
BOLIVIA

Year 1 findings from the Life in a Time of Food Price Volatility Study



Market in Quillacollo. Credit: CERES, 2012

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GLOSSARY

OTB:	Territorial Grassroot Organisation (Organización Territorial de Base)
EMAPA:	Food Production Support Company (Empresa de Apoyo a la Producción de Alimentos)
ENDESA:	Empresa Nacional de Electricidad Sociedad Anónima
TCO:	Native Community Lands (Tierra Comunitaria de Origen; a civil society organisation focusing on land issues)
COD:	Department-wide trade union (Central Obrera Departamental)
AMLECO:	Dairy Association of Cochabamba (Asociación de Lecheros de Cochabamba)
SEMBRAR:	Regional Strategic Associations Related to Food Balance and Reserves (Sociedades Estratégicas Múltiples en Balances y Reservas Alimentarias Regionales)

1 INTRODUCTION

Bolivia is undergoing important social and political changes motivated by i) the inclusion of indigenous social organisations in the political structure of the State, and ii) the implementation of political measures with social and economic focus, which have favoured a wider population segment. Some of these measures include cash transfers and pensions for the elderly, for children, and for pregnant women.

Further, the current government follows a national development plan on which food security, embedded in the frame of food sovereignty, is one of its most important pillars. The challenges in this area are large, due to the changes observed in the agricultural sector, the emergence of new urban centres, the constant emigration from the rural areas to the cities and abroad, and the modernization of the food market.

The traditional smallholder marketing system that once supplied the country with agricultural produce is almost extinct in Cochabamba, place where this research takes place.

This document presents the result of the first year of the research. Differential changes can be observed with respect to food related strategies implemented by urban and rural inhabitants. While in the rural context, in the community of Pirhuas, there is deterioration in food consumption due to the reduction of agricultural production and the increased dependency on processed foods; in the urban neighbourhood of Kami, ex-mining and migrant families are experiencing a process of impoverishment.

This worsening of living conditions forces women to engage in long work shifts, distributed across different employments and working places, which prevent them notably from dedicating time for food preparation. Many of the families we have met face serious challenges with regards to food consumption.

Volatility and changes in prices, both in food and in agricultural produce, contributed to the impoverishment we have noticed.

The results and related thoughts focus on the impact of food price volatility on households' wellbeing and on their strategies for ensuring that families are fed. The information presented stems from primary data collection done in Pirhuas and Kami, in the valley of Cochabamba, in 2012.

- Price volatility has a differentiated effect on the type of products, according to its origin: agricultural or processed foods. The price for agricultural products varies depending on the season, with prices going up and down; however, the price of processed foods constantly rises but never decreases.
- Price volatility for agricultural products has de-stimulated agricultural production which has reduced it and has led to the replacement of traditional products by other “improved” or certified seeds that do not reproduce and force farmers to purchase seeds every time.
- Price volatility affected farmers making farming a secondary activity, with the likelihood of it being replaced by other economic activities such as cattle ranching, transportation, aggregate extraction, etc.

- Price volatility has caused changes in food consumption in the rural area. People cultivate small plots of land with fewer varieties of products for self-consumption only. This has influenced agricultural output, as well as food prices. Moreover, the urbanization process and the emigration from the rural areas to the cities have also reshaped the production of food. Hence, over the last years people have been replacing fresh products with processed foods.
- People consider that well-being means having more income; food ranks as number two or three in their priorities, followed by health.
- Young people have their goals on other activities; they are becoming professionals in several fields but not in agriculture or related areas.
- Parents are seeking that their children conclude their education as a way to improve socially. Former miners do not want their children to become miners.
- Food is valued by young people in both sites.
- Social protection is deficient and it is politicised; people become pragmatic to obtain greater benefits.
- Safety plays an important role in the social cohesion of the community. There is control over their neighbours' activities due to bad past experiences in settlements with families linked to drug trafficking activities. However, the State is not present in the area; all institutional presence is outside the community (i.e. police, notaries, health clinics, banks, etc.)
- The government has tried to control the price of important products in the basic basket of goods, such as sugar and oil, by prohibiting exports of said products and by promoting its direct sale at fixed prices through EMAPA. The initial result was positive for low-income consumers; however an in-depth analysis is required. In any case, the price control policy was not deemed important in the interviews.
- People consider that the main political aid was the creation of EMAPA. It has not succeeded in distributing the commodities (sugar, flour, oil, rice) it imported. People considered these products as poor quality and access to them was extremely difficult.
- A sector that has improved its economic situation in recent years is that of pensioners.
- Work conditions, particularly for women, demand considerable family sacrifices that affect children. Some mothers prefer to look for part-time jobs, with lesser pay, than to stay at home with their families. Two to three decades ago, the kin and social networks that Kami residents (migrants) had were still strong enough for providing support in difficult times. Nowadays, these networks have weakened leaving families without social support. In addition, families do not have access anymore to support services (such as food distribution) that were given once by the mining cooperatives to its members..
- All focus groups considered family and, especially, the education of children and youth to be key factors to well-being.
- Strategies to combat price increase have variations, but the most recurrent are: getting together to buy in bulk when prices are down; lowering demand on quality for the sake of quantity; looking for secondary or seasonal products. These are not new strategies and they seem to be well rooted in the behaviour of the low-income population.

The Process

The investigation process lasted one and a half months and it was performed by a team including two sociologists, two economists, and a field facilitator for the rural case. The approach to both sites lasted more than a week, until we were able to select and accept them for this project.

We worked in the province of Quillacollo, department of Cochabamba, Bolivia. This province has 5 municipalities: Quillacollo, Sipe Sipe, Colcapirhua, Vinto and Tiquipaya. This project was implemented in the Pirhuas community in Sipe Sipe and in the Kami urban neighbourhood, in Quillacollo.

The territorial grassroots organisations (OTB) represent the civil society of Bolivia. Both in Pirhuas as well as in Kami, representatives were elusive and delayed our meetings. It is worth mentioning that these authorities have limited summoning capacities or their capacity is focused on strategic—and usually conflictive—topics within the population.

Nowadays, the population in the urban community of Kami is rather heterogeneous due to the population's origins and the differences in the types of employment engaged on. The population is not anymore predominantly linked to the mining industry in Kami, but has a variety of backgrounds and occupations.

For the case of the rural community, Pirhuas, the community leadership role roves among community members, being compulsory for community members to exercise this role. The population is more homogeneous and apparently share many commonalities; however due to time constraints (related to work/employment), there is a visible deterioration in community participation, reciprocity, and collective alliances.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Main motivations and objectives

The main motivation for the team in this research was its nature as a long-term investigation on a strategic topic for the creation of social and economic policies such as those linked to food security. In the case of Bolivia, national policies have food sovereignty as one of the most important pillars of its development plan. Food sovereignty is used as a way to add a power dimension to the concept of food security. In Bolivian policies, it also includes the objective of improving domestic food production, achieving permanent access to food for all, and the elimination of dependence on food aid and unfavourable food market conditions.

All communities, but especially those in urban areas, consider this to be a basic need. Compared to ten years ago, it is a less pressing issue in the rural areas. The difference corresponds with international trends on the transfer of poverty from rural to urban sectors. This makes a difference in the expectations of both sectors of the population.

Participating associations and organisations

The following participated in Kami: the office of the Deputy Mayor, an OTB (Organización Territorial de Base) representative, the retiree co-op federation (Federación de Cooperativistas Jubilados), the Cruz Gloriosa parish, the Senda Nueva NGO, and traders.

The rural area had the participation of organisations and groups of producers as representatives of the social community conglomerate. Dairy producers, young female labourers, poor women farmers, people who work in the river and families from different socio-economic levels.

2.2 Method and approach

Research Questions and Rationale¹

In Bolivia, this investigation effort is part of the “Ensuring Food and Nutrition Security in an Era of Food Price Volatility” project, in collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies and the Oxfam programmes in each country (Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, Pakistan, Vietnam, and Zambia).

The first main objective of this programme is to contribute to the improvement of food security perspectives for poor and vulnerable persons in developing countries subject to food price volatility.

The second main objective is to contribute to generate a better-informed food security debate in the ten countries where the study is being implemented, in order to answer the following questions:

- How do high, unpredictable prices generally affect the well-being and the development of poor persons and vulnerable communities;
- How do prices affect the daily task of feeding and caring for families, and
- How well do support systems work for the beneficiaries (formal or informal) in helping them cope with the sudden price changes around them?

The following question was also considered in Bolivia:

- How did coping strategies change, in the Bolivian political context, which is said to be stable according to grassroots organisations and communities? That is, how do people adapt to changes when the environment is perceived as stable?

Thus, the study seeks to generate evidence on the following topics: well-being, coping strategies and social protection systems. Also, every year a new special topic will be added. In 2012, the new special topic is “future farmers” with the idea of answering the question, “What are the future plans of young people and how does agriculture feature in their life plans?”

¹ For an expanded presentation of the topics, questions and methods, see document: *Methodological Guidelines for Qualitative Research for Project on Life in a Time of Food Price Volatility (Draft Version: May 2012.)*

Approach to longitudinal qualitative community case studies

The global study used two approaches –quantitative and qualitative–, which often overlapped. In this case, for the country studies, the approaches we are interested in are qualitative and longitudinal, since the design of the investigation seeks to understand the dynamics of these impacts and the corresponding responses, i.e. how they change in time and the context of price change.

Qualitative investigations seek to address the reality of people in their everyday life. Collecting information about people's life and strategies when facing food price volatility is very important, because this information gives a different perspective to conventional macroeconomic data used in most analyses, on which people's reality is absent.

2.3 Methods and tools

All guide questions followed the Oxfam/IDS proposal and were tailored to each interviewee during the fieldwork interviews.

The FVP investigation process was very challenging because of its methodology and because concepts had to be revised since interviewees were rural people that were outside of their original context.

The ever-present, underlying question was “What is this for?” People in Pirhuas were extremely sceptical of an investigation doing any good, which is why we had to talk extensively with the people to convince them to respond to our request to meditate and answer some of our questions.

As was mentioned before, the undeniable reason for their scepticism is they do not consider our proposals as urgent to the community –the need for meetings, workshops and other collective efforts. Even for urgent matters, they prefer to pay the fine set by the territorial organisation for not participating. Their resistance was clearly visible in the meeting with the leaders and authorities when we introduced the project.

