

# SEED to FEED

IFS Project Newsletter , April 2012, Issue 2



## PLANTING SEEDS...CHANGING LIVES

What once was La Villa Real de Tapacarí, Cochabamba – a splendor of farms, mills, blacksmiths and majestic weeping willow trees – is now one of the poorest and most food insecure municipalities in Bolivia. To help lower poverty rates, reduce chronic malnutrition and improve food security in Tapacarí, USAID’s Integrated Food Security (IFS) Project is supporting sustainable agricultural production, forestry and the creation of natural resources committees in 22 communities of Tapacarí’s Escalera watershed. USAID is helping local families to improve productivity of crops, livestock production and forestry development to increase income and boost the rural economy, contributing to food security and sustainable management of natural resources. The Escalera watershed is a vital resource for agricultural crops in this arid region. The sustainability of the watershed will depend on how this natural resource is used and protected.

"We want to strengthen our knowledge on agricultural production through simple practices and improve our crops with improved and certified seeds," says Reynaldo Gutierrez, who is helping lead the USAID activity in the community.



This past year, USAID has trained 25 local leaders, such as Gutierrez, in harvesting, post-harvesting and sustainable natural resources management. The leaders are now teaching other community members how to sustainably harvest their crops. More than 10 workshops have been conducted in 22 different communities to train local leaders how to reduce threats to biodiversity while promoting the sustainable use of the natural resources base upon which productive activities occur. The activity benefits 658 families – nearly 3,000 people.

USAID also delivered almost 90,000 kilos of certified seed of alfalfa, potato, wheat, barley and oat to the Tapacarí community in 2011. The seeds are an improved variety over traditional ones used, producing 50% percent more when harvested properly. These certified seeds have been adapted to the weather of the high valleys and have a 98% success rate.

"Before, no one came to help. We had no technical assistance, and climate conditions ruined our lands. Life was not easy," said Gutierrez while looking over Tapacarí’s majestic horizon. "Our families and our animals from now on will have food, and our life will be better. I know."

### EDITORIAL

Welcome to Seed to Feed, the newsletter of the Integrated Food Security Project in Bolivia. The IFS Project is striving to help the poor in Bolivia’s most remote areas to become more food secure. From helping small enterprises grow to assisting municipalities to develop their own food security plans, the IFS Project is applying a multi-level, integrated approach to food security with activities that translate aid into action. In this issue, you will read about committed local health agents who walk from home to home teaching families about nutrition and health. You will learn about communities that have irrigation for their crops for the first time in a decade and discover how one group of women is increasing their household incomes and contributing to their community’s overall food security through a small egg production company. I hope you enjoy reading about the project’s achievements in the past three months.



# Big profits from good eggs



Watch our videos at:  
[www.ifsproject.org](http://www.ifsproject.org)

In the small rural community of Pongo B2 in the municipality of Qui-me in Inquisivi Province, USAID’s Integrated Food Security Project is helping rural microenterprises, such as the Egg Producers Association of the community Pongo B2, to increase their incomes and contribute to the community’s overall food security. Eggs are an affordable and excellent source of protein in areas that lack access to a variety of high quality, nutrient-rich foods. Egg protein can play an essential role in decreasing rates of malnutrition, particularly in children. In this municipality, 51.5% percent of the population lives in extreme poverty, and 80.7% of the children suffer from chronic malnutrition.

*“I am a housewife and I have my own business. My family is proud of me. I dream of having a huge place full of hens – 1,000 or 2,000 hens that will produce so many eggs!”*  
 – Primitiva Choque Calle

The Association began in 2010 when 10 women joined together to enter a contest held by the municipality to promote a stronger community and economic growth. Contestant Luisa Choque Flores said, “We had to draw “talking maps”, reflecting how we were in regard to housing, food and natural resource use, while showing how we wanted to be in two years, which we presented through our egg producers’ company. The municipality gave us first prize, which was almost US\$150, for presenting the most innovative and realistic project. With that money we fixed this place that was a waste dump, gave US\$7 to each of us and started to buy some hens.”

