

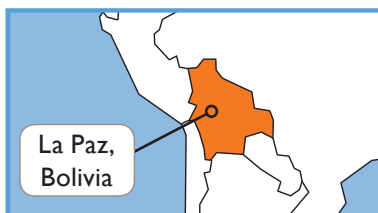
# CASE STUDY: BOLIVIA

## LA PAZ URBAN PILOT PROJECT

Urbanisation is a global megatrend that is changing the aid and development landscape. The world's population is already over half 'urban', with more than one billion people living in slums.

World Vision (WV) has established a Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming that is leading urban pilot projects in six countries. The pilots are testing innovative, locally driven urban poverty solutions such as securing urban land rights, influencing municipal policy implementation, and creating livelihood opportunities.

The Bolivia Urban Pilot Project promotes the active participation of children and youth in local governance processes in La Paz.



**Project name:** 'United to Live Better' and 'Sowing Unity'

**First Phase Start Date:** October 2010

**First Phase End Date:** September 2015

**Target population:** 15,600 children (an estimated 30–50% are child labourers)

**Direct project participants:** Approx. 6,300 children & youth, and approx. 800 adults

**La Paz metro total population:** 2,364,235 (2008 est.)

**Proportion of national urban population in slums:** 50.4% (2005 est.)

**Annual national slum population growth rate:** 2% (2001 est.)

**Projected national urban population by 2030:** 9,799,000

## PROJECT CONTEXT

The focus of the programmes has been around the empowerment and security of children, adolescents and youth in 38 neighbourhoods spread across three districts in La Paz. The project area is situated in an area where over half of the population lives in conditions of poverty. Children and youth, in particular, are afflicted by domestic violence; a lack of protection during the day; few opportunities for positive use of free time; the formation of groups (gangs) with risky behaviour; early pregnancy; and the lack of formal employment of parents. Further, the community experiences low levels of organisation, mobilisation and representation in decision-making spheres.



<b>PROJECT GOAL</b>	Empower children and youth, and promote their active participation in the municipal development of La Paz.
<b>PROJECT OUTCOMES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children, adolescents and young people live in safer environments with respect for their rights.</li> <li>2. Children, adolescents and young people have better development of life skills and abilities.</li> <li>3. Empowered children, adolescents and young people contribute to democratic and equitable leadership that promotes their welfare and their families' welfare.</li> <li>4. Children, adolescents, young people and their families contribute to their community, through mobilisation and transformation of their neighborhoods.</li> </ol>



## PROJECT APPROACH

Specific project interventions include prevention and protection against violence, abuse and infringement of the rights of children and youth. This is achieved through organisation and awareness-raising among parents, teachers, and young people. The project creates spaces for constructive dialogue between peers, and healthy spaces for adolescents in health and community centres.

Another activity contributes to the education and development of young people's competencies through school improvement activities, and vocational training.

Children and youth participation in local governance processes is a key aspect of these programmes.

The aim is for children and youth to participate in the decision-making forums of their district, influence their needs and the respect of their rights. Women represent another focus group, and their participation is oriented around promoting their recognition and value in their neighbourhoods, and contribution to democratic and equitable leadership.

Projects dedicated to local governance facilitate the accreditation of youth networks as legal entities to engage in participatory law making. Through these projects, young people are trained to become municipal councillors (there are already two women, who were sponsored children, now on the council).

Partnering in general has been a key feature of this project's approach, with WV taking on a pivotal brokering / facilitation role in many instances – partnerships have been formulated with a range of organisations including neighborhood councils, government, NGOs, academic institutions and faith groups.



## PROGRESS TO DATE

- An agreement between the Organic Charter project, World Vision Bolivia, and the President of La Paz Municipal Council has been forged to create a Municipal Law which focuses on the holistic development of children and adolescents. This is the first law of its kind in the country and is intended for replication in other municipalities.
- A Police Patrol Unit has been created to ensure public safety (previously these civic services were not extended to the area) – a result of municipal policy advocacy work by the youth network and World Vision.
- Activities are coordinated with the GMLP (Municipal Government of La Paz), the University and other organisations based on 'a neighbourhood sustainability agreement of real communities', thus uniting efforts to promote development and participative projects from within community spaces.
- The projects have played a complementary role in the implementation of community activities in newly built Government infrastructure, and this political capital will help to sustain the programme beyond its lifecycle.
- Currently the programme is part of a 'Macro-district network across four city districts for the prevention and response to violence'. The network runs this with representatives from all of the partner organisations – with each one of the partner organisations providing a leader for this network in rotation (for sustainability). The project is connecting the youth in communities with a La Paz municipal programme that provides training to teenagers around entrepreneurship.

- Workshops given by WV have increased confidence in women to get involved in decision making with local neighborhood councils and municipal authorities.

## KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- A unique feature of the two urban programmes in La Paz is their success with youth mobilisation. For the first time, children, adolescents and youth have been directly integrated in the process of 'community diagnostics' and in the development of programme activities, in order to have their voices and needs known.
- The creation of safer urban environments for children, youth and adolescents relies greatly on finding ways to decrease collective and individual vulnerabilities. The strategic alliances that have been formed with partner organisations and local government institutions have been essential.
- Collaboration has been very effective with neighborhood councils; however, sustainable change demands a stronger focus on advocacy at municipal level, and the formalisation of cooperation agreements.
- High levels of alcohol consumption seem to exacerbate violence in La Paz. A cultural change to break the cycle will demand strategic alliances and systemic actions beyond the capacities or lifecycle of WV urban programmes.
- To make an impact in dense urban contexts it is essential to primarily focus on an issue-based approach. This programme found that a multi-sectoral approach somewhat diluted its effectiveness – going forward a scaled-up approach will focus on the issue of 'Protection', with other partners (including NGOs and Government) across La Paz, for city-wide impact. Secondary, local issues will still be addressed at the neighborhood level.

### For more information, please contact:

**Centre of Expertise for Urban Programming**  
World Vision International

**Email:** [urban\\_programming@wvi.org](mailto:urban_programming@wvi.org)

**Web:** [www.wvi.org/urban](http://www.wvi.org/urban)

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities world-wide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.