“[Proceed] if you are not going to hold meetings or workshops. You can work in the community from house to house only when people have time [to meet with you].”
(Community leader, Pirhuas)

They have the same attitude towards all development projects that come to the community: they can work house to house but come across difficulties when rallying up the people.

Indeed, time is often people's most precious asset, which is why we had to adapt to a series of time constraints in order to talk with them.

None of the instruments we use to generate participation in the population was used as we originally intended.



Credits: CERES, 2012

Even our work with children had to be circumstantial; we used their recess in school and had to reward them with a piece of candy for participating. We asked them to draw their favourite food.

It is important to consider the attitude of this rural community regarding time, but also regarding the need –or not– for external support. It seems the later is not required and people have begun to work in another direction. They maximise their time and work in many different activities.

Accompanying people in their activities was the strategy that worked best. It was difficult to get meetings in which we sat down for a while with those that we could not accompany.

The experience in the urban environment was similar. First, we had to gain the trust of people. On the first days they shared with us that two Italians on a motorcycle had committed crimes in the neighbourhood and, most of the time we were in Kami, both of us men rode a motorcycle.

Second, people there had time constraints. Everyone, even the elderly women in the Mothers Club did not have any time to meet with us (they did meet with the other ladies in the club.) The same happened with the women in the Senda Nueva project whom we could only meet with when they had already gathered to carry out their project activities. The rest of the days, the women had many other things to do.

Also, the topics in this investigation, when included in a considerable number of questions – stating facts and/or requiring a conversation between interviewees and interviewer– were found

to be quite long. In average, the first two parts required more than an hour and people were anxious to end the workshop or interview to continue with their activities.

The above was less evident in the in-depth interviews, which we held with urban families even on more than one occasion. Extending the time for data collection in the field may seem inefficient but is reasonable given the conditions.

In Kami, we first sought out the community leaders and used the Hunter Floyd reputational or positional method. We started with well-known institutions such as the Pensioners' Cooperative, the Territorial Grassroots Organisations (OTB), and the parish. The latter produced the best results to continue with the snowball method, i.e. once we found a woman or a family willing to participate in the study, we would ask her/them to refer a friend. As a result of our contact with the parish, we met with our first interviewees. This grew until we reached our number of interviewees.

In the in-depth interviews, as with the focus groups, we prepared the tools shared across the ten research countries: a well-being matrix, a cause-effect matrix, a basic goods basket matrix.

However, as was mentioned previously, these tools were not used in most cases –with the exception of the Youth Focus Group in Kami and in the smallest focus group of mothers in the Senda Nueva Project. We applied one or two tools at the most during the interviews and these were related to the basic basket of goods.



Basic Basket of Goods Interview with B.R.

In Pirhuas, we conducted in-depth interviews on the basic basket of goods, food prices as well as genealogies.



In-depth interview with a local technician

CERES researcher, during an interview.

2.4 Reflexions on methodology

Fifteen years ago, when the lead researcher worked in the design and implementation of participatory methodologies, many of the poorest populations experienced social exclusion due to ethnicity, gender, region and other reasons. The main theme back then was the inclusion of said factors into development plans and into social and political participation systems. Instruments were designed to allow participation in a community to collect information about them in order to diagnose and plan changes to their disadvantaged position –with private or public aid–. Sadly, many populations are still being utterly excluded and face social and economic inequality.

Important political and social democratisation processes took place in Latin America. These included participatory methodologies as well as the development processes that had enduring effects in the empowerment of populations that used to be excluded, i.e. indigenous people, women, youth, sexually diverse people, small producers and others. These groups, among others, were able to attain different levels of citizen participation.

There has been progress on social exclusion, as they now participate in different social and political representation systems, both locally as well as nationally. This, however, does not mean that they have rid themselves of all inequality and oppression, which is why these people today refuse to be just “project or policy beneficiaries”; they demand POWER and RIGHTS.

Without going into a detailed analysis of the situation, what I am attempting to highlight is that many participatory methodological proposals must be revised from beginning to end. In the past, the goal was to encourage participation and establish a better relation between insiders and outsiders, as well as to prepare situations where stakeholders were able to diagnose poverty and their expectations; however, today the population does not welcome outsiders seeking to develop unsolicited activities.

On the other hand, the techniques take time and they are difficult to implement given the work hours of the population, individually and collectively. Their agendas are booked with negotiation and planning meetings and they also have internal leadership struggles, to the point that they prefer to pay the fines than attend meetings. Plus, meetings take time that they could use in their job.

Employment also underwent many changes, i.e. the lack of permanent employment and the farmer/agricultural crisis in many areas in Latin America has forced the population to work by the hour, as labourers, in the drawback industry (*maquila*) or in other types of temporary jobs.

Working in poor rural or urban areas in these conditions becomes a serious challenge, because other variables such as modernisation, prestige, the fact that they are not proud of “being helped”, but especially the financial aspect of the present time, need to be factored in.

In many of these communities, the time interviewees devote to interviews or other project activities has to be compensated. Even when the benefit is collective, individuals receive a monetary compensation. As a result, some people ask for compensation for the hours devoted to answering a survey or questionnaire. This did not happen to us in Pirhuas. I think the persons would have rejected the compensation because they are proud of their production and self-sustaining capacities. In Kami, on the other hand, the women interviewed would have easily

accepted the compensation and it could have made focus groups meetings easier. Women would have felt that their effort was compensated.

We were unable to summon the Pirhuas community. The meetings we held were with families or small groups, and they considered it a favour toward us. Once in the meeting, they would get excited and conversational, but there is much incredulity on changing things through policies. The possible solutions they have tend to be individual more than collective, with the exception of putting political pressure on the State.

We were not able to bring together the focus groups in Kami. We did meet with groups but only because they were already gathered for their routine activities. The only focus group we did hold was with retired miners, but it is our impression that they thought our work presented the possibility of another aid project.

So, what can be done –methodologically speaking–, to ensure the participation of the community in the investigation or planning stages?

We designed several techniques that could not be used in a standardised manner due to several reasons. Sometimes a person accepted part of the proposal but not the rest; they preferred open dialogue and not one question after another. They preferred to speak thinking about what was really interesting –their life and not just data--, so we had to resort to being colloquial when addressing their needs, perspective for the future and considerations. When we complied with their terms in Pirhuas, the process worked. This had several implications:

- First, time consuming. A person cannot arrive and start a conversation or obtain data on the first visit.
- Second, a sincere attitude towards dialogue, of acknowledging the other, of validating his/her opinion and comments.
- Third, cooperation meaning that the researcher has to accompany the interviewee in his/her duties, activities and not assume time will be solely dedicated to the investigator. It is necessary to consider how and when collective action takes place and not confuse it with other activities that have several persons in attendance.

It is the researcher's opinion that because this topic brings together several aspects –public and private, production and reproduction, social and economic– this is an important opportunity to revise participatory methodologies and exchange experiences.



Degraining corn in L.'s house



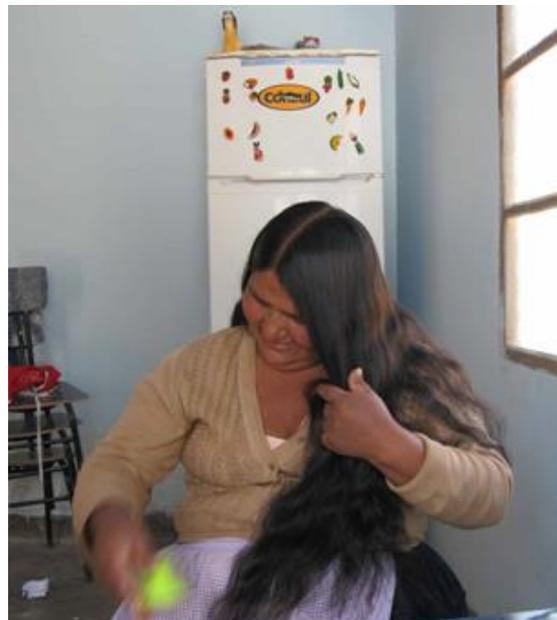
Harvesting alfa in J.C.'s plot



Keeping company during community work



F., during the interview



M. combs her hair while being interviewed

2.5 Data management

Data was obtained in most cases via the interviews with individuals or groups, with limited possibilities of using participatory tools due to the conditions in which the interviews took place. Most people were reticent to having their interviews recorded or of the use of instruments, because of time constraints. The entrenched individualism was an obstacle to group sessions. In Pirhuas people even conditioned their participation to our agreeing to not hold workshops or meetings. Overall, people are not at all participatory in research or with the participation of outsiders.

Field data obtained in the interviews was transcribed and entered into the corresponding fields in the matrixes and according to the research proposal.



Meeting with milk producers

All graphs and charts were prepared by the researchers because interviewees –with very few exceptions—refused to use them. There are audio clips from Kami, but quality is not the best; there is one audio clip from Pirhuas. We did take many pictures that show, not just the context, but also the interviews, the living conditions in which the population lives, etc. Pictures will be submitted in video format.

3. NATIONAL CONTEXT OF FOOD PRICE VOLATILITY

3.1 Food security situation in Bolivia in recent years

Previous studies on the status of food security in Bolivia that analysed the availability of food nation-wide and the dynamic between supply and apparent demand, as well as of changes in agricultural trends, found a considerable increase in the apparent consumption per capita from 1960 to 1970. There was a plateau in the mid 90s but it increased again as of year 2000 (Ormachea, 2009).

Another finding was a reduction in the internal supply of imported food products until 1995; there was an increasing trend on imports starting on the late 1990s due, mainly to more grain and wheat flour imports. Food deficit in Bolivia in the year 2000 fluctuated from 19% to 21% (Ibid.).

Zeballos and researchers from the Fundación Milenio group discovered that “*given the reduced increases in domestic production, food imports grew in absolute terms and in the per capita consumption ratio.*” Research also discovered that as a whole, food imports for direct consumption grew from 108,051 tons in 2006 to 183,045 in 2008, with a slight drop to 151,034

tons in 2010 (which stands for a 50% increase in 2006-2010). Another finding was an increase in the demand of food due to different factors, but the most important were an international price increase and a per capita increase (Zeballo, et al, 2011).

Recent research, such as that conducted by Wanderley for COSUDE on food availability and supply, found that growth in the last ten years in the agricultural, livestock and forestry sectors was 3.1% below the averages for petroleum and gas (8.4%) and mining (6.2%) and also for the national GDP (3.7%). This had an impact in the reduction of the GDP in the agricultural, livestock, hunting, forestry and fishing sectors, going from 15.4% in 1990 to 13.3% in 2009 impacting the reduction of food availability in the country. According to the author, "*In Bolivia in recent years there is an increasing trend for importing food products which the country used to be able to produce for domestic consumption (beans, vegetables, fruits, rice, potatoes and dairy products*" (Wanderley, 2012).