When the IFS Project first began providing assistance in Pongo B2 a year later in 2011, the small enterprise had only 100 hens and the place where the producers kept the hens was in total disrepair. Hens frequently died, and production was low with 50 eggs or fewer every two days. With USAID’s assistance, a new facility was constructed, 300 additional hens were purchased and the women have learned how to breed, feed and nurture the hens to ensure healthy hens and the best quality of eggs possible. The additional hens and the improved quality has increased production to 400 eggs per day, generating US\$900 a month from the eggs they sell versus US\$70 they used to make before USAID’s assistance. The association is saving most of the money to buy a car to transport the eggs to other areas, and to purchase 200 more hens.

Egg producer Primitiva Choque Calle, said, “We started this and have to make our business grow every day. We thank USAID for all the assistance. Now we can make Pongo B2 a better place for our families.”



**BEFORE**

**AFTER**





## Municipalities Build Food Security

In the past year, eight municipalities created Municipal Councils on Food and Nutrition (COMANs, for its acronym in Spanish) with support from the IFS Project in efforts to strengthen municipal management for integrated food security and adaptation to climate change in: Quime, Ichoca, Caracollo, Tapacarí, Anzaldo, Mizque, Toro Toro and Ravelo. COMANs work primarily on executive, legislative and technical management issues and consist of municipal authorities as well as trade union representatives from production servers, and public and private institutions.

USAID's IFS Project supported workshops in each of the municipalities to develop essential skills of 54 municipal public servants - elected officials and municipal officials - to design and carry forward their own comprehensive municipal sustainable food security strategy.

The IFS Project evaluated the municipalities' level of knowledge and skills around food safety, risk management and climate change to ensure the workshop trainings were relevant and at the appropriate level. The workshop focused on improving the capacity of the municipality to manage administrative matters at different organizational levels and to assist the municipality in formulating its POA (Programmatic Annual Operations) with an integrated approach to food security. The Food Security Strategy (EMSA, for its acronym in Spanish) development process has been highly participatory with the inclusion of local decision makers, and highlighted the limited number of development agencies and

cooperation in the territory, which encourage actors to design EMSA management purposes funding. Guidelines for the development of the EMSA were established at the workshop in order to identify potential programs and projects to support the strategy.

Alejandro Rodriguez, Municipal Mayor and authority of the Federation of the Regional Union of Natives in Caracollo, has demonstrated a strong commitment to strengthening food security in his municipality. This commitment is shared and supported by the IFS Project of USAID/Bolivia through the coordinated implementation of initiatives and projects destined to fighting against malnutrition.

"This is a responsibility to serve society and fight against malnutrition with equality, because when a boy or a girl is well fed, he/she can study and live better," says Alejandro.



## Health and Nutrition Door to Door



Watch our videos at:  
[www.ifsproject.org](http://www.ifsproject.org)

