6%. This rural character is also diverse; for example, in Bolivia 37.3% of its inhabitants live in small towns of less than 2,000 inhabitants (CEPAL 2009).

Both poverty and extreme poverty have been falling throughout the region since 2002,<sup>1</sup> a trend that is reflected equally in both rural and urban sectors, even though the percentages in the former continue to be systematically higher. In 2009, 33.1% of the Latin American population was under the poverty line, and 13.3% was in extreme poverty. In rural areas these proportions rise to 52.8% and 30%, respectively, while in urban areas they are 27.8% and 8.8% (CEPAL 2010). Bolivia– together with Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay – is one of the countries of Latin America where more than 50% of its population live in poverty and more than 30% live in extreme poverty. In Bolivia, in 2007, 64.8% of children under 18 years of age lived in households that were poor and 40% lived in households that were extremely poor. This situation is even more serious in rural areas. While

63.6% of the children in urban area households were poor, in rural areas this percentage reached as high as 99.2%. For its part, extreme poverty varied from 23.5% and 66.7%. As can be seen, unfortunately in all cases, the percentages of children living in poverty and indigence in the rural areas are always higher than the overall average (CEPAL/UNICEF 2010).

Education is key for overcoming poverty. Considering the fact that these children face limitations with respect to access and retention in the education system, the possibility of overcoming the poverty or indigence they have been born into is practically nil. In the region, on average, 0.8% of children suffer serious deprivation with regard to access to education systems, and 6.4% moderately serious deprivation.<sup>2</sup> This situation is even worse in rural areas and among the indigenous population, rising respectively to 1.4% and 10.1% for the former and 1.6% and 8.6% for the latter (CEPAL/ UNICEF 2010).

<sup>1</sup> With a slight increase in 2009, which is expected to be reversed again in 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Serious deprivation is defined as children and adolescents who have never attended school and moderate deprivation as those who having attended school have dropped out before completing secondary school.



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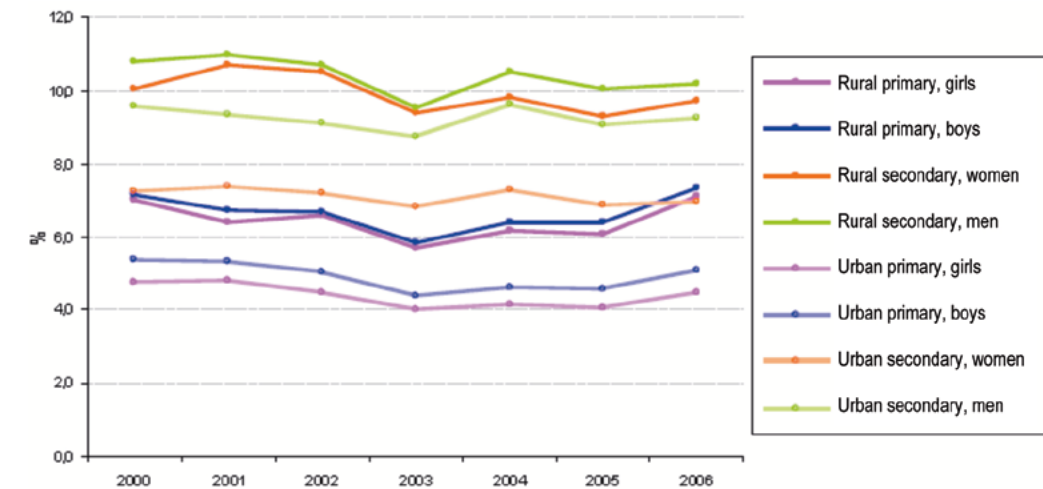
# 2 ■ Bolivia in the Regional Context

In Bolivia, 0.2% of children have never attended school, and 3.9% have dropped out before completing secondary school (CEPAL/UNICEF 2010). According to data from the country's Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, the net rate of completion of the eighth grade of primary school (which is considered basic education) between 2000 and 2006 did not exceed 33%. Only one out of three children aged thirteen in the enrolled population complete this phase of education. At secondary level, one out of four seventeen-year-old students completes it

(Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Bolivia, n.d.)