Other authors, such as Flores, state that "*The food situation in Bolivia is improving on the long-term. It relied on the imports of fats, dairy and flour donations in the 1960s. Today it only relies on wheat and flour.*" However, he stressed the fact that this is a slow increase and warned that the country has become vulnerable to external crises such as the increase in food prices." (Flores, 2012:5).

According to the author, the causes for this vulnerability are: a) an increase in the population, which directly affects food production since "*twice as much food has to be obtained from a soil that produces the same and uses technology that has made very little progress;*" b) greater participation of the Bolivian economy (exports and imports) in the rest of the world makes us extremely vulnerable. The author concludes that in Bolivia,

The problem of food security is not just a food production and availability issue, like most of our authorities like to think, but rather one of access to food." He says, "*Bolivia should use a 'two way approach': produce more but also create more jobs and more income for the poor. It is possible to produce more food because the country has the land and technology to do so despite the considerable institutional barriers, private land issues, and the certainty in access to production factors. Creating more employments and more income is very difficult, but today –and only today– Bolivia has enough money to increase the income of poor people with transfers to the base of the social pyramid. Money has to come from Government funds, since it is just the manager; it has to be distributed among its true owners, especially those that go hungry.*" (Flores, 2012:5)

Lastly, Prudencio, who assessed the national food condition, states that as of a few years,

Bolivia has been undergoing transformations dealing with the entire food system, with some successes and some new obstacles or challenges. In terms of food production, it increased 149.6% from 1999/00 (8.454.590 mT) and 2009/10 (12.670.130 mT), due especially to the expansion in cultivated soil for all products. The above also means that food supply or availability per capita increased in the last years from 0.77 mT/annually (2005) to 1.1 mT/annually (2010). Prudencio also states that [...] from the access to food standpoint, for example, regardless of the annual increases in minimum wages, in 2010 said wages only amount for 38% of the basic basket of goods in the urban sector and for 62% in the rural area (Prudencio, 2012).

This background suggests that, for the coming years, food security in Bolivia might be at risk either due to a reduced food availability from nationally produced foods, an increased dependency on imported foods, and/or the impaired access to food for population segments with limited income and economic possibilities.

3.2 Malnutrition

According to Prudencio, there is some progress in the reduction of acute malnutrition (children under 2 years of age), since the rate dropped from 2.05% in 2003 to 1.66% in 2008 (Prudencio 2012.)

On the other hand, specific studies in Bolivia, especially those made by government agencies, show that child malnutrition tends to be associated to mothers with deficient nutrition; this is further complicated by low prenatal control coverage, which results in underweight babies at birth (Narváez, 2002). During their first years of life, the combination of breast milk and solid food is paramount for the health and nutrition of children. Other studies highlight geographic and cultural factors (Morales et al, 2005). Nationwide, there are trends visible in different studies; these can be used to explain the reduction in malnutrition. For example:

- Family income levels are correlated to malnutrition rates. According to 2003 information, all over the country, children in the first quintile of households (the poorest) show malnutrition rates six times higher than those in the top quintile (wealthiest households) (Oomman et al, 2003); said information can be verified with ENDSA reports. Cochabamba is an average income area, but in some rural zones the economic capacity per household decreases dramatically thus increasing the risk of malnutrition in children (UNDP, 2007).
- Coverage of basic water and sanitation is fundamental for good health and to preserve hygienic conditions in the homes. Coverage of water and sanitation in the urban area of the department is low and worsens in disperse rural and peri-rural areas because they do not have these services.
- Access to health centres provides better controls during pregnancies and increases access to nutritional supplements of pregnant mothers, reducing malnutrition rates. The percentage of mothers who receive the fourth prenatal control in Cochabamba is close to the national average, although the quality of said control may be deficient.
- Geographic factors can also impact malnutrition, but are not determining. Rather, these interact with economic and socio-demographic aspects in each household. Cultural factors are visible in the low quality of health care and management model to prevent malnutrition in indigenous children. Chronic malnutrition in Bolivia remained at similar levels during the last years, however a downward trend is observed in Cochabamba (Ibid).

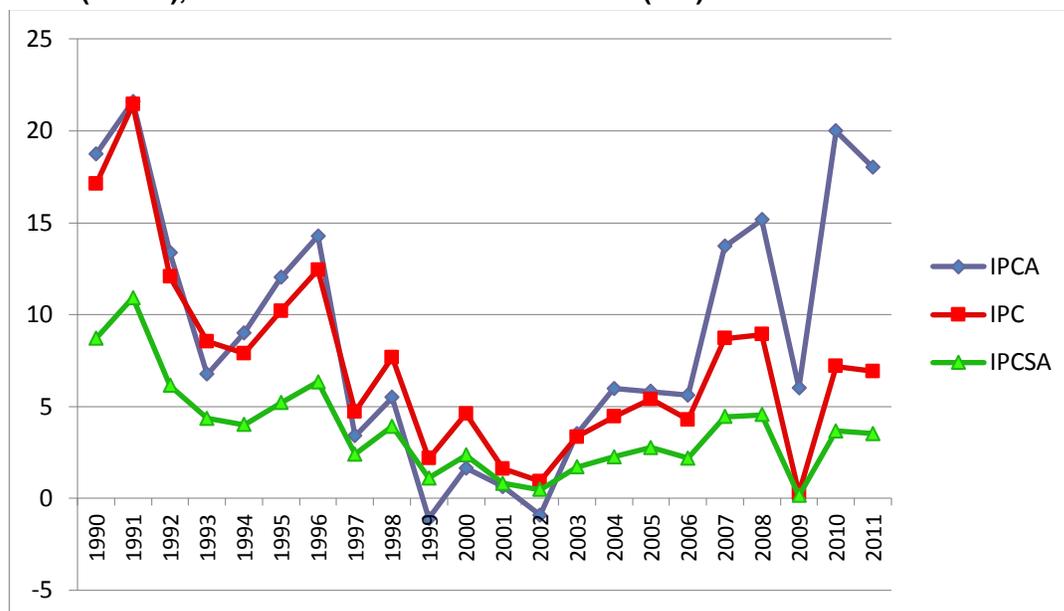
3.3 Movements in national food prices in the past year

Analysis of the official National Statistics Institute (INE) statistics on the price of food (Graph 1) show variations in food prices in the last 20 years that have exceeded (in many periods) the levels of inflation in the country. This trend was more drastic and visible in the last five years.

Research by the Central Bank of Bolivia shows that the greatest price volatility is visible in the Food category, particularly in Commodities (for which prices have changed almost 9 times per year) that are produced by farmers (Palmero and Chacón, 2010).

Authors like Flores state that food prices in Bolivia have increased following the global trend and that it will continue in coming years (Flores, 2012.)

Graph 1. Harmonised Consumer Price Index Evolution –Including Food (IPCA), Excluding Food (IPCSA), and General Consumer Price Index (IPC)



Key: IPCA: IPC Including Food
 IPC: General Consumer Price Index
 IPCSA: IPC Excluding Food

Source: Compiled by the author with INE information

Also, organisations such as FAO and OECD confirm this trend and say that food prices will continue to go up in the next ten years. Likewise, the highest prices of food will continue to be a significant component of inflation for consumer prices in most countries, particularly in developing countries where the poor population spends most of its income in food (FAO, 2011; OCDE, 2010).

This will undoubtedly jeopardise poor households even further. In their efforts to preserve their food security, they will be at risk of becoming even poorer and even losing food security entirely because average expenditure of households on food in the urban area is 36%, whereas in the rural area the number increases to 62%; total average expenditure on food in Bolivia is 43% (INE, 2009). Inflation in the poor population is due mostly to the variation in price of food and beverages (Fundación Jubileo, 2012:2).

3.4 Evidence of poverty and food security impacts over past year

Several studies on the level of poverty in Bolivia state that poverty has decreased in the last ten years, albeit with extremely heterogeneous results if analysed geographically. The UNDP states, "Bolivia has low human development while having significant differences in the different regions and departments. Departmental inequalities persist, despite migratory flows which caused

accelerated demographic changes; income-generating and access-to-service opportunities are still uneven from one region, municipality or department, to the next (UNDP: 2007).

On the other hand, authors such as Prudencio, who have reviewed official statistics state that “[...] the level of poverty has decreased from 36% in 2000 to 22% in 2010, mainly due to the redistribution of income via conditioned transfers (bonuses); the population now has the possibility of increasing its access to and consumption of food, although this is not necessarily the case due to prioritisation, education, and food habits among other factors” (Prudencio, 2012).

Indeed, upon review of available official statistic data (Table 1) it is clearly visible that poverty in general in Bolivia from 1999-2002 was very high, above 60%. However the national average masks entirely different situations depending on the geographic area and altitudinal tier. These are clearly differentiated because although poverty in the urban areas of the country was 53% on average, in the rural area poverty affects 80% of the population.

In 2009, the incidence of poverty in Bolivia reached 51.31%, which meant there were 5.27 million people whose per capita income was beneath that of a basic basket of goods and other basic needs (poverty line.) In the rural area, the incidence of poverty was 66.43% and the incidence of poverty in the urban area was 43.55%.

Even when this data shows some progress in recent years for poverty reduction in Bolivia, close to half of its population continues to be poor. This also means that more than half its inhabitants have a per capita income lower than the price of a basic basket of goods and other basic needs, as Table 1 shows:

Table 1: Evolution of Poverty Incidence in Bolivia

Description	Measurement Unit	1999	2000	2001	2002	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
BOLIVIA										
Poverty Incidence	Percentage	63.47	66.38	63.12	63.33	59.63	59.92	60.10	57.33	51.31
Total Population	Person	8,000,798	8,274,803	8,248,404	8,547,091	9,366,312	9,600,809	9,850,513	9,999,829	10,269,598
Urban Areas										
Poverty Incidence	Percentage	51.36	54.47	54.28	53.91	48.18	50.27	50.90	48.72	43.55
Total Population	Person	5,035,535	5,268,526	5,148,771	5,330,045	6,001,837	6,065,496	6,418,450	6,546,521	6,785,816
Rural Areas										
Poverty Incidence	Percentage	84.00	87.02	77.69	78.80	80.05	76.47	77.29	73.64	66.43
Total Population	Person	2,965,263	3,006,277	3,099,633	3,217,046	3,364,475	3,535,313	3,432,063	3,453,308	3,483,782

Source: INE 2009

When analysed by geographic area, the situation is more alarming because the incidence of poverty in the rural areas is much higher than in urban areas or even nation-wide. Still, per capita income in Bolivia for more than 5 million people is lower than the value of a basic basket of goods and other needs, which makes them vulnerable to price volatility.

