

Introduction

Our project information newsletters (PINs) are published with the purpose of strengthening the communication with our partners and other agencies and individuals who have a fundamental contribution to make to the implementation and impact of our projects. This is the first informative bulletin of the project titled: *'Strengthening the livelihoods of peasant families in Colquencha'*, whose operating name is *Colquencha Slopes*, located in La Paz, Bolivia.

The project is implemented with the financial support of the European Commission. The total investment amounts to € 800,000. The project is being implemented in the municipal jurisdiction of Colquencha since January 2009 with a duration of four years.

Practical Action started working in Bolivia in 1999. Practical Action's country office in Bolivia started its operations in 2008 with the purpose of contributing to reduce the poverty in Bolivia, a country with an enormous natural richness, valuable productive and human resources and enough potential to head toward sustainable development.

The goal of the Laderas Colquencha project is to work with 800 peasant families in Bolivia applying an approach that involves a direct investment in the human, physical, natural, social and institutional capitals with the highest potential to overcome poverty.

Best regards,
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Representative of Practical Action's office in Bolivia



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Colquencha: Challenges and Potentialities

The livelihoods of the population of Colquencha are weak and insecure as a result of a 'depressed' agricultural economy, with no profits and low levels of production, productivity and quality. The problems in the production are the result of the use of poor traditional practices, poor livestock management practices and a poor utilization of water for the production of pasture and crops. Other factors that add to the problem are the lack of productive infrastructure, soil erosion and degradation due to inadequate agricultural and herding practices, and the lack of technical assistance services.

The producers have a limited knowledge of the market and have not experimented with new forms of organization that could bring a change in the social relations and contribute to increase their income adding value to their milk.

As regards to local institutions, after 14 years implementing and applying community participation and administrative decentralization, most municipalities in Bolivia can identify the problems that prevent a real and effective participation of the civil society in municipal management and, consequently, in social development. The needs of small producers cannot be included in the agendas of the Municipal Development Plan and the Annual Operating Budget. The lack of technical training and the lack of knowledge of the roles, rights and obligations of the authorities result in a limited social control.

The *'Strengthening the livelihoods of peasant families in Colquencha'* project, implemented with funds from the European Commission, will work toward increasing the incomes of 800 peasant families, with a significant improvement in their productivity and access to markets and basic services. The project will help develop dairy farming as the main economic activity, improving the productive capacity of the population without neglecting the diversification of profitable crops, which is always necessary.

To reach this goal, the project will i) strengthen the milk production chain, ii) promote a better interaction between the different actors, and iii) develop the capacities to have a clear understanding of how the market operates. In order to overcome the weakness of local institutions, the project will strengthen the social and productive organizations and the municipal government. The aim is to achieve a better participatory planning and management, particularly on issues related to economic development, thereby contributing to the consolidation and continuity of the productive and business development of Colquencha. The intervention will be reinforced with actions for the management and conservation of natural resources, particularly soil and water.



Colquencha slopes project

Target audience

The direct beneficiaries of the project will be 800 peasant families whose primary activities are livestock farming (cows and sheep) and agriculture (the main crops are potato, barley and quinoa).

Partners and collaborators

The project will be implemented in partnership with important institutions in Bolivia. Fundación Sartawi will be responsible for implementing the productive components and all the aspects related to infrastructure, training of promoters, overall management, markets and local institutional development. The Municipal Government of Colquencha will be the main collaborator in terms of productive and basic infrastructure actions.

Expected results and main indicators:

1) Improved technical-productive capacities and management of natural resources for peasants and productive organizations:

- 650 families with improved productivity of pastures (40%), milk (30%) and crops (30%). Installation of more than 100 Ha of pastures, 400 Ha of fodder barley, and 100 Ha of crops using improved techniques by the end of the project
- 300 families incorporate at least 3 food crops (vegetables) that are more profitable by the second year of the project
- The families learn how to achieve a more balanced diet incorporating the new crops.
- The producers associated have a good knowledge of dairy production techniques (cheese) by the end of the project
- The producers are able to manage conservation areas by the end of the project: 48 Ha of land under conservation and 12 Ha of reforested land

2) Peasant families and organized groups of producers and population have an adequate rural infrastructure:

- 8 irrigation systems for the benefit of more than 400 peasants (100 Ha of irrigated crops or pastures)
- Installation of 100 rural drinking troughs for the benefit of more than 400 families by the end of the first year of the project
- Installation 2 drinking water systems for the benefit of 150 peasant families by the end of the second year of the project



Sartawi Fundation

- Installation of 650 barns using appropriate technologies and materials by the end of the first year of the project
 - The population replicates fodder conservation techniques following the example of five demonstrative plots implemented using appropriate technologies and materials
 - Construction of a rural cheese production enterprise during the third year of the project to work on the aggregate value of the local production
- ### 3) Availability of private technical assistance services provided by promoters trained by the project:
- 30 farmer promoters providing ongoing technical assistance for the benefit of more than 600 producers by the second year of the project
 - Implementation of an association of promoters by the end of the second year which will be in charge of carrying out negotiations with public and private institutions for the implementation of new services and actions for the benefit of the farmers of Colquencha
- ### 4) Productive organizations strengthened and with increased negotiation capacity and articulation with the market:
- Productive organizations managing their irrigation systems efficiently and adequately using at least three management tools by the second year of the project
 - Social organizations in charge of water supply services managing their systems efficiently and adequately using at least three management tools by the third year of the project
 - Farmer producers form an association for the implementation of a rural cheese production enterprise using at least four management tools by the end of the fourth year of the project

5) Local institutions (municipal government and civil society) with strengthened capacities promoting a more inclusive, equitable and democratic society:

- The population, more informed about their rights and obligations, increases by at least 50% their participation in civil society organizations and groups by the second year of the project
- The municipal government with strengthened capacities promoting local economic development, increasing its productive investments by 30% by the second year of the project
- Institutionalization of a participatory workshop implemented each year for the selection and prioritization of projects at municipal level

6) The lessons generated by the project are disseminated among public and private institutions and organizations of producers at regional level:

- At least 10 local governments in the Altiplano plateau know about the intervention and are interested in its replication
- A public or private dairy farming network making efforts to support the dairy sector
- At least 5,000 farmer producers are informed about the intervention, its results and its lessons through various sources: radio, technical manuals, informative brochures, events, etc



Practical Action

Practical Action is an international technical cooperation organization that contributes to the sustainable development of the poorest populations through research, application and dissemination of appropriate technologies.

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