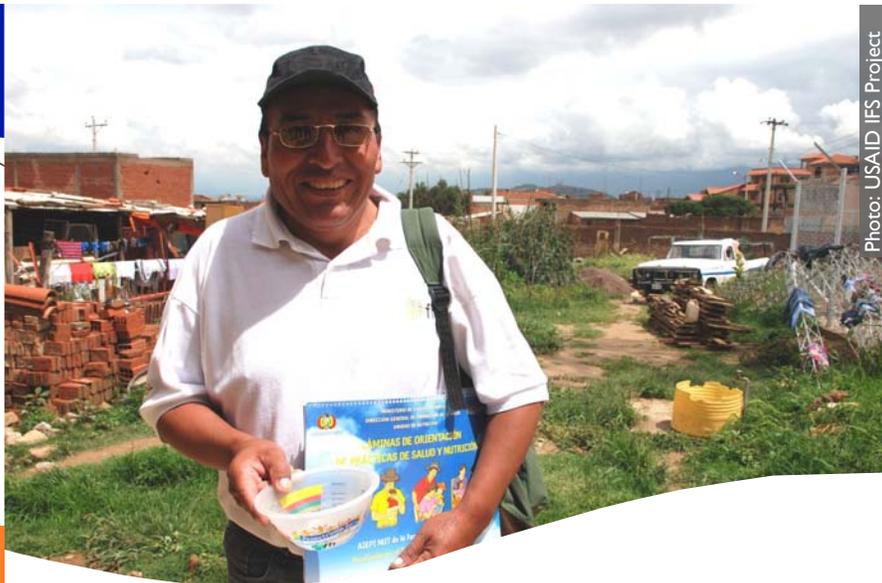


Photo: USAID IFS Project

"I work walking from house to house knocking on their door, and mothers receive me with great affection," says community health agent Dionisio Mamani Flores. "If we didn't do this home care, if we didn't worry about the children in our communities, when they grow up the malnourished will stay in the countryside and the well-nourished will be at the university. It's all thanks to the nutrition they receive up before they are five years old," he says.

In Bolivia's remote rural communities, the lack of nutrition information, education, and knowledge, combined with cultural practices, has resulted in an inadequate use of food, water supplies, and sanitation. In 2010, USAID's Integrated Food Security Project began collaborating with eight municipalities in Bolivia to educate communities and families on improved nutrition and environmental sanitation and to provide better access to health and nutrition information and resources.

*"My satisfaction is that children grow up healthy and that some day when I see them big and strong they would remember me as an important part of their development, and they would tell me, 'Thank you, Dionisio for all your help.'"*

—Dionisio Mamani Flores

Community health agents supported by USAID go from house to house educating mothers on how much and how often to feed their children and on what kinds of food are the most nutritious. Before these services, the mothers often fed their children too little and too seldom as well as provided meals low in important vitamins.

Going from house to house requires time and patience from the community health agents as they talk to mothers in different areas and communities about the importance of nutrition. As volunteers, they leave behind their own activities at home in their efforts to reach the many mothers who do not have the time or opportunity to visit a health center. Home visits allow the mother to feel more comfortable talking to the agent and enables the whole family to participate in the discussion.

Many rural communities in Bolivia lack a variety and supply of vegetables. Therefore, iron, vitamin A and nutrient supplements are necessary for a healthy diet. The health agents teach mothers about the importance of boiling water, how to prepare nutritious foods and how to give oral rehydration salts to the children when they suffer from diarrhea. The objective of working with community health agents is to produce positive changes in the population's health, as well as to strengthen community mechanisms for participation in prevention and promotion activities that contribute to the development of skills for self-care in the community setting.





## Climate Change

# Watering the Future!



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In Bolivia's high Andean communities, climate change has led to sporadic rainfall, unpredictable weather patterns, rapid melting of snow and glaciers and unhealthy watersheds. In turn, poor subsistence farming communities have been left without enough water to irrigate their crops, requiring them to travel further each day to collect water in order to survive.

In late 2011 and early 2012, USAID began providing technical assistance and equipment to help food vulnerable communities in three municipalities (Caracollo, Ichoca and Quime) to build resilience and adapt to climatic changes. In the small community of Kala Cruz in Caracollo, USAID provided 10 water pumps and 10 water tanks that can hold 400 liters of water. An additional 20 water pumps and 20 water tanks will be constructed in two other communities of Caracollo by the end of January.

Emma Alvarez said, "Before USAID gave us these water pumps I used to walk to the river and dig to get water. I carried at least 60 liters of water a day, 45 minutes away from my crops, going there three times a day so I can water my crops."

Roman Salas Sarate, a father of seven from Kala Cruz, used to dig in dry river beds to find water for his crops. "Water is life. Without it everything dies," he said. "I'm so thankful we have our own water pump now, and we will soon install water tanks for a drip line irrigation system. I can't wait to see my crops grow and diversify, and I'm sure that my family's life will improve."

In Quime and Ichoca, USAID will establish irrigation systems and educate local communities on climate change adaptation and its importance in rural food security. Communities will learn how to study disaster risk patterns associated with climate change effects on watersheds and how to manage the risks of climate change through appropriate technologies. The findings and lessons learned will be shared throughout Andean communities in Bolivia, benefiting more than 10,000 people in the three municipalities.



