

2021 PROGRAM REPORT

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Bolivia Kids

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BOLIVIA KIDS

BOLIVIA KIDS WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN, THEIR FAMILIES, LOCAL LEADERS AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO TACKLE THE ROOT CAUSES OF BARRIERS FACING VULNERABLE CHILDREN.



Together, at Project Sariry, we provide 75 children and their extended families with education, primary health care, a lunch program, and unique opportunities to develop leadership and life skills. Our team of instructors also builds capacity in the larger community by providing teacher-training and technical support to surrounding elementary schools, promoting child protection and family violence prevention, and working to challenge beliefs and attitudes that foster gender inequality.



The community of Tilata is made up of rural migrant families who have come to the city in search of economic opportunities and better quality education and services for their children. It is an extremely poor and under-served community.

Below is a summary of our programs and activities in the past year.



BOLIVIA & THE PANDEMIC

2021 WAS A TREMENDOUS YEAR OF GROWTH FOR BOLIVIA KIDS AND OUR LOCAL PARTNERS.

The pandemic continued to present many challenges, especially with respect to ongoing school closures in Bolivia. However, the distressing and prolonged lack of access for students to formal education inspired our team to pursue new partnerships and innovate program delivery by providing several new initiatives, most notably **'Mobile Education'** for 115 children and their families and **'Outdoor Adventures'** for 25 adolescents.



Variable and sustained quarantine restrictions have been in place in Bolivia since March 2020. Although access to work has gradually improved, students lost almost two full years of schooling and only returned to class full-time in late 2021. Virtual education was offered sporadically and unevenly across the country during this time and proved especially difficult for low-income and rural families to access. For perspective, only 10% of Bolivians have access to fixed internet. Despite ongoing school closures, our local partners at the Sariry Education Centre opened their doors full-time in February 2021 to provide children with much-needed in-person educational support, psychological support, and a daily hot lunch.



The staff at the Sariry Centre noticed significant learning losses in the students, which was exacerbated for many by learning disabilities and mental health issues. Through the Mobile Education program, Sariry staff engaged in community outreach and one-on-one family home visits, armed with educational materials, books, games, and computer tablets loaded with educational apps. The focus of this program was to provide intensive, quality education and emotional support to children and their families to make up learning losses and ensure that the pandemic does not derail their aspirations and commitment to pursuing higher levels of education.



HEALTH & NUTRITION

MALNUTRITION IS A CONSIDERABLE ISSUE IN THE COMMUNITY.

Food scarcity is frequently identified by the families we serve as their most pressing challenge. While the Sariry Centre was closed in 2020, we continued to provide ongoing food support via a community food-delivery program to ensure that our previous success in eliminating malnourishment among children enrolled at the Sariry Centre was not reversed. In 2021, we reopened our full-service hot lunch program at the centre to 75 children and their families without disruption.

This steady supply of food support during an unprecedented economically challenging time provided essential nourishment for growing children, as well as much needed food security for families, which has been challenged by higher food prices due to the pandemic and now the war in Ukraine. The overwhelming stress and anxiety associated with food insecurity can put a strain on caregiving behaviours and adult mental health, which can subsequently translate into toxic levels of stress in children, adversely impacting their long-term growth and healthy development.

Twice this year, the Sariry Centre hosted a team of doctors to provide primary health check-ups for children in the broader community (between 100-300 children attend). These examinations identify children with chronic malnourishment, anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies. Children with extreme cases are invited to join in the hot lunch program and are provided with vitamin supplements.

At the last examination, 0% of the 75 children attending the Sariry program were malnourished in contrast to 40% of children who are malnourished in the wider community. 22% of children attending the Sariry program are overweight because families are largely consuming affordable and widely available starchy staple foods. To support families to incorporate more nutrient-rich foods in their diets, staff frequently provide nutrition workshops in the broader community to educate parents about their children's nutritional needs for healthy growth and development, and to help identify locally-grown vegetables and proteins that could be readily and affordably integrated into their diets.