As always, this situation is more pronounced in rural areas (Graph 1). While in urban areas, the drop-out rate in primary school in 2006 was zero, in rural areas it reached 9.8%, with rates higher for males (10.4%) than for females (9.1%) (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Bolivia, n.d.). Also, the Bolivian education system holds back or expels around 40% of the students that manage to enter it (OREAL/UNESCO 2007).

Graph 1  
Evolution of the school drop-out rate by level, gender and geographical area (2000-2006)



Source: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Bolivia. La educación en Bolivia. Indicadores y estadísticas municipales.

It should be underlined that Bolivia is one of the few countries of the region that recognises the importance of the socio-cultural heterogeneity of the country and declares the adoption of an intercultural bilingual perspective in the national curriculum, with active participation of the Educational Councils of Indigenous Peoples in the formulation of education policies (OREAL/UNESCO 2007).



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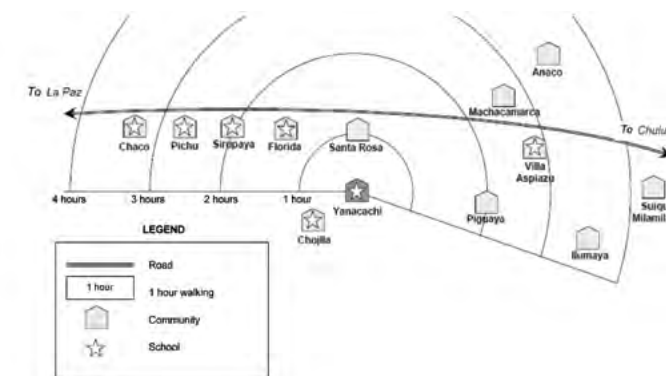
## i. History

As can be seen, the rural areas of Bolivia face the greatest problems in the area of education. Recognising the magnitude of the problem, the Fundación Pueblo (the Village Foundation) began its work in 1990 in Yanacachi, in La Paz department with improving the quality of education as the principal focus. After a few years, the foundation began an in-depth analysis of the situation and a search for possible solutions after having verified the difficulty of ensuring access to rural education in practice, especially due to the distance between the schools and the homes of many of the children (see Diagram 1). This work was done at the request of a group of parents in the municipality where only two schools with offerings of complete basic education existed (Fundación Pueblo 2002). The students had to walk long distances to reach the schools, or try to find a family with which they could live, paying their lodging with work. The possibility of completing this education cycle in such conditions was not high.

In the search for solutions, the organisation analysed the traditional boarding school model. Its implementation required a large initial investment (infrastructure and furnishings). In order to be “profitable,” it had to ensure a sufficient number of students, for which it had to cover a significant geographic area. This aspect prevented the students from maintaining close contact with their families and meant that they would not have the affective support that is necessary when considering the age of these children (10-14 years).

The foundation considered the ancestral Aymara custom of “Utawawa,” in which families that live far from the schools send their children to live with a relative or friend, in exchange for having the child do domestic or productive work, given the poverty of these families. It was not possible to promote a model based on child labour, but it was possible to take up this idea, which forms part of the local idiosyncrasy but eliminating this form of payment. Based on this concept, the organisation initiated the pilot experience of Student Lodging with Families in Yanacachi. In the beginning, the foundation obtained private donations to pay the host families. The scholarship programme selected student recipients taking into account the distance they had to travel and favouring gender equity. The community and the scholarship recipients’ parents worked together to choose the host families, in order to ensure their qualities and capacity to assume such a responsibility.

Diagram 1  
Location of communities and education units  
Yanacachi School Nucleus, 1997



Source: Fundación Pueblo 2006.

The model worked. The scholarship recipients of the programme are lodged during class days in the homes of families located in the same town/village as the Central Unit of the school nucleus. On holidays and weekends, they return to their homes in the communities in order to maintain family ties. The host families receive a payment for each scholarship recipient and each school day, thus avoiding child labour and generating additional income, usually for women. According

# 3 ■ The Student Lodging with Families Programme

to the information provided by Fundación Pueblo, in many cases this is the only regular monetary income the family generates and is used to improve the quality of the family's nutrition and make improvements to the home. The host families commit to ensuring a suitable independent space for the students to sleep and do homework, to providing all meals (breakfast, afternoon snack and dinner, and lunch in those places that do not have a student dining hall) as they do to members of their own family and to ensuring the students' well-being. The foundation provides furniture and utensils required by each student in the form of loans to these host families. In addition, each school nucleus has a cook responsible for providing lunch to the students and a general administrator who supervises the correct functioning of the model and the host families' compliance with the programme conditions, supports the teachers in the training to improve the quality of the education they provide, and helps the scholarship recipients in their homework and accompanies them in play and cultural activities.