The analysis of poverty figures for women and men, using the MECOVI surveys 1999 and 2001, shows that poverty was slightly higher (in proportional terms) among women during these years

(Table 2). Thus, in both urban and rural areas, poverty affects almost the same proportion of men and women (MECOVI, 2001).

Table 2. Poverty incidence by gender (%)

Year	1999	2000	2001
Gender	Poverty Incidence %		
Urban Area			
Male	51	55	53
Female	52	54	54
Rural Area			
Male	81	85	80
Female	82	86	82
Total Bolivia			
Male	62	66	63
Female	63	66	64

Source: INE - Mecovi Surveys 1999-2001

An element that affects poverty is education; the higher the education level of the person the lower the likelihood of poverty. Education makes people more productive and opens new employment opportunities. The Mecovi Survey (1999 and 2001) shows that poverty indexes, in total, are higher in groups with lower literacy (Table 3). Poverty incidence in the low literacy level was 59 percentage points higher than in levels with higher literacy in 1999. The difference dropped two years later due to the increase in poverty incidence of the group with higher education (university).

Table 3: Poverty incidence according to literacy (%)

Literacy Level	1999	2000	2001
Urban area			
None	64	70	69
Elementary school	60	62	63
Secondary school	47	51	47
Higher non-university education	24	26	24
Higher university education	19	21	23
Rural area			
None	87	91	86
Elementary school	81	86	81
Secondary school	65	65	66
Higher non-university education	24	34	25
Higher university education	12	21	16
Total			
None	77	82	79
Elementary school	69	72	71
Secondary school	49	53	50
Higher non-university education	24	27	24

Higher university education	18	21	23
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Source: INE - Mecovi Surveys 1999-2001

There was an increase in the poverty incidence in the university group in 1999-2001 and a decrease in the Higher Non-University Education group; Elementary and Secondary School groups remained relatively stable in the same period of time.

Poverty is higher in the rural area; however upon further analysis the groups with higher literacy levels did not have marked differences. There is, however, a significant difference in the poverty incidence for the groups with lower literacy levels. The groups labelled as None, Elementary and Secondary School have the greatest differences between the Urban and Rural Areas.

Poverty incidence has remained at an average of 88.3% in the group of people with no literacy in the rural area and in the Elementary school level, it exceeds 80%. Poverty incidence levels increased from 1999 to 2001 in most groups, both in the urban as well as in the rural areas. The greatest poverty incidence was visible in the group of rural people with no literacy, while the group with the least poverty incidence was the one with higher literacy levels in both the urban and rural areas.

Finally, when analysing the poverty incidence per family members, households with larger families had the highest poverty level in all indexes (Table 4).

Table 4: Poverty incidence per family members in a household

	Poverty Incidence %	
1999	1-3 Members	46
	4-6 Members	60
	7 or more members	81
2001	1-3 Members	46
	4-6 Members	64
	7 or more members	76

Source: INE - Mecovi Surveys 1999-2001

It is clear that poverty in Bolivia affects close to half of the population and has a higher occurrence in low-literacy households with more family members and it impacts men and women equally.

3.5 National development policies

In recent years, the Bolivian Food system has undergone a series of transformations due mostly to the introduction of a new food production model. This model is characterised by some authors like Prudencio (2012) as follows:

1. A more intense and massive agricultural production with a considerable impact on the environment, especially in the Santa Cruz region. It is based on the indiscriminate use of agrochemicals, use of transgenic seeds, has a strong presence of foreign capitals, and a

traditional production in the Western region of the country which is characterised by low yields and farmer management.

2. A new role of the State, which consists on protecting the domestic market and its inhabitants, supporting small farmers with a new law (the Law of the Productive, Communal and Agricultural Revolution, 2011), and becoming a market regulator and stakeholder throughout the system phases.

However, the author warns that this new model could cause results that may not be beneficial for the country, i.e. a series of consequences that can place food security of Bolivians at risk including: relying on transgenic seeds and on agrochemical imports (USD 26.9 million in 2000 and more than USD 165 million in 2009/10); dual agriculture that produces for the external market while focused on transgenics from the Eastern area of the country with foreign capital and food producing agriculture for the domestic market, with low yields and located in the highlands and valleys; a new stakeholder, the State, that is now willing to participate in all the phases of the agro-food system as a competitor and a State that is interested in supporting farmer family agriculture (via the Law of the Productive, Communal and Agricultural Revolution) and the production of transgenics; greater exploitation of our natural resources and more damage to the environment and biodiversity (Prudencio, 2012).

Other authors such as Rodríguez state that:

“sadly, in recent years, decades of self-supply have been shattered. To attain “food security” short-term policies were issued, as if obeying political-media oriented calculations, causing a drop in domestic production of certain items. Faced with the public policy that only seeks to guarantee the supply of food items at any price—even importing at expensive price and selling with subsidy and cheap—is the concept of “food sovereignty” which really means that all efforts should be made to stock up with national products, thinking not only about the city but also on the rural areas. It is true that “food security” is easier to attain than “food sovereignty”, because one can happen with imports but the cost of it is turning a country fully reliant on external supply.” (Rodríguez, 2012)

The current administration passed Law 144 in 2011 (the Law of the Productive, Communal and Agricultural Revolution). This law states in Article 2 that,

Its objective is to regulate the process of the productive, communal and agricultural revolution on food sovereignty by determining the institutional foundation, policies, technical and technological mechanisms, as well as financial mechanisms for production, transformation and marketing of agricultural and forestry products from the different stakeholders in a diverse economy. It seeks to prioritise organic production in harmony and balance with the goodness of Mother Earth.

According to Quiroga, the core of the current administration for governmental policies for food production and food security is Law 144. He has made an in-depth, critical analysis of this law and believes that *“it was the governmental response to an increase in food prices that began in August 2010 and grew stronger after the rise in gas prices (gasolinazo) in December 2010.”* In the Gasolinazo, the bolivian government mandated a generalized increase in the prices of liquid fuels, such as diesel and gasoline (regular, special, and for aircrafts). The price of a litre of gasoline rose from 3.74 bolivianos to 6.47 bolivianos, meaning a 73% increase. Special gasoline

rose from 4.79 to 7.51 bolivianos (57% rise) and diesel went from 3.72 to 6.80 bolivianos (82% rise). This mandate, which was suspended within few days due to social protests, led to a significant increase in the price of basic foods (due to higher production and transport costs, as well as to speculation)².

Furthermore, Quiroga adds: “*government ideologists –now the authorities in office—insist on experimenting with something they know is not feasible.*” The author believes this law will not improve the agricultural sector nor will it ensure food security in the country due to its considerable political and ideological content. He further concludes –as do Flores and Urioste— “*one of the clearest goals of Law 144 is the creation of political clientele to whom ample public resources will be transferred with no controls or transparency mechanisms in place.*” (Quiroga, 2012)

3.6 National government programmes and institutions

The Bolivian State has several institutions and agencies working directly on food security, as follows:

National Institute for Agricultural and Forestry Research Innovation – INIAF

The INIAF was created in October 2008 with the purpose of “*generating technologies, establish guidelines and manage public policies for agricultural and forestry innovation to contribute to food security and sovereignty according to the framework of knowledge dialogue, social participation and genetic resource management for agro-biodiversity as State heritage.*”

Food Security Support Programme – PASA

This has been a long-standing programme for productive development; it started operations in 1997. Its overall objective is to “*collaborate in the development and consolidation of national food security and sovereignty by strengthening the productive and organisational systems in farmer, indigenous and first people’s family units from its foundation and by promoting comprehensive local food and agricultural systems.*” It is important to note that this programme has offices in all the departments in Bolivia. Its institutional objectives include: The promotion of the human right to proper food, from a local environment and according to the SEMBRAR (Strategic Regional Associations Related to Food Balance and Reserves) Programme perspective.

- Strengthen farmer, indigenous and first peoples’ agriculture starting from the family units and community groups, especially in those with high levels of food insecurity (Food Insecurity Vulnerability Index 3, 4, 5), in the production of food products particularly for family consumption and safe local markets according to the CRIAR programme.
- Support initiatives related to climate change adaptation in the food security framework.

² For more details see (in Spanish): <http://www.hidrocarburosbolivia.com/bolivia-mainmenu-117/general-mainmenu-123/38949-suspension-del-gasolinazo-no-baja-aun-precios-de-alimentos-y-transporte.html> or <http://www.jornadanet.com/n.php?a=58642-1>

- Be the lead for support activities and food security and sovereignty situation analysis in areas of high vulnerability.
- Diversify funding sources needed to fully implement the multi-annual budgetary plan. Improve institutional efficiency.

National Institute of Health Laboratories – INLASA

The INLASA laboratory network has been serving Bolivians for over a century. Its work team supports the following industries: food, restaurants, supermarkets and others in the food industry. It ensures food safety quality and nutritional value of food products available in the domestic and international markets.

With this in mind, its services include: Microbiological and physiochemical analyses with technically valid results to ensure the quality of the food industry.

State Company to Support Food Production – EMAPA

EMAPA was created by the Bolivian government in August 2007 and it was the first strategic State-owned company to obtain the ISO 9001 Quality Certification. Its main objectives include: development of the agricultural production in the country; support to smallholders by providing them with inputs at no interest rate, purchase of smallholders' produce at fair prices; the avoiding of speculation in food products; improvement on the redistribution value of agricultural production; and the establishment of procedures that allow Bolivian families to access to food at low prices.

EMAPA played an important role in the control of food prices and on the distribution and supply of food in the domestic market. Its participation was centered in two main activities: in one side, imports of basic foods³ and other products with deficit in the local market; and in the other side, distribution and commercialization of these food products through commercialization centres that were established across the country.

In order to purchase this food, consumers had to go to the retail centre and show their personal identification (in addition of waiting in long lines). These retail centres offered the products at a lower price when compared to the regular retail options. Many business people considered EMAPA as unfair competition and initiated a set of protests⁴.