As part of our health promotion strategy, staff delivered a variety of workshops in 2021 to caregivers and children at the Sariry Centre, as well as to families, students and teachers from the local elementary and junior high school, which serves 500 students. Information was also disseminated through home visitation, which provided a wonderful opportunity to support 40 families to incorporate new strategies. An important topic this year was prevention of communicable diseases, especially COVID 19, with a focus on healthy sanitation practices, basic health principles, and vaccination. 100% of the staff, parents and children that attend Project Sariry were vaccinated in 2021. Other workshop topics included: youth leadership; child, adolescent and adult mental health; family violence prevention; and, early child development.

EDUCATION

A CORNERSTONE OF BOLIVIA KIDS PROGRAMMING IS TO PROVIDE EDUCATION SUPPORT TO MARGINALIZED CHILDREN SO THAT THEY CAN REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL BY ACCESSING HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION

In the past two years, educational support has become especially important for students given the prolonged disruption to formal education and resulting learning losses. In 2020, Bolivia Kids and our local partner, the Sariry Foundation, developed and piloted 'Mobile Education,' which took education to the streets! Instructors met with children in small groups outside their homes and participated in family home visits. Together, we expanded the program in 2021 in partnership with the Breteau Foundation, and we intend for it to become a core program going forward. We also expanded the Sariry Centre's computer lab by wiring it with internet cable and purchasing 4 computers, 2 printers and a projector, which has supported many students in the community to complete and improve the quality of their school work.

BRETEAU FOUNDATION

Our partnership with the Breteau Foundation is focused on utilizing technology to expand access to quality education, improve academic engagement, and provide customized support to children with learning disabilities. Breteau Foundation provided 20 high-quality educational apps that have been loaded on to 30 computer tablets. These apps offer assessment tools, customized learning plans, and

engaging games that support enriched learning in literacy, math, science and critical thinking.

Breteau also provided Sariry staff with 8 intensive training sessions on how to use technology - specifically the apps - to positively impact student learning, as well as 1000 educational booklets to be distributed to families in the community. Bolivia Kids provided funds for additional staff for this initiative, as well as for 30 tablets (although unfortunately 15 were stolen when the centre was robbed in December) and we intend to provide more support as the program grows.



EDUCATION CONT'

The tablets, books and educational materials are used during home visits with 40 children, aged 13 years and under, and their parents, with a priority focus on preparing children 6 years and under for school readiness and success. 95% of the pre-schoolers who participated in this program are now prepared to succeed at school. Sariry staff also use the tablets to provide enriched learning opportunities for 75 children at Project Sariry and an additional 40 children with learning disabilities at the nearby elementary school that require extra support. The school administration has requested that we provide enriched support to a minimum of 80 students next year.

The Mobile Education program has been widely embraced by students, parents, teachers and Sariry staff. Parents reported having a deeper understanding of their children's learning needs and have adopted new strategies to encourage and participate in their children's education. Given that most of the children have learning disabilities, this is a significant positive shift in parent perspectives, which previously expressed concern about 'lazy' children. All parent participants expressed feeling more confident and capable in supporting their children's learning at home and reported that their children made substantial learning gains. Similarly, student participants expressed feeling pride, happiness, success and a strong desire to continue with their learning. Their confidence, joy and motivation increased exponentially in correlation with their improved scores in reading and math. Children indicated that the fun and novelty of the educational apps and the engaging one-on-one and small group support made it easy to repeat exercises and reinforce concepts.

The local elementary school teachers also expressed feeling highly motivated after participating in the program. They indicated that they learned new strategies and gained important insights on how to better support children with learning disabilities. They remarked that their students are more eager, inspired and creative, and are taking more risks in their learning. Next year, our aim is to build further capacity at the school by training teachers to work with technology and by hopefully providing the school with additional educational resources, especially books, and its own set of tablet devices.

Sariry staff were most inspired by the impressive gains that students made, especially those with significant learning challenges. Pre and post-testing revealed that all 40 children with learning disabilities improved, and in some instances, substantially so. Sariry staff shared that this experience was a notable opportunity for professional development and a considerable achievement for their team. They have renewed motivation to work with children with learning disabilities because they know that with targeted support, students can thrive and succeed at school, and pursue higher education and professional careers.