In 1997, twelve students entered the programme, and they were received by four host families. In 2001, the number of students had risen to 41, served by ten host families. Since 2008, given the excellent results, the municipal government assumed the cost of the programme and its administration. Today it is an integral part of Yanacachi's public policy for education.

In 2002, the foundation decided to expand the model and apply it in the school nucleus of Cayimbaya, in the municipality of Palca, department of La Paz, with a completely farm worker population. Not everything was a success. While it worked and served as a pilot, in 2004 it was transferred to the municipality and shortly after, unfortunately closed due to a lack of funding by the municipal authorities.

With the accumulated experience, the foundation decided to promote the model and sought the support of the Ministry of Education of Bolivia and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). These institutions, recognising the excellence of the programme, supported a study to evaluate the feasibility of application of the model in the north of Potosí. This study, titled "School access and feasibility of the Student Lodging with Families Programme in the north of Potosi," confirmed in its prologue that the problem of access to school is concentrated mainly in the rural area, and at the same time showed that the Student Lodging with Families Programme is an option that can "facilitate 'Education for All' in a large part of the isolated rural area of Bolivia" (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte de Bolivia/GTZ/Fundación Pueblo 2003).

Once the study concluded, it was important to diffuse the results with local authorities, community leaders and the general population of the thirteen municipalities that formed the area. The interest – mainly of the municipal authorities – in implementing and co-funding the lodging programme was explored. As a result of all of these activities, in 2004 Student Lodging with Families expanded its area of operation to the municipalities of Colquechaca, Pocoata, Chayanta, Uncía and Llallagua in northern Potosí under the name of "Project for School Access and Continued Attendance for Indigenous Children in Northern Potosí." To date, the municipality of Chayanta has fully assumed the management and cost of the programme in the school nucleus of Caotaca. This is another successful example of a public policy generated from an innovation.

It should be emphasised that the innovations that this programme has developed, together with its consolidation, the possibility of creative replication and its efficient costs, led to it winning second place in the Experiences in Social Innovation

Contest in 2006 hosted by ECLAC and supported by the W.K Kellogg Foundation.

## ii. The objective of Student Lodging with Families

The objective of the programme is to facilitate completion of basic education up to the eighth grade by children who live in areas far from the schools. Many of them must walk two or three hours to get to school. The dropout rate is high, due to fatigue or to the fear that they might suffer an accident. Despite the adversity, some do manage to stay in school but their performance is very low due to the physical debilitation such long walks can cause.

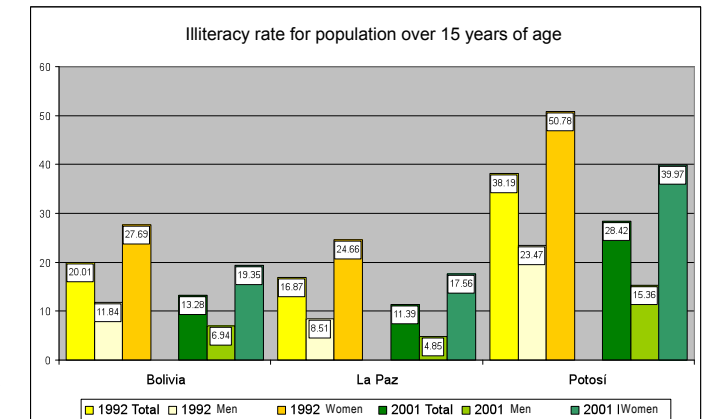
## iii. Municipalities in which the programme is executed

In the municipalities where the programme is executed (Uncía, Colquechaca, Pocoata, Chayanta and Llallagua in Potosí department) extreme poverty is much higher than the national and departmental averages in most cases. As a case in point, 98% of the inhabitants of Colquechaca live in extreme poverty; in Pocoata it reaches 88.6%, in Chayanta 67.3%, and in Uncía 60% (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Bolivia, n.d.).