USAID is providing rural Andean communities with water tanks and pumps along with the knowledge they need to adapt their farming practices to climatic changes. The reliable source of water and technical assistance will help to improve food security for more than 10,000 people.

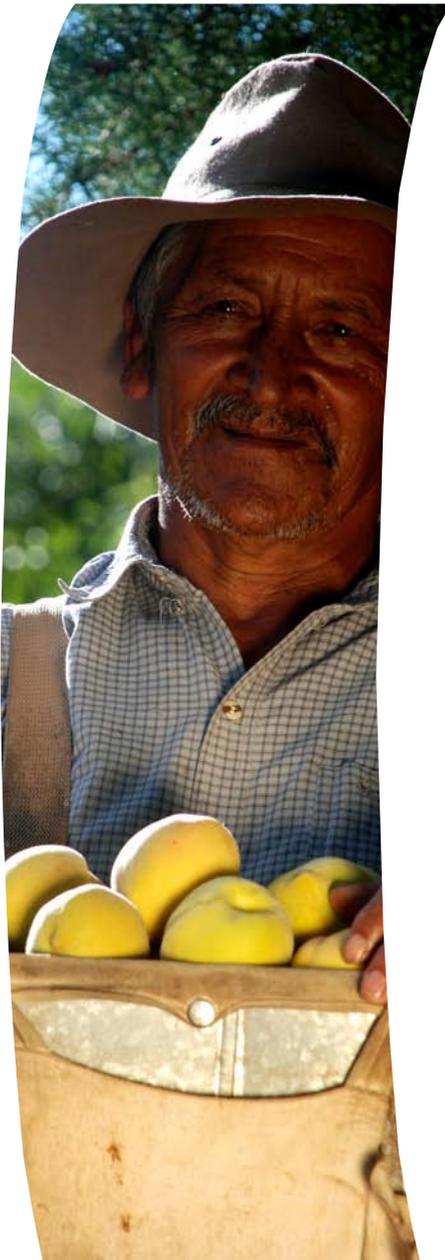
# Fruit for Profit!



Watch our videos at:  
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Photo: USAID IFS Project



In the municipality of Torotoro in central Bolivia, most of the population lives below the poverty line. Bolivia's National Statistics Institute ranks the area at index 5, representing the highest level of poverty. With a poverty rate at a staggering 98.7 percent, the municipality has one of the worst rates in Bolivia.

The majority of the municipality's households farm to generate enough income to live, relying on their production of lemons, guavas, sweet potato and oranges. But competition is fierce in the local markets with sales prices often lower than production costs. In 2011, the Agricultural Producers Association of Caine, which includes 11 communities of Canton Julo in Torotoro, was contracted by the municipality to supply jelly for school breakfasts. The farmers produced their fruit jellies in a small room under poor conditions and absent of basic food hygiene standards.

The jelly producers requested technical assistance to modernize their production. In November 2011, USAID constructed a fruit processing plant to meet Good Manufacturing Practices, a set of standards that help to ensure products are consistently manufactured while maintaining good hygiene and high safety standards. Such standards will allow for certification in the future and help the farmers provide quality assurance for their jellies, which can bring in higher prices for their products. USAID also provided the Association with training on infrastructure maintenance as well as technical support to help the Association's more than 100 producers improve harvest and post-harvest practices.

Adjacent to the jelly manufacturing plant, USAID constructed a building to help the producers display and promote their products to visitors. The building will also serve as a place to promote other products offered by the municipality of Torotoro.

*Jelly producer Teófila Vargas now says with a big smile, "I never thought we could have this. I know now for certain that our lives will improve and that our products will go further than just local markets."*

# Snapshots



## Strategizing for Food Security

In January 2011, the IFS Project assisted the Hornuni Community in the Municipality of Quime to carry out a reforestation activity on the forest land of the Hornuni Education Unit. Approximately 20 people, including students, teachers, parents and the director of Local Economy of the Quime Municipal Government took part in reforesting denuded areas with 600 forest species, including tara, pine and cedar. Reforestation will increase the resilience of vulnerable populations to the impacts of climate change and are complementary to the IFS Project's construction of ecological stoves, which optimize energy consumption, contribute to better food preparation, improve health and protect the environment. The reforestation efforts were also carried out in the municipality of Tapacari in strategic alliance with the institution Sumaj Q'amaña. A total of 32,000 plantlets were delivered for 32 hectares of forest.