The Mobile Education program resulted in a measurable positive change for students - both emotionally and academically - through support at home, in school, and at the centre. Staff are excited to imbed this strategy in our core work going forward for its potential to lead to long-term benefits for the entire community. It is predicted that the prolonged closure of schools in Bolivia will lead to higher rates of school desertion. The intensive support provided by our team has ensured that 100% of children enrolled in Project Sariry have returned, highly engaged, to school!

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



We are excited to share the 2021 recipient of our post-secondary scholarship, Erika, successfully completed her first year of a 6-year Business Accounting degree at the University of El Alto. Erika worked hard to complete grade 12 on her own, with support from the Mobile Education program, and then successfully applied to the university to start her post-secondary journey in February 2021. The scholarship covers all costs that are associated with post-secondary education that would otherwise create significant barriers for entry (transportation, books, materials, course fees, food, photocopies, etc). We intend to offer 2 scholarships in 2022.

A letter from Erika reflecting on her first year is attached to this report.

MENTAL HEALTH & PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

BOLIVIA KIDS CONTINUED TO WORK WITH PROJECT SARIRY IN 2021 TO PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT AND CRITICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT TO CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

As children and youth returned to the project in early 2021, the instructors noticed a marked deterioration in their mental health, with many children overwhelmed by fear, anxiety and depression. Families accessed support from psychologists through telephone conversations, videoconferencing and in-person visits at home and at the centre. Forty-two children and youth (and their families) received sustained psychological care throughout 2021 to address issues predominately related to family breakdown, low self-esteem and challenges related to learning disabilities. 80% of those who received support indicated that they are now capable of reflecting on their challenges to find solutions in adverse situations, and they feel positive about themselves and hopeful about world around them.

The prolonged school closures and crushing isolation during the acute phase of the pandemic was particularly difficult for adolescents in the community. As some restrictions lifted in 2021, Bolivia Kids partnered with a local initiative, Jatha, to bring an **Outdoor Adventure program** to youth at the Sariry Centre and also to a second youth centre in the nearby city of El Alto, called Tiahuantinsuyo (25 youth total). We launched this pilot program in late 2021 (evaluations pending) and if it proves successful, we



collectively hope to expand the program to serve more youth in the broader community.

The program includes weekly youth meetings, leadership workshops, speakers relevant to youth, mentorship, and 12 outdoor excursions (monthly) that include activities like repelling down an office building and multi-day overnight treks through the Andes Mountains. The objectives of this program include: nurturing the growth of meaningful bonds between youth by building trust, empathy and understanding in novel situations; developing greater self-confidence and resilience by cultivating important skills like problem-solving, communication, collaboration and risk assessment; and, reducing the negative effects of stress and trauma by fostering a connection to the outdoors.

MENTAL HEALTH & PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT CONT'

To date, anecdotal feedback indicates that youth are feeling significantly more supported and connected to others, and are subsequently feeling more confident about themselves and their futures. The majority of these youth had never left their communities previously. Experiencing the Bolivian wilderness has presented a wonderful opportunity for growth and self-discovery.

Sariry staff continued to provide workshops throughout 2021 to community leaders, school teachers, students and families on the prevention and intervention in household violence. They also organized family outings to the historical site of Tiahuanaco and local parks. Children and youth organized their fourth "Clean Up the Neighbourhood" event with support from the municipality. They were very pleased to report that they picked up significantly less garbage this time, which suggests their neighbourhood campaign is having an impact on people's propensity to litter!