Also, while the illiteracy rate has fallen throughout the country since 1992, the rate in Potosí continues to be higher than the national average (Graph 2). The difference in literacy is also reflected in the various municipalities. As an example, in 2001, 56.9% of the population in n Colquechaca was illiterate, and in Pocoata the rate was 41%, and always much higher among women.<sup>3</sup> This is not rare, given the low net coverage rates of primary school and the rate of

completion of eighth grade in the area compared to the departmental and national averages. In the former, the coverage rate is only 66.3%, compared to 88.4% for Potosí and 92.7% for the country, and the completion rate was 4.3%, compared to the department's rate of 21.8% and the country's rate of 31% (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Bolivia, n.d.).

Graph 2



Source: Information taken from the website of the Ministry of Education, Bolivia.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, the transition rate in primary school, which had increased significantly from 2000 to 2006 and reached 92.1% in the rural area, suffered a sharp fall in 2006 to only 87%, basically due to termination of the practice that allowed students to stay in school one extra year if they had failed (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Bolivia, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup> In Colquechaca, the female illiteracy rate is 74.3%, and in Pocoata 57%.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.minedu.gov.bo/minedu/showContent.do;jsessionid=FA983C18F8E4215670CC6A13E02BF5E4?notebook=1&entry=18>

While the number of schools<sup>5</sup> and School Nuclei<sup>6</sup> would make one think that the north of Potosí does not have any great problem of educational offers,<sup>7</sup> 58% of these institutions only provide up to third grade, 30% to fifth grade, and only 12% provide complete basic education. Thus, approximately 7,500 students have to transfer to another school in the course of their primary education. This situation is worsened by the long distances between the Associated Units or schools and the Central Units, which on average is eleven kilometres, but varying from one to sixty kilometres (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte de Bolivia/GTZ/Fundación Pueblo 2003).

**Map 1**

Bolivia: Geographic location of the departments of La Paz and Potosí, and of the municipalities where the programme is executed



5 Called Associated Units (Unidades Asociadas).

6 A núcleo escolar is a grouping of indigenous schools in a specific area, whether national, municipal or private, that work together directed by and with the collaboration of an educational establishment. (Gobierno de Bolivia, 1935 n.d.).

7 There are 790 educational institutions organised in 92 Núcleos Escolares.



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# 4. Execution and Management

Implementation of Student Lodging with Families is carried out in three phases:

- Preparation and planning
- Installation
- Operation

### i. The preparation and planning phase

The process begins with definition of the municipalities and educational nuclei where the programme is to be implemented. Based on the requests received, a series of informational meetings are held in each of the interested educational nuclei or municipalities, in which municipal, education and local authorities and civil society in general participate. The participants are informed in detail about how the lodging works, the minimum conditions that have to be met for its implementation to be viable, the responsibilities of all of the stakeholders and partners expected. These activities begin more or less six months before the start of the next school cycle.

The interested municipalities, through their authorities, approach the foundation and identify the school nuclei where they consider implementation of the programme to be necessary, as well as the probable number of potential child beneficiaries. This information is analysed by the foundation's team and corroborated by field visits.

The following is necessary in order for a programme to be implemented:

- Existence of the need and of a minimum number of children<sup>8</sup> at risk of abandoning their primary education due to the limited offer of education and the distance to the schools.
- A minimum number of families who are willing to be hosts and have the space necessary to lodge the scholarship

recipients.<sup>9</sup>

- Capacity of the Central Unit to receive a larger number of students.
- Overall willingness of the population to be an active party to the programme.
- Lack of problems among neighbouring communities.
- Other programmes to facilitate access and continuance in school, such as school transportation or boarding schools, do not exist.

Once the visits have been completed, the foundation assigns priorities to the educational nuclei taking into account criteria such as severity of the problem and the willingness of the municipal governments to contribute matching funds for the direct and indirect costs of the programme. These decisions are based on the budget available to it and on committed municipal matching funds. Once they are taken, negotiation begins with the municipal authorities of the locations where the model will be implemented.