4 RESEARCH SITES (KAMI AND PIRHUAS)

³ For more details see (in Spanish):

http://www.lostiempos.com/diario/actualidad/economia/20091110/emapa-anuncia-venta-de-5-productos-de-la-canasta_44552_76787.html

⁴ More details can be found in press releases from the past years (in Spanish):

<http://eju.tv/2011/02/inflacin-sectores-sociales-no-creen-en-datos-del-ine-la-presin-crece-por-los-alimentos-y-las-tarifas/>

Both Pirhuas, a farmer community, as well as Kami, an urban neighbourhood, are located in the Quillacollo province, Cochabamba department. These two sites were selected as our case studies.

Rationale for selection

Both communities were selected using the common initial criteria of accessibility. Then, we looked for the presence of current socio-economic and cultural phenomena representative of the general context of productive transformation, poverty, and migration, access to food markets, social organisations, and cultural variables.

Other factors included socio-economic, geographic and demographic factors; main types of livelihood risks (e.g. droughts, conflicts, and reliance on global commodity markets); gender and local (informal) relations; social protection or community support institutions.

Rural Case: The “Pirhuas” community

Pirhuas is a farmer community in the Sipe Sipe municipality in the central valley of Cochabamba department. No work had been done in this community, only in the larger area of the Sipe Sipe hinterland. Contacts in this place, as in the case of Mrs. E. C., allowed us access into the Pirhuas community.

Pirhuas was selected because it was considered an average community among the ones in the Cochabambino valley; it met the project terms in the sense that it is a medium-sized rural community, with adequate accessibility in terms of distance, and is located in a region where poverty is widespread.

Urban case: The “Kami” neighbourhood

The Kami neighbourhood in Quillacollo, is close to the Blanco Galindo highway that communicates the La Paz and Cochabamba departments. It is known as part of the central axis of Bolivia. The Kami neighbourhood has a long history of development in the central valley of Cochabamba and is part of the rural migration area of the city, i.e. co-op miners that had plots of land built rural collective properties and later built homes. CERES carried out previous research with co-op miners, their economy, life strategies and citizen status. This information was used as background and previous contacts facilitated our access to the neighbourhood.

The Kami neighbourhood is typical of urban zones with concentration of poor people and of generational differentiation, as it has retired miners and their children –who have new life strategies of their own. Kami miners are a large part of the population and some leaders say they are 40-60% of the inhabitants. There are families in the neighbourhood with no mining history as well, so its social composition has a strong influx of rural-urban migration, as do many other poor neighbourhoods in Cochabamba.

This neighbourhood is also a zone of emigration to other countries, especially Spain. We were not able to determine the exact percentage of emigration, but it seems to be a considerable number. Kami miners migrated in the past decade to Trópico de Chapare as well (a coca-producing zone), as did many persons from the rural communities.

This neighbourhood is located in an industrial zone that is very important to the regional economy. Food wholesale markets are also found in this area.

5. CASE 1: PIRHUAS COMMUNITY, SIPE SIPE MUNICIPALITY

The selection of this community was based on the criteria received from informants who stated: *“this community used to be very poor but it has improved, although they are not rich...”*

Other communities neighbouring with Sipe Sipe have better economic conditions than Pirhuas. However, the access to these communities was difficult due to distance and to the distrust present in the rural area towards outsiders (the research team). It is hard to access the community without the help of people they trust.

We were not able to find data about the community before visiting it. The size of the community also seemed indicative of its poverty level, since it is one of the smallest in the area.

Selection was initially suggested by E.C., who is our main contact in Sipe Sipe and who worked as local facilitator in this project. She lives in Sipe Sipe, is Quechua and knows everyone there well.

We made a field visit to verify the situation and the infrastructure, as well as to determine the level of interest. We confirmed that many people knew E.; she helped us enter the community. Distrust in farmer communities can be illustrated by a comment made by a farmer:

“It’s a good thing that you are with them otherwise, people here could kill them. These people are very distrustful.”



E.C., local facilitator with community inhabitants

The reason for including this quote is to say that in the last 5 years, access to communities has grown more difficult due to insecurity. They do not trust outsiders that come unannounced. Another reason is because development efforts (NGOs) are being criticised by the Government.

5.1 Main socioeconomic, geographical and demographic features

No secondary information was found on these topics for Pirhuas.

The community is not listed in the regional maps and the community representative could not provide us with information. However, the community has an approximate size of 5.000 hectares in the valley.

Pirhuas borders to the Northeast with the Viloma-Calacala community; to the Northwest with the Combujo community; to the West with the Pancuruma River and the Siqui Siquia community, and to the Southwest with the Caviroma community; to the Southeast, the Santa Rosa community, and to the East with the Viloma River, which is one of the largest rivers in the region and is used as an aggregate factory during the dry season.



Source: Author's, using Google Maps (2012)

The transformation in Pirhuas in recent years was similar in cause and origin to those of rural communities close to intermediate cities. The people in Pirhuas assured us that radical changes started approximately 15 years ago, when the community began its “rebirth” with the return of its population.

Years ago, the economically-active population began migrating abroad, especially to Spain. Some migrated to the Trópico de Cochabamba region, also known as Chapare.

Those who travelled to Spain began sending remittances and some of it was used in the construction of modern houses in the community. Others used it as motivation for the definitive move to the Quillacollo or Santa Cruz city, where they made an “investment.” The later sold their land in Pirhuas at very low prices because they did not have water for irrigation or access to basic services. The private sector took advantage of this and bought the land.

The population that migrated to the Trópico kept their plots in Pirhuas and hired workers to cultivate potatoes and vegetables that they would take to Trópico. These people began investing in Pirhuas by remodelling their houses and buying more land.

New investors went to the Municipality of Sipe Sipe to ask for the construction of a road, public lighting, and transportation. All important changes that took place between 1996 and 1998 helped in the rebirth of this community.

Deep transformation in the social composition came with the rebirth of Pirhuas. Now Pirhuas has 220 affiliates (families) according to data from the OTB and the chairman of the regents. This population is known for having different types of farmers live together: i) “piqueros” (a kind of land ownership, prior to the agrarian reform) who owned small plots next to the hacienda; ii) former hacienda employees who were given ownership titles of 1-2 hectares; iii) old farmer migrants from the highlands who came down to the valley and purchased lands in the community some 20 years ago when lands were affordable; and iv) new migrants –most of them young people from the highlands—who came to study and work as labourers and lived in rented places or worked as guardians.

Middle-aged people (30-50 or even 60 years of age) are the majority in Pirhuas; there are some older people, but there are many people in their 80s-90s that are still active and productive.

Young, school-aged people are the third category of inhabitants. All the families we visited had children in the university or in a middle school that provides technical training. Lastly, there are children ages 6-11; we saw very few babies.

5.2 Main types of risk for livelihoods

Pirhuas is located in a low valley with dry and cool climate, at an altitude of 2.500 metres above sea-level. In this region, all crops are affected by frosts, sleet, strong winds; hail and frosts are the main culprits of production losses (Beetstra, 2010).



Water source in the community

One of the main risks in the community is the risk of running out of water. The main sources of water are surface water and they have 4 deep wells (100-200mts), which in this region is considered a sign of the depletion of water sources.

Another important risk is pollution; it came up in several interviews. Many vegetables and even traditional corn were lost, they say, due to pollution in both sources. Pollution is caused by brick companies that are drawing close to the community and pollution of lands that use chemical products and the solid chicken waste from companies with operations in the area.





***Agrochemical bottles in the community
Agroindustrial company,
Agua Pura***

A third risk is that agrochemical companies have opened facilities here after buying land from the farmers.

Lastly, this community has another income source –the change of economic activity foreseen to start with migration and allocation of funds to other productive

budget lines for young people. They are becoming professionals and are not interested in farming.

5.3 Gender relations and local relations (informal)

We consider this as a topic that requires further investigation, as we were not able to do so in this first approach. We can state that the migration of husbands to other production and business areas —like the La Paz mines or the buying and selling of plots in Santa Cruz and opening businesses there, like truckers or transportation— seem to be the reason why some men start new families and abandon the woman, leaving her with the burden of the agricultural production.

It can also be another reason why agricultural production has been reduced to its minimum, or self-consumption.

Women are taking on a new role in their communities. Because their husbands are busy or absent, women have to attend the community meetings. It is interesting to see more women than men present. This does not mean that women participate more or that they have more power. In a meeting, the chairman said:

“Just women in this meeting, but when the issue is appointing representatives or authorities, all [the community members] want men.” (Leader in an OTB meeting)



Community women participating in community activities

Attendance to meetings is mandatory; if they do not attend, they are fined. Therefore, it is an imposition on women to attend in representation of their households.

5.4 Social protection or community support institutions

“...There are no government policies here; we have worked for everything here. Nobody has given us anything; the only help I get is from my children who are in Spain.” (Mr V. 55 year old, farmer)

Social protection is almost non-existent in the zone. They do not have a health clinic and the need for health services is provided individually and privately in the capital of the province (in Quillacollo.) Farmers have to pay for the health services they require. Prices are basically the same as in Cochabamba city, an appointment with a physician costs approximately 22 dollars. Medicines are just as expensive and in some cases, mistakenly prescribed. For example Mrs. B. is an elderly lady who was stamped on by cows; she went to the doctor because her body was sore and she was prescribed Vitamin C and sulphonamides.

“The Sol bonus (a type of pension given by the government to the elderly) is all my wife and I receive every month. It is always useful. Health insurance makes us wait too long and their service is not good. I returned from Quillacollo because of that and went to a jampiri (traditional healer) and now I feel much better.” (Ibid)

“...packaging, sorting and washing vegetables, in a cold room at -8 degrees. We are on our feet all day. We bring our lunch from home. We have no social security.” (Mrs Q. employed at the plant nursery)



Mrs. B. speaking with the local facilitator



Community children receiving presents from World Vision

It seems there are no traditional physicians left in the community.

Drinking water and irrigation services were partially supported by World Vision, through the PDA project. Children in school also receive presents (such as school supplies and clothes) twice a year.

For the above reasons, we conclude that very few mothers are benefiting from the Juana Azurduy bonus (government economic support for pregnant women) and the family subsidy, since both require a lot of paperwork.