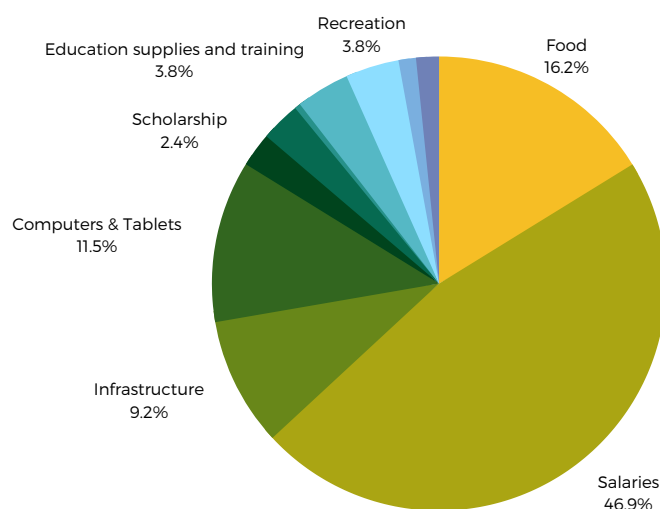
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

WE WERE ABLE TO CONDUCT MUCH-NEEDED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CENTRE IN 2021.

We were able to conduct much needed infrastructure improvements to the centre in 2021. The roof was replaced to address rain leakage. Interior walls that were water damaged were also replaced. The classrooms were renovated and the entire building was freshly painted, inside and outside. We also connected the building to the district natural gas system.



2021 PROGRAM INVESTMENT



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| Food | \$14,462 |
| Salaries | \$41,853 |
| Infrastructure Improvements | \$8185 |
| Computers and tablets: | \$10,290 |
| Scholarship | \$2170 |
| Psychological Support | \$2527 |
| Practicum student expenses | \$377 |
| Educational supplies and training | \$3415 |
| Recreation | \$3402 |
| Office Supplies and expenses | \$1106 |
| Building Maintenance and cleaning supplies: | \$1451 |

Total: \$89,238



ALL OF US AT BOLIVIA KIDS AND PROJECT SARIRY WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR SINCERE AND ENORMOUS GRATITUDE TO OUR SUPPORTERS.

The organizational resilience demonstrated by our local partner and the ability of our partnership to innovate and expand services during an extremely turbulent time is a direct outcome of your commitment and generous support. Thank-you!



THANK YOU!



A LETTER FROM ERIKA

[Translated from Spanish]

Hello Jane,

I send you this letter with love. Going to university has always been a dream of mine. At the same time, it is a tremendous challenge. When I got my letter of acceptance, you can imagine my surprise. At first, it brought me great joy - I was accomplishing my dreams - but then I started thinking... How am I going to pay for it? I live with my mom and our combined income would not be enough to pay for my studies.



Fortunately, I received a scholarship. As the days went on, I was learning a lot. Everything was new to me, and I was meeting very nice people, even though there were also some challenging times. I kept pushing forward. I learned how to think critically to succeed in university. I thought about who I want to be. And I also thought about the importance of being a professional to go into the workforce, which means we should not just be concerned with making money but also enjoying and doing good work at your job. While I was studying, I began to appreciate where I was, now studying at home. It is a comfortable place to be. On occasion, I was able to submit assignments in person at the University.



My favourite classes so far are basic accounting, commercial law, general administration and history. My highest grades are in commercial law, general administration, and basic accounting with an average of 90%. My lowest grade is 60% in mathematical analysis. The challenging part of university is that the classes have been virtual, making learning more challenging but day after day, I give it my all. Having to look at a monitor for hours on end is exhausting. However, I had the tools to succeed, like talking to my teacher and creating strategies that work for me, to make it less difficult than it need be for me to enjoy my studies.

On the other side of things, having the scholarship has made it much easier on my mom and me. It would have been a great expense, purchasing materials, internet, photocopies, books, transportation, etc... And for me, the expenses have all been paid for, allowing me to focus on my studies without having to worry about the economic hardships, and not worrying my mom.

I just want to finish by saying how thankful I am to Bolivia Kids. I am in debt to you with all the support you have given me. If it wasn't for all your help, I wouldn't be studying right now, trying to better myself. I hope that one day I can help some other young adult who has dreams similar to mine and that the economic gaps are no longer barriers for someone following their dreams to attend university and contribute to the world by joining the workforce. Thank-you very much for everything!

With lots of love,
Erika