These negotiations usually take place at the so-called "summits," participatory events in which the municipal authorities and the community assign priorities to the programmes and projects to be carried out in the municipality and draft the Annual Operational Programme (AOP). The counterpart's commitment should at the very least meet the following scheme: In the first year, the Foundation commits to contributing 60% of the total cost and the municipality must cover the remaining 40%. In the second year, the Foundation's contribution decreases to 40%, and for the third it will be 20%. Starting in the fourth year, 100% of the cost must be covered by the municipal budget, and the Foundation continues to advise on execution of the programme if the municipal authorities so desire. Once sufficient municipal funds are included in the AOPs, a tripartite agreement is signed by the

Fundación Pueblo, the municipal government, and the District Directorate of Education<sup>10</sup>, which then leads to the installation phase.

### ii. Installation phase

This phase starts with the first disbursement of matching funds by the municipal government, from which time the foundation opens the local office at the educational nuclei, contracts the local coordinator and promoter and purchases the furniture and utensils that will be loaned to the host families for the lodging of the scholarship recipients.

The promoter commences a task of awareness building and promotion, both in the distant communities and in the town where the Central Unit is located, with the aim of identifying the beneficiary families and those that could act as hosts, in that order.

For a child to be served by the project, the parents must present an application<sup>11</sup> to the local coordinator explaining the reasons why their child should be selected as scholarship recipient and who the receiving host family could be.

Selection of the scholarship recipients is the responsibility of a commission, composed of the Fundación Pueblo, the local coordinator, representatives of the parents of the potential scholarship recipients and local authorities. This is done in two stages. In the first one, applicants are pre-selected based on the following criteria:

- That they live in rural areas where the local school does not offer the grade to which they should advance and that their home is located more than an hour and a half from the Central Unit of the educational nucleus.<sup>12</sup>
- That both the applicants and their parents accept the conditions stipulated in the Agreement for Facilitating Access to Education<sup>13</sup> and the General Conditions of the Student Lodging with Families Programme.<sup>14</sup>

The applicants who meet these requirements pass to the second stage of selection, in which the following items are analysed:

1. *Seniority*: Children who have already been scholarship recipients during the previous year and who should, and wish to, continue studying have priority over new applicants.<sup>15</sup>
2. *Gender*: Under equal conditions, the applications of girls receive preference until achieving at least 50% participation in the programme.
3. *Distance*: The students from the most distant communities always receive preference.
4. *Corresponding grade*: The candidates with the least number of years remaining to complete basic education receive preference.
5. *Number of scholarship recipients per community*: Preference will be given to applicants from communities with a lower number of scholarship recipients.
6. *Siblings of scholarship recipients*: Once the above conditions have been met, priority will be given to brothers or sisters of scholarship

10 The District Directorate assumes responsibility for delivering information – including the attendance record and academic performance of the scholarship recipients – to the programme.

11 See the application form at [www.cepal.org/dds/InnovacionSocial/e/proyectos/bo/Hospedaje/ejemplo-solicitud-beca.pdf](http://www.cepal.org/dds/InnovacionSocial/e/proyectos/bo/Hospedaje/ejemplo-solicitud-beca.pdf).

12 This condition is not taken into account in the case of children with a handicap that prevents them from walking up to an hour and a half a day.

13 See the document at: <http://www.cepal.org/dds/InnovacionSocial/e/proyectos/bo/Hospedaje/convenio-facilitacion-acceso-educacion.pdf>.

14 See the document at: <http://www.cepal.org/dds/InnovacionSocial/e/proyectos/bo/Hospedaje/condiciones-generales.pdf>.

15 Over those who have had problems such as bad conduct or poor academic performance.

8 A minimum of thirty children per núcleo educativo.

9 At least one for every three or four scholarship recipients.

recipients who are going to continue in the programme, always provided that their parents have fully met the obligations defined in the Agreement for Facilitating Access to Education and the General Conditions of the Student Lodging with Families Programme.

At the same time, the families interested in becoming hosts are received and reviewed. As already mentioned, they are chosen with wide participation of community leaders who testify to the human qualities of the family group, in addition to showing that they can provide the living conditions that ensure there will be no crowding and the problems it may cause.

The choice of the family with whom the scholarship recipient will be lodged is a subject well discussed with his or her parents. They articulate what their preferences are and the ideal characteristics of the family they would like their children to live with. Using this information, at a meeting with the community authorities, the parents, the host families and the community in general, the coordinator proposes a distribution that is studied and decided upon. A key aspect of this decision is the trust the parents have in the host family. Once the decision is taken, the scholarship recipient, his or her parents, the coordinator and the host family sign the aforementioned Agreement for Facilitating Access to Education.