*“I couldn’t get this subsidy when my son was born (last year.) **Why?** I did not have time to register my son. They were asking for the OTB certificate and I had to go to the Municipality to request the live birth certificate – which is different from a birth certificate--, so I went and they asked me to come another time because they had to log on to the system. So I was not able to get it. I am upset with the father of my child because he has not helped me...”* (“Agua Viva” greenhouse employee)

School-aged children receive the Juancito Pinto bonus (economic support for children in school) once a year; it consists of approximately US\$30.00.

Overall, the community lacks social protection due to a number of factors, being the most critical ones: unavailable information, and long and complex bureaucratic procedures for processing and accessing the benefits.

5.5 Local findings in Pirhuas about FPV and people’s response

How has this affected the way people live in the last year?

First of all, we must mention the social differences in the community. During the investigation we detected the presence of at least three social groups: families with assets (US\$40,000 to 60,000,

the minority), those that do not seem to be affected greatly with the price increase as a result of having changed their consumption habits:

“... my husband drives his own tractor, he has worked the river for 6 years now. I used to sort rocks too, but now I only supervise his operator.” (Mrs B., farmer, housewife, 38 years old)

“... I have worked with rocks for three years now. My brother owns a retro excavator; my nephew is the operator. They rent this part of the river from the community and we have a job.” (Mrs H.G., stone sorter.)

“... we purchase the same, what can we do about it?... we spend more, too...” (Mrs F.L., butcher in Sipe Sipe)

These families rely more and more on the market and their consumption is similar to that of urban consumption. Their food habits almost never include traditional meals, for example children are given lunch money to eat in school, which is located in the city or town. These families are the ones that hire the labour of the poorest.

“That is unheard of nowadays; we all stay in our plots or in our homes. There is no more ayni (mutual support), we hire labourers...” (Male milk producer in the PIL module).

“... I stay until late at night cleaning up with the peasants...” (Mr F., milk producer, 45 years old)



Community boy snacking on a processed product during recess.

Families who have 5-6 cows have lower income and do not have retro excavators or any other piece of machinery. They are affected by the price of food and it is obvious that in the last year

they have replaced products such as beef for soy beef, for example. These are also the families that reduce the volume of products they buy and still resort to bartering with farmers in the highlands or have their own orchards to grow roots and grains like wheat.

“... families with more children are the ones that buy the least; 0.25 kg is all they buy...”
(Mrs F.L., butcher)

“...The price of sugar has gone up, as has rice and oil. Sugar is what goes up the most, twice as much. After the rise in gas prices we have had to charge more and nothing has come down; without being able to pay more, we have gotten used to spend more.” (Mr M.V., farmer, 55 year old originally from Pirhuas)

“... Now my oldest son helps me. He also works with rocks and gives me money to help with expenses. He dropped out of school; he was in middle school...” (Mrs.V, single mother, 45 years old)

The poorest families are the ones that came from the hills recently or a short time ago and they live in rented rooms or land or they just purchased land. They still have their old food habits and refrain from buying products from the market or buy very little oil, sugar or rice.

“We work by day sowing potatoes and corn. It is not a secure employment, sometimes they do not give us work. My son works in the river.” (Mr M., poor farmer, 68 years old)

“... Only those that own land live well, those that do not suffer because they have to work as day labourers...” (Mrs G., farmer, 50 year old)

“There is no shortage of anything in this community. There are few that are poor. In school, 5 or 6 are poor, but they are not from here, they came from the highlands. They are the ones that are poor, but they also bring their goods, so they have that...” (P.A., school teacher)

The change in prices due to product seasonality is very common in this area. There are no sudden, evident increases or decreases for products in the basic basket of goods. The market where they buy is Quillacollo and they go there mostly during the weekend (Saturday and Sunday) because they find farmers from other zones that sell the same products at “better prices.”

Where FPV is more visible is in the production stage, since the policy that fixes prices for food markets was subsidised recently by farmers.

“Prices go up and down because people are not organised, they all grow the same thing, i.e. carrots, and so that forces the price down and it becomes scarce and then it goes up. Sometimes they prefer to use their crops as fodder for the cows. Prices are always unstable, like with tomatoes [5bs -20bs per cuartilla (sixteenth part of a hundredweight)]”
(S.R., manager of the Agua Viva greenhouse)

The effect of this policy in the zone was that they stopped producing vegetables and fruits for the market, especially carrots. Not only that, but the dairy economy replaced the agricultural in the market. This does not give them as much margin, thus, productive diversification and migration

have in many cases, entrusted the agricultural activities for family consumption into the hands of women.

“Farmers do not have a fixed price for their vegetables; who produces that way?” (Male milk producer in the PIL module)

“Things are the same because we work more and more; now my son has to work.” (Mrs A., stone sorter, divorced)

6. CASE II: KAMI NEIGHBOURHOOD, QUILLACOLLO MUNICIPALITY

6.1 Main socioeconomic, geographic and demographic features

Kami is a miner neighbourhood located in District 5 in the Quillacollo municipality. According to the Deputy Mayor, it is the largest district in the municipality. It includes approximately 36 OTB and Kami is the largest and most populated OTB. Other important OTBs in the vicinity include Colquiri to the East; Villa Maria, to the North; Kimbol, to the West; the Blanco Galindo highway is located to the South, as well as Assana and Quechisla, and Quechisla and Colquiri had miners as their first inhabitants.



Source: Author's, using Google Maps (2012)

The densely populated neighbourhood is 8 blocks long and 1 block wide. Although the authorities and inhabitants acknowledge the demographic importance of Kami, there is no official statistical data to corroborate it and it affects the entire municipality. Despite the many legal requirements in the municipalities, Quillacollo has been immersed in an intense political instability, which has prevented it from updating its 2001 Municipal Development Plan, something that should be updated every five years.

Interviews with Key Informants and with the population that has lived there for a long time say that Kami experienced steady migration from the Kami mine since the 1980s. Even the name of the neighbourhood changed to something different from what the first farmers in the zone knew. So, there was a time when close to 80% of the population were ex-miners from the Kami mine.

The concentration of new population was the result of the housing plans made by the miner cooperatives with their associates. The co-ops built low-cost houses that its affiliates purchased. This dynamic explains why miner neighbourhoods such as Colquiri are inhabited by ex-miners from a mine with the same name. All miners are homeowners. The number of miners has decreased with the passing of years. According to V.B., they stand for 40% of the population nowadays; others say 60%.



Façade of the pensioner Association

The first socio-professional group includes miners or ex-miners that soon began to diversify their economic activities to alleviate the meagre pensions. Many turned to transportation, others to services, automotive mechanics, and cargo transportation, sale of spare parts for cars and trucks, or general trade. Now, many of them have noticeable well-being, especially those that sell spare parts for heavy transportation. This is a minority group with obvious political clout. The leader of the OTB is part of the international heavy transportation group.

Another group that seems to be significant is that of tenants. According to the chairman of the Kami OTB, most of the people are homeowners, but ex-miners have 1-5 tenants as a way to supplement their income.



Tenants standing in line to buy gas (gas in the homes is only available to owners)

Not much is known about this more or less roving population that includes students, newlyweds, professionals, masons, and house maids.

In recent years (2007-2012) the neighbourhood has experienced important infrastructure improvements: pavement of the main street that runs through the entire Kami neighbourhood; pavement of other secondary streets; and installation of gas in the homes (almost complete).



Oquendo Avenue – Main Street in Kami

It is not possible to determine the age composition of the population due to lack of data (data is unknown even to the Deputy Mayor). Schools in the area accept students from the entire district and some come from distant locations. Young people in the district can attend other private and public schools.

6.2 Main types of risks for livelihoods

There are no specific risks for this population other than the overall economic risks, or crisis that endangers employment.

6.3 Gender and local relations (informal)

It was no surprise to find that women are responsible for most of the activities in the home, but we also found that this responsibility is shared with younger women as well. Adult women tend to contribute to the household income with one or several activities outside the home, without forsaking the responsibilities that women traditionally have, i.e. chores and caring for the children.

In Pirhuas, younger women start working as labourers. In fact, for communities in the highlands, this is a more interesting option, although there is a difference in pay.

“...labour is cheaper [here] and more sought after; the few people that come from other towns are highly demanded here. In the past, five years ago, women would earn 15bs

daily wage, but now (2012) they earn 40bs; at that time men would earn 40bs and now they earn 70bs.” (S.R., Manager at Agua Pura)

Mrs R’s case stands out. Her husband’s wages are not enough to feed the entire family, so she performs all her house chores in the morning, prepares breakfast, gets the youngest children ready, cleans the house. After the children are off to school, she goes out to her first job in a video arcade. She took this job because it lets her work in her other steady job: she is part of the embroidering women who meet in the parish. She gets paid for the embroidering work she does. Her oldest daughter helps her preparing lunch for the entire family. In the afternoon she works in the arcade until 3 or 4 and then goes to the parish to embroider or checks on her children’s homework. Her husband is a baker who works all night and at noon looks after the youngest child (the only child of both him and B.) On Saturday, Mrs R. washes her children’s clothes as well as other people’s clothes. Her husband does his own laundry. On Sunday she shops for the entire week.



Mrs R carrying out her two jobs while being interviewed.

Grocery stores and market stands are mostly run by women; but restaurants in the neighbourhood have mostly male employees.

Additional to being responsible for the chores in the home and collaborating with the family income, women are the only ones that participate in the social support systems we found. In fact, the parish and the Senda Nueva NGO work only with women. As we will see, this consumes their time. Men do not collaborate. Social support here is feminine.

6.3 Social protection and community support institutions

Kami has a health clinic nearby, but people prefer to travel to the Quillacollo hospitals, a few kilometres away using public transportation, or to Cochabamba City.

Support for the people in this neighbourhood comes basically from two institutions: the Cruz Gloriosa Parish and the Senda Nueva NGO.

The parish has an embroidery project. They get orders for Bolivian-motif embroidered tablecloths and every week, the women deliver their embroidery work and receive more orders. Mrs R., one of the embroidering ladies, has participated in this project for nine years. She embroiders all day long.



Senda Nueva facilities in the Parish.



Embroidering women interviewed while they worked.

The parish had a food support programme, until last year, which served children and provided school support. They provided the children with breakfast or lunch. The children's mothers had to pay 2bs per child and were required to give their time to help prepare the meals, clean the facilities, and participate in other parish activities. This programme was funded with funds the priest had negotiated in Germany. However, after 5 years, the parish had to close the programme due to the increase in food prices (2010 and 2011), as their funding was not enough to pay for their costs. Also, a similar project opened nearby with great success.