## BCC on the GO!

The IFS Project is promoting changes in cultural attitudes, social norms and institutional policies through a Behavior Change Communication (BCC) strategy to create an environment that supports the promotion of food security. In January 2012 the IFS Project conducted a qualitative study through focus groups and interviews in nine communities in the three municipalities of Quime, Mizque and Torotoro. During the study, mothers, fathers, children, farmers, municipal authorities, community health workers, teachers, local communicators and technicians participated in activities such as focus groups and interviews around agriculture, infrastructure and sustainable use of natural resources. This was part of formative research that reviewed the collection of information and a qualitative study on the main barriers and practices and influences that prevent or hinder the adoption of behaviors aimed at providing food security to the population of the selected municipalities. Drawing on the research, the Food Security Behavior Change Communication Strategy was designed and will begin being implemented in June 2012 to provide people with the knowledge, skill, encouragement and support they need to change their behavior in a way that leads to greater food security. Typical activities of the BCC strategy use multiple channels to transmit messages and emphasize the needs of a well-defined target audience.



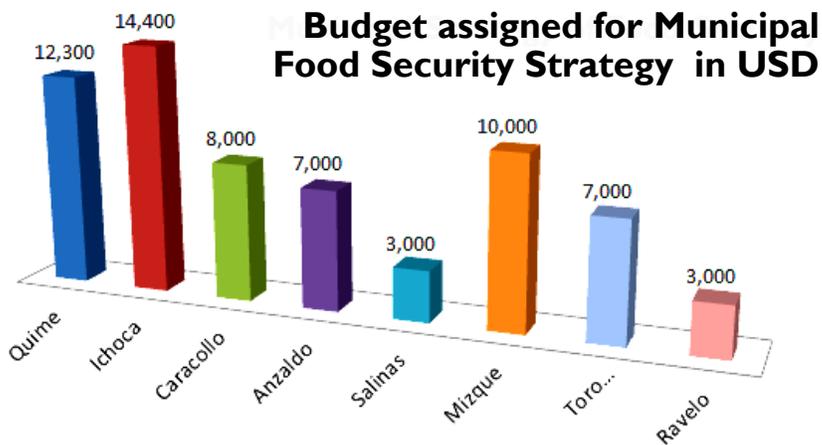
## Better Prices = Better Markets!

The IFS Project seeks to provide access to market information to 3,000 farmers, producers, rural entrepreneurs and local governments/municipalities implementing the Agricultural Market Information System (SIMA). This activity is improving the decision-making capacity in agribusiness and production planning as well as helping to develop and implement market information services tailored to producers. The SIMA activity has strengthened capacities in analysis and use of information on pricing, production costs and profit/loss. As part of this activity the IFS Project has produced three books on market information: 1.) *Markets and Historical Prices – Relevant Agriculture and Livestock Products in the Occidental Bolivia*, 2.) *Market Weights and Measurements – Used in the Commercializing of Occidental Bolivia* and 3.) *In Order to Win You Must Know How to Sell – Production Costs and Prices on the Markets*.

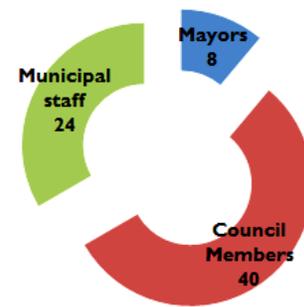


# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

In January 2012, the IFS Project trained 72 public servants at the municipal level to build the capacity of eight municipalities to design and manage a comprehensive food security strategy for their respective municipality.



## Number of municipal employees trained in designing/managing a Municipal Food Security Strategy



My little brothers and I are healthier thanks to the visit of the health community agents that IFS Project sends to us!!

Laura, 11 years old  
Cochabamba, Bolivia

Photo: USAID - IFS Project

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