Once this decision is reached, the coordinator will work on ensuring the conditions for receiving the scholarship recipients: the recreational learning space (in Aymara, phujllana) and necessary materials, the reinforcement of learning, the dining hall, preparations in the homes of the host families, etc.

The space for afternoon activities is of great importance in the learning process of the scholarship recipients. On one hand, with the support of a tutor and with books that form a student library, they receive learning reinforcement and support for doing homework. But it also becomes a space for relaxation, play and cultural development through which intellectual and motor skills are stimulated by means of didactic games, music and the possibility of playing an instrument, singing and dancing, and likewise of playing sports.

### iii. Operation phase

On the eve of initiation of the school year, the scholarship recipients arrive with their parents at the Central Unit, where they meet the local coordinator and move into the home of their host family. The children must bring their hygiene items, bedclothes and school materials. The parents pay their annual contribution of Bs. 25 (US\$3.60) for the shared medical kit and the monthly contribution of Bs. 22 (US\$3.16) for meals.<sup>16</sup>

During the operation phase of the programme, the scholarship recipients attend school from Monday through Friday, and on weekends they return to their homes. The host families take care of them, and the local coordinator maintains very close contact with the parents, supervises and controls the behaviour and academic performance of the scholarship recipients, and supervises the host families. She keeps track of the daily class attendance of the programme's students. She likewise watches over and supervises the play activities and learning reinforcement and also controls the lunch served, whether by the host family or in the school dining hall. She also regularly visits the host families to ensure that they fulfil their duties. In case of conflict, the local coordinator also acts as a moderator.

Continuing the interest that the Foundation has always shown for the quality of education, teacher training and improvement courses are promoted in coordination with the District Directorates of Education. Up to 2008, as an integral part of its activities, the programme carried out constant training of teachers (Continuous Teacher Improvement) in which it ensured pedagogical refreshment and technical guidance through workshops and support in the classroom. Since 2009 this training is only done in a unit for which the District Directorate of Education requests it, a matter that is included in the tripartite agreement.

The objective of the workshops is to expand the teachers' repertoires with new methodologies for participatory, playful, varied and individualised teaching. In the classroom, the teachers were supported in their daily work, clearing up their questions and guaranteeing the correct and appropriate application of the content learned in the workshop. In some school nuclei other modes of teacher improvement have been implemented, such as the "Teacher's House," which is a space equipped with a library and audio-visual material where the teachers can prepare and plan their classes, guaranteeing better quality of teaching.

Above the local coordinators is a regional coordinator, who supports and supervises the work of the former and maintains constant contact with the municipal governments and the District Directorates of Education, informing them of the progress of the programme.

At the end of each school year, an evaluation workshop is held with the participation of the scholarship recipients, their parents, the host families, a representative of the municipal government, the teachers, the District Directorate of Education, and a community authority, if he

or she is interested. The recommendations and suggestions that emerge are taken into account for designing the following management period.



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<sup>16</sup> In some municipalities, by agreement with the community and the authorities, the meal contribution is lower for girls as a way of encouraging their participation.



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# 5

## Costs and Funding

The costs of the Student Lodging with Families programme are divided into those related to installation of the programme in a school nucleus and those of operation. The two cases have certain differences. As an example, the cost of the recent experience carried out in the municipality of Ckochas, northern Potosí is shared below. It currently serves 90 children from distant communities in three school nuclei: Seocochi, Checchi and Media Luna.

### i. Costs

| INSTALLATION COSTS                              | Annual amount (2009) in US\$ |
|---|------------------------------|
| Purchase of wooden bunks                        | 6,149                        |
| Purchase of foam mattresses                     | 5,171                        |
| Transportation expenses, furniture and fixtures | 1,087                        |
| Furnishing of local offices                     | 3,323                        |
| Furnishing of out-of-school spaces              | 1,523                        |
| Radio and newspaper advertisements              | 44                           |
| Salary of the promoter                          | 864                          |
| <b>Subtotal, Installation costs</b>             | <b>18,161</b>                |
| <b>OPERATION COSTS</b>                          |                              |
| Honoraria, regional coordinator                 | 4,344                        |
| Honoraria, local coordinators                   | 5,029                        |
| Honoraria, facilitators of study support        | 555                          |
| Payments to host families                       | 25,835                       |
| Telephone calls                                 | 114                          |
| Correspondence                                  | 31                           |
| Transportation and travel expenses              | 875                          |
| Office supplies                                 | 293                          |
| Shared medical kit                              | 321                          |
| <b>Subtotal, Operation costs</b>                | <b>37,397</b>                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    | <b>55,558</b>                |