This new project is run by Senda Nueva, an NGO that started operations in the neighbourhood in 1992 and nowadays makes use of some of the space available at the parish. Their project consists of giving mothers who participate in the programme one meal and one snack a day per child and school support at 15bs per day. As with the project run by the parish, mothers have to contribute with work for 1 ½ day per week –half a day for preparing diverse things and one full day for cooking and looking after the children.

The mother's perception about their participation in this project is positive. They commented on feeling happy for going there for work and for spending some time with other mothers. They talk about problems their families might be facing, and give and receive advice. They see this exchange as a type of therapy against stress and the daily routine. They share many good moments that compensate the load of the work on which they engage.



Group of mothers (Senda Nueva) sharing with us about the loans they receive.

This programme has two additional components: 1) Some mothers bake bread for sale, and 2) some mothers come together in groups and get loans for food. Loans are for 500bs, but the application has to be submitted by a group of women and they have to state which food they will buy and the corresponding budget.

6.4 Local findings in Kami about FPV and people's responses

What is happening and how has this affected people in the past year? (what happened during the last five years)

Responses were not clear and do not show a coinciding of macro factors affecting the different groups when data was collected. However, as was stated before, the rise in gasoline prices (Gasolinazo) was something mentioned by several respondents. This issue was perceived as a trigger for the increase in food prices first and in the general costs of living.

"... what affected us the most was the rise in gasoline price in this administration [starting end 2010]. In the past [before the gasolinazo], prices were ok, but after that incident, nothing has gone back to how it was, instead everything goes up." (Mr B., OTB water official)

In the opinion of key informants what has affected most the lives of people in Kami in the past year has been the lack of stable dignified jobs. This happens even when Kami is located in the "industrial area" in Cochabamba and Quillacollo. State factories (or part of their operations) are located very close to Kami, such as COBOCE (cement plant), DILMANN (cold cuts factory), UNILEVER (importer of a wide range of products and cleaning products), and PIL (dairy processing plant). Others that are close by include COCA-COLA, MANACO (national shoe factory) and many large and medium-sized lumber companies.

Key informants (District Deputy Mayor, OTB president, R.B., and V.B.) stated that very few people in Kami work in these factories. In Mr. R.B.'s opinion, several of the tenants in the neighbourhood work in the factories (but it is impossible to know exactly how many tenants live in the neighbourhood.) According to Mr VB., the OTB leader, and Mr. R.B., in charge of water, not

too many people work in these factories. The reasons behind might be that many of the persons in the neighbourhood are and have been pensioners, housewives, or business people, who are not interested (or qualified) in working in the factories.

The lack of employment for miners is a double problem: it is a problem for them and for their children. The Bolivian Labour Legislation grants miners differentiated benefits due to the low life expectancy in their profession. Working in the mines is closely related to tuberculosis and cysticercosis.

“Why did we come out of the mines? Why did we come to Cochabamba? Due to illnesses which prevent us from working; our lungs are not well, whether we come from Oruro, Potosí or wherever... we’ve come here for health reasons.” (Miner pensioner)

Retirees complain they cannot work, either because they are retired or simply because given their age it is difficult to find a job.

“We have been marginalised. Our pension is not enough to live a dignified life.”

“The basic basket of goods costs more than 8000bs, sadly we do not have that much money. That’s the way it is.” (Miner pensioner)

On the other hand some state that their children, even professionals, cannot find jobs.

“Our children cannot find employment; even though they are professionals, they had to go to the mines because there is no employment. Others have moved to Chapare and Yungas⁵. All our hard work to help them become professionals has been in vain... but what can we do.” (Miner pensioner, 65 years old)

Jobs currently available pay such low wages that they are only enough to survive, but people can do nothing else, only work. It takes up all their time. *“... it is not enough to live a good life with the family.”*

The Youth Focus Group agreed with this statement. One of the most important problems they perceive is the lack of jobs. Another problem they mention is the increase in the price of food and transportation.

⁵ Chapare is a tropical region in Cochabamba, approximately 170 kms from Quillacollo. In the mid 1980s it experienced considerable internal migration, especially from mining centres in crisis and rural areas. It is an attractive region due to its thriving economy with coca and its close links to cocaine traffic and production. Yungas is another coca-producing region but it is located in La Paz. Coca production in this region is less linked to drug production due to its status as a legally authorised coca-growing zone, as stated in Law 1008.



Youth Focus Group after the meeting.

To close the circle in this phenomenon, women in the retiree group –who are really the daughters of the pensioners in the focus group—pointed out that the limited job opportunities are associated to outsourcing and vulnerability of existing jobs. The effect of this is low wages and a limited possibility of action, even with labour authorities.

“There are outsourcing companies. These do not pay much, they deduct money for the AFP [Pension Fund Administration, Administradora del Fondo de Pensiones]. They deduct 150bs from my pay. My check should be 915bs but they deduct absences [from work]. A non-justifiable absence represents a deduction of 3 days. Still, we hold on to our jobs. The government should control the companies. There are some that work 12- or 16-hour shifts and all they get is soup.

I have a job and I hold on to it for dear life. In the past I would go from one job to the next, but not anymore... But if I complain they would fire me on the spot... and then I would have nothing to feed my children.” (Miner’s daughter in the Focus Group of Retired Cooperative Members)

However, the situation for pensioners has improved in the last five years thanks to the mobilisations made by pensioner unions nation-wide. Mr V a miner and former member of a co-op, active in these mobilisations told us that the pension used to be 600bs, 10 years ago. But with the protests from Cochabamba to La Paz in the late 1990s and early 2000 they were able to get an annual adjustment according to inflation following the “inversely proportional” rule. This means that pensioners with lower pensions receive more and those that have higher pensions receive less. Plus, they also receive the Dignidad bonus (approximately 200bs), which was created by the Sánchez de Lozada administration in 1997. These changes have increased pensions an average that goes from 1200 to 3000 bs.

Mrs B., with 6 children (5 from a partner who abandoned her and a last child from her current partner) has decided to not look for a job in the factories nearby for a simple reason:

“Those jobs keep you there from 8 to 8. So you are there the entire day and it makes me wonder, who will take care of the children? Who helps them with their homework?”

Those in the Traders Focus Group (who sell in the Kami market) stated that the biggest problems last year [2011-2012] were:

- *Less liquidity in the families' economy*
- *Price increases*
- *Less people working in the fields*
- *Climate has changed and because of that prices go up*

Unemployment is the most important factor in the generalised food price increase, but national political disturbances were also a factor. A woman mentioned a specific incident: the clash of indigenous people (TIPNIS) in the park with the government over a road that runs through their territory (tensions escalated in 2011). Another one mentioned something more generalised:

“Protests, strikes, roadblocks... they set up roadblocks for any reason. This also forces an increase in the price of potatoes, rice, sugar and oil.”

Family case studies show that the greatest problem is the increase in the price of food [starting 2007 – 2008], but also in that of clothing, transportation, basic services, gasoline, everything.

“Food is more expensive; money is not enough. I used to spend 30bs per week [before the gasolinazo in late 2010], but now I spend 50bs.” (Mrs M., 18 years, head of her household)

Along the same lines but with increased limitations, a more austere lifestyle:

“I believe things are worse now because of the price rise that came with the gasoline price rise. Before [pre-gasolinazo] 100 pesos were enough to purchase groceries and even to have a meal in the market. Not anymore, we have to save as much as possible.” (Mrs V. T., 34 year old woman, mother of several young children)

“Things are worse now, everything is more expensive. There is not enough money to save, all the money is used to buy food.” (Mrs C., 66-year old widow)

The basic basket of goods is more expensive now. In Mrs B.'s case, it increased from 250 to 300bs, in the case of Mrs T. it increased from 100 to 200bs.

All interviewees said vegetables were more expensive but they are due to the seasonality of vegetables. There are seasons when tomatoes and onions are more expensive but not all the time. A group of mothers complained about the price of tomatoes but this was due to the religious fair in the municipality. Once the fair was over, the price dropped. The same thing seems to happen with onions; although the reason for the price increase during data collection was unclear. This group of mothers includes women of all ages and they all said onions had never been so expensive; they think it is due to onions being used in making drugs.

“I have noticed prices go up for a season. Sometimes when I go to the market, everything is more expensive; when I go back two weeks later, prices are down. So it evens out.”

Depending on the product, prices vary. Potatoes are expensive during winter and cheaper during harvest time. We have the advantage that there are old potatoes, which are cheaper in winter time. We buy those and make up for the differences in prices. Beef, chicken and those go up and prices don't come down. Very rarely do chicken prices drop, because there is a lot of demand.” (Mrs M. F., 45 years old, three children)



Vegetable stand in Kami

Although vegetables prices vary according to seasons and other activities like fairs, which increase the demand of some products, the price of other products never decreases. These include meat (particularly beef), sugar, flour, and rice. The most surprising finding was that this trend now also includes traditional products with high nutritional value such as *quinoa* and *chuño*.⁶

The rise in prices observed in the past 6 years (2007-2012) has forced people to stop buying fruit and fish.

“In our case, we no longer buy fruit; 25 plantains for frying, for example, are now worth 20bs. We no longer buy fish. The other day a trader was selling it at 40bs/kg—awfully expensive! Condensed milk... we also used to buy it for desserts, but not anymore.” (Mr F factory retiree, 63 years old)

How well are people coping with change in everyday life?

“Given the changes with employment, there are no strategies other than trying to look for more employment; there need to be more resource-generating activities to cope with expensive food prices. We also need to look for places with better prices to shop; especially avoid intermediaries.” (Mrs P., trader who receives her husband's pension)

⁶ Chuño: Frozen, dehydrated potato.

B. has multiplied her sources of income.

“My husband’s salary is not enough; I work too. I do embroidery and I also work in the arcade selling tokens.”

Later in the interview we found out that on Saturdays she also works washing other people’s clothes. Her oldest daughter helps her.

In general, we found that the ways in which people cope with the increase in prices include:

- Shopping in the market for the entire week and not purchase certain items like fruit, fish, or cereals (quinoa, lentils). Some interviewees are buying less milk or are no longer using butter.
- Certain products cannot be excluded from the diet. For example, rice, when it becomes more expensive, they buy lower quality rice. Instead of buying the whole grain, they buy cracked white rice. The same applies to potatoes; they buy old or small potatoes. Meat is very hard to replace so they buy the cheaper cuts. Some families are buying only chicken giblets (head, legs, etc.)
- Those families that are better off buy products in bulk when prices are cheap or whenever they think prices are going to go up. For example, they buy a hundredweight of rice or flour; of course, this only works for products that can be stored in large amounts.
- Another option is to organise a group and buy a large amount of a perishable product, so they buy a big quantity with less money. This happens almost spontaneously, it is not customary.
- The group of mothers, as a small organisation, has purchased products in bulk and they distribute it among the group. This is possible due to the food loans we will address in the next section.