Source: Fundación Pueblo, Bolivia

With the exception of the remuneration of the promoter and the radio advertisements, the installation costs are incurred only once in several years, unless more scholarship recipients are received or the necessary furnishings deteriorate. As can be seen, the installation cost per scholarship recipient is only US\$ 200. The operating costs, which are US\$ 415 per student per year, represent 67% of the total, and within this 46% is the payment to host families. In total, a scholarship recipient has an annual cost of US\$ 615, an investment that today, as a result of this programme, permits children living in scattered rural areas and at risk of exclusion from the education system to complete their basic education.

### ii. Funding

In 2010, the municipality of Ckochas, through the education budget, covered the totality of the payment to the host families. The installation costs are generally covered with resources of the Fundación Pueblo, which in the specific case of this municipality also enjoyed the support of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. As will be remembered, the parents of the scholarship recipients also contribute for meals and the shared medical kit. The general community itself, as in this specific case, donates the space for the offices and the recreational activities, and facilitates the lodging of the local manager.

Consequently, it is a model in which the efforts of various parties are brought together, having as basis the direct contribution made by the municipality from the education budget, ensuring the children their right to education and contributing to progress regarding the second Millennium Development Goal: universal basic education.



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# 6 ■ Project Results

After more than fourteen years of execution and expansion of the Student Lodging with Families model, during which more than 2,000 children have been served, it is possible to affirm that this programme:

- Has made possible the reduction of school dropout rates, contributing to increasing the number of children who manage to complete primary school at the corresponding age.
- Has made possible an increase in the enrolment and continued presence of girls, contributing to increasing gender equity. Today, parents trust the model and take their daughters to school with the peace of mind that they are going to receive the necessary care in a family environment.
- Has generated additional income for more than 500 women (hosts, cooks and managers) and, in many cases, for families where this is the only stable monetary income that they receive. This has allowed them to improve family nutrition and the overall conditions of their home. Serving as their household's income generator has empowered them and may lead them towards a path with greater gender equity in the region.
- Lastly, the schools that these scholarship recipients attend today have better qualified teachers who have been able to develop more creative and playful forms of teaching. Therefore, not only the scholarship recipients benefit, but also all of the children who attend these schools.

The programme has also achieved the recognition, trust, and support of all of the actors of the education community. The model is valued by parents, which is reflected in the growing number

of children served by it. The education authorities and teachers value and support it because of its contribution to the growth of the student body and to the quality of education in their school. The communities value it as is evident in the contributions they make, such as the construction and maintenance of the office or dining hall.

It is a programme that already forms part of the local education policy. A large part of its operating costs, especially the payment to the host families, is included in the Annual Operating Plan of the municipalities. The actions of the programme bring together both the political will of the authorities and mobilisation of the community.



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# 7

## Strengths and Weaknesses of the Programme

### i. Strengths

The Student Lodging with Families Programme provides a response to the difficulties, and therefore the exclusion, faced by children in isolated rural areas that prevent them from completing basic education. It is also based on principles rooted in the rural indigenous culture and therefore accepted by it. The model has also allowed other members of the communities where the schools are located, especially women, to benefit, too: they receive a monetary income that in many cases is the only stable income of the families. Likewise, it improves the quality of education for all of the students who attend the schools.

Another of its great strengths, which in fact has allowed it to become a public policy in several municipalities, is the relatively low installation and operation costs compared to other options, such as the traditional boarding school. The programme can start operating in a relatively short time. Lastly, there is a good level of involvement and participation of the community in all phases of the programme. The co-responsibility of all parties encourages, for example, the host families to invest money in improving their homes, the municipality to provide its matching funds and parents to make their contributions.

### ii. Weaknesses

However, the programme is not exempt from problems or difficulties. For example, the necessary number of potential host families for the programme to operate with reasonable fixed costs does not always exist in the “host” location. Unfortunately, a solution has not yet been found for this case. Another equally important issue is that when dealing with very poor communities, which is often the case, many families face great economic limitations for carrying out the required

home improvements, especially the requirement that the scholarship recipients have a separate space for sleeping. On some occasions, this has been achieved over time by the families’ decision to allocate part of their income to this end, on others they have enjoyed the support of civil society organisations. For instance, this problem was faced in Cayimbaya, but it was enough to give the families time and they themselves made all of the necessary improvements.

Another problem that the programme has faced, especially in the most rural Aymara communities, is the fear of exposing oneself and running risks such as those implicit in the care of “someone else’s child.” To handle this problem, the programme has worked closely with the entire community. In this regard, it is recommended that programme leaders have advanced in-depth knowledge of the idiosyncrasies and customs of the respective population, in addition to actively involve the local, municipal, and national authorities and the population in general, for the replication of the programme.

While it could be thought that ensuring the correct behaviour of the host families could represent a great challenge, this has not been the case as the communities commit to the programme and support the local manager responsible for such supervision. This way of working is fundamental to be able to detect any possible problem. For example, once a host family stopped fulfilling its obligation of caring for and duly feeding the scholarship recipients, a situation that was quickly perceived by a neighbour who reported it to the manager. After rapid verification of the situation, the scholarship recipients assigned to that family were relocated to a new one accepted by the parents of the children. Fortunately, due to this constant supervision and the careful selection of host families, there has been no case of violence or child abuse to date.



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## Innovative Elements of the Programme

### i. Reinvention of ancestral customs

The programme has been able to adapt an ancestral custom to the needs of today's society, avoiding child labour as a form of payment. In a creative way, it has contributed to increasing enrolment and the continued retention of children from isolated rural areas in school. In this case, it is used only for the completion of basic education, but it could well be used for other levels, including technical training.

### ii. Community participation and empowerment

The programme's truly participatory way of working with both the local and municipal authorities and its achievements have made it possible for the programme to be funded by the municipal education budget. As a public policy, it makes the expansion to many other municipalities possible. It also eliminates dependence on the unstable resources of civil society organisations.

It has become a source of stable monetary income in communities where this is very scarce. In addition, in the majority of cases women are the recipients of the income. There are widely known benefits for the living conditions of a family that come from women being the earners and thus able to determine how the income is used. Also, the proposal presents a relatively low cost of implementation and operation, which makes it easier to carry out especially in contexts with budget limitations.

### iii. An alternative model to traditional boarding schools

The programme develops an alternative model to traditional homes, such as the Hogar Juvenil Campesino (home for youth coming from the rural areas), or boarding schools. According to the Foundation's Director, one of its principal

advantages is the family environment in which these children live, where they are able to maintain their customs, their type of food and, above all, the affection of a family. Being located relatively close to their family homes, they can spend the weekend in their own families and not lose their ties. Given that problems such as those mentioned in the previous section can be overcome, we can emphasise the potential replication of this programme. As can be seen from the replication in various municipalities of northern Potosí, the programme can be adapted to many contexts, with its essence and general design being maintained. Above all, the existence of clear rules, processes, and written agreements for managing the programme makes it possible for interested parties in other places to easily decide which components of the programme can be adopted and which need to be modified according to the specific context.



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A central element for being able to replicate this model is to ensure that the parents of potential scholarship recipients feel it is safe to “hand over” their children, and especially their daughters, to a family in order to permit them to study at a nearby school. This is very common in the ancestral traditions of many of the descendants of indigenous peoples in the Latin American region, and therefore does not imply great problems. In places where the custom does not exist, it is essential that the programme coordinating institution be able to create this confidence. A key aspect of it is the ability of parents to meet the host family in advance and decide on whether or not they are well-suited to host the children.

It is also essential to have families, and especially women, who are willing to be hosts and take responsibility for caring for the scholarship recipients in the community where the programme is to be established. They must be motivated not only by the possibility of receiving an income but also by the commitment to helping these children as though they were their own sons and daughters.

In order to expand coverage, it is important that government authorities, at least at the local level, allocate resources for the payments to the host families and that there be an institution, whether public or private, that coordinates and supervises the correct functioning of the programme.



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# 9 ■ Conditions and Recommendations for Creative Replication of the Model

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