The underlying thought is that the basic basket of goods, for example, will go back to “normal” when prices stop increasing and when sources of income improve. While there is no clear and real indication on when the general conditions will improve, people maintain the hope of a better upcoming future, based on government statements suggesting that the situation will improve.

What sources of support are working best to help cope with change?

There are two significant sources of support: State and private.

Sources of State support

The Bolivian State has several policies aimed at alleviating poverty and which relate to this research. We have mentioned, although indirectly, the Juancito Pinto bonus. This is a monetary bonus (200bs) that is given to each elementary school student that has completed the school year. It comes as relief to the family economy because it helps with school supplies. However, the local inhabitants have a negative perception towards it due to an event occurred long time ago, but which is still present in the neighbourhood’s memory.

“Her husband said he was going to collect the bonus for the 4 children. She had to stay at home, do the laundry and cook. He went by himself and was supposed to return at 4 pm,

but didn't. When he finally did, he said all 4 children had been murdered with rat poison. She committed suicide and left a note saying that all the bonus was good for, was to make him drink." (Mrs P. widow, 66 years old)

or, along the same lines:

"It [the bonus] is helpful but only for some things, shoes. How much do you think a backpack costs? 120-150bs! I would like to get that bonus at the beginning of the year. Everybody eats that bonus, they spend everything in bars. There are people needier than I. I have never partied or seen my brothers get drunk. I have never been to those places nor have I ever spent money there." (Mrs R., embroider, receives remittances from abroad)

In summary, although the amounts may not be enough, the perception is that what is being given is not being used in the best way.

There is also the school breakfast programme; this consists of food distributed by the Municipality with funds from the Treasury of the Nation. Meals vary depending on the municipalities or regions, but it basically consists of liquid ration (milk or fruit juice), fruit and a ration of cookies. The investigator asked if breakfast in school was helpful to the mothers but there was no consensus on its effectiveness:

V.: Yes, very much; it is... [Cut short by M.]

M.: No, it doesn't taste good and the children throw it away

J.: No

M.: I am a school delegate that is why... [Cut short by Jenny]

J.: I am, too.

M.: This is why I say that 70% of the kids throw the food out and the other 30% does not take it at all. We really do find the food stashed away in corners or in the garbage cans. (Mothers' group in Senda Nueva)

In any case, during our interview with the Deputy Mayor in District 5 he said that this food is distributed without problems in all the schools in the district.

At the national level, the management of the school breakfast programme has caused problems in the municipalities. In El Alto, for example, they want to replace the banana because children do not want it anymore (bananas have been distributed for several years.) This could be what is happening in Kami, where according to some mothers, the influence of media (mainly TV) makes children desire foreign products and junk foods, leaving aside national products and fruits and with no consideration of the nutritional value of the foods they are choosing.

The support provided by EMAPA has been important in times of food crisis. EMAPA was created when food prices were terribly expensive (especially for flour, sugar, and oil); it was responsible for distributing the food that the Bolivian State had imported to cope with the shortage and with the strong increase. We heard several criticisms of this system stating it no longer works the way it was originally designed to work.

Criticism of EMAPA operations

“People had to stand in long lines, even sleep on the street a day before, to receive a small amount of certain products. Products such as flour and rice were low quality or had expired. It was not good. You could find those same products in neighbourhood stores, which proved that products were being distributed irregularly, that there was favouritism or even corruption.” (Focus Group with Senda Nueva mothers)

This is a generalised criticism, but other non-governmental support institutions attempted to help people gain access to the State support. Both the OTB as well as the Cruz Gloriosa parish took the necessary steps to access EMAPA products so they could distribute them more efficiently in Kami. They did not succeed.

Mr V.B and Mr R.B. are OTB leaders fro Kami. They explained:

“We submitted our paperwork with EMAPA to be able to distribute products here in the neighbourhood and in the district, but everything was too bureaucratic.” (V.B., retired, in charge of water in the neighbourhood)

They organised themselves by blocks, each street had a street delegate that collected names, products and amounts each person needed. These lists were used to submit the request to EMAPA, but the product was delivered close to two months afterwards. The OTB made no further attempts.

The Cruz Gloriosa Parish experience was practically the same.

“We went to EMAPA. For example, when the price of bread went up, the priest was able to get some funding to help the poorest. We wanted to buy flour, but alas! We thought we could bake our bread with the flour and shortening, but it was all very bureaucratic! They needed this form, that form, etc. and when it seemed that we were finally going to get the green light... they turned us down saying the person responsible had changed and the process had to start all over again. We did this three times and nothing happened. Nothing has changed there.” (Mrs C., social worker in the Parish)



Mothers from the parish group selling bread



Jean Paul interviewing E. Carrasco (Parish)

In conclusion, this support was not reaching the neediest and even worse, people have the strong impression that it is being misused due to corruption and that it only benefits the rich and not the poor.

“Not in EMAPA, because those that have no money cannot afford to buy by hundredweights. It makes me think that people in EMAPA sell that way to wrap things up quickly.” (Mr R., retired, 65 years old, Kami)

And, along the same lines:

“When I went to EMAPA, all I saw were other traders. Poor persons really need it but cannot afford to buy more than a few kilos. Businesses in EMAPA sell by 25-lb bags and prefer to sell to other traders. Another time, one trader asked me to buy things for him with my ID and he would pay me. I hated him for doing that because all they look for is their own profit and do not care for poor people.” (Mrs G., receives remittances, 27 years old, Kami)

7. FUTURE FARMERS

The research work also explored specific information related to a special topic: future farmers. Throughout our work, we gathered information on whether agriculture is present in the living conditions and aspirations of young people.

7.1 Rural site - Pirhuas

Young people in Pirhuas, in general terms, no longer consider agriculture as an option or a possibility in their future. Their goal is to receive good income and “become professionals.” In fact, all those we interviewed were studying careers such as electro mechanics, information systems, and physiotherapy. Others want to join the military.

Their expectations are in part due to the frustration their parents have toward agriculture. However, for a long time now, farmers have wanted their children to become something other than farmers, not just because agriculture is not profitable, but also because farmers are discriminated. This situation has changed somehow: people are now proud about what they are and cannot be called “ignorant farmer” or “filthy indian” anymore. Their daily life has changed; they have changed the way they dress, the way they live and how they speak, because they were discriminated because of those traits.

On the other hand, farmers as a social sector in society have become empowered since the democratic election of a “farmer” as President of Bolivia. The strength of the social movement, the presence of farmers occupying public positions, the law against discrimination, as well as other measures have changed the notion of a farmer. Even so, parents do not want their children to become farmers and they themselves no longer want to be farmers either.

“Have a good job; so I have to study and become a professional. After I graduate from high school I want to study law.” (Young employee at the greenhouse.)

Parents consider their children’s future to be distant from agriculture, because they consider this to be a better quality of life.

“... Now children watch television, they study in Sipe Sipe...” (Mrs G. 80 years old, living alone)

“...To continue working as a farmer these days, we would need to receive a pension, because we don't receive one now. There is no insurance for elderly people and the Dignity bonus is not enough for making a living...” (Mr C., milk producer, 48 years old)

“Nobody can be a farmer, because they are working blindly, sometimes you lose—that's what we see as parents—and so this is why we make our children study.” (Ibid.)

“Sometimes you eat well and sometimes you do not; as one grows older it gets even worse, sometimes we get sick from all the hard work. This is why we do not want our children to be farmers.” (Ibid.)

“As parents we make sure they study, that they have everything they need. Plus, they have the advocacy offices, too.” (Mrs C., ex-leader)

“My children are: two in Spain, one in Santa Cruz, another in the Tropico and 3 are here with me. The oldest went to school up to 4th and 5th grades; this is why they are farmers, as is the one in the Tropico, he produces oranges and coca. My son in Santa Cruz has a store. The ones that live in Spain send money.” (Mr V, farmer originally from Pirhuas)

“Prices go up a tiny bit and people no longer want to buy. ‘We'll buy Peruvian instead,’ they say. This is how farming is, prices go up and down, no fixed prices.” (Ibid.)

“Young people have changed, we have seen the hardships our parents experienced and we don't want to do what they did. We want to become professionals, to work in the city. Some friends have worked hard and have saved and they pay for their own schooling without asking their parents for money.” (Mr C., 18 years old, Pirhuas)

“I want to become a police officer; but if it were possible, I would like to have land and make it produce. But I would like to have capital, to be an entrepreneur instead of a farmer because farmers make no profit and they get sick.” (Ibid)

“Now they even go to the university; we barely made elementary school.” (Mrs G., young mother with 4 children, wife of a miner)

“As parents we make them study; we give them everything. In the past, as soon as a person got out of school he had to go work. We have raised several children, because God has been good, we don't miss anything.” (Mr R. farmer, originally from Pirhuas)

“None of the young people—not even the poorest—want to become farmers.”
(Mr R, farmer originally from Pirhuas, 55 years old)

7.2 Urban site - Kami neighbourhood

Farming is not an option for young people. Parents encourage their children to become professionals instead.

Mr B., was a farmer who became a miner so his children could study. Now, one of them is an architect, the other is finishing his university studies in architecture as well. We asked him if he would want his children to work in the mine, to which he replied:

“No, my experience there was enough. Nothing but hardship is in the mines. This is why I sent my sons to school; sure they are not all the same. My oldest son studied in San Simón and now works in the Municipality.” (Mr B, in charge of water for Kami, 65 years old)

What we want to stress in this section is not so much their perception of farming but rather the sacrifices and efforts made so their children could receive an education. The fruit of his labour is that his sons are professionals and have worked in positions of public responsibility. We want to add the notion that studying is a promise for an improved social change.

The population is knowledgeable that progress is not automatic. In our conversations we were told that professionals do not always find employment.

In any case, most of them show they value greatly the education of their children; this was visible in all levels. Mrs R. was a low-income family mother who does not apply to permanent employment with social benefits because she knows it means leaving her children unattended. She said:

“... In a year’s time I will get a good job. I cannot for the time being. My little ones are too little and the other ones are in school. They would have to stay with the oldest girl, and they don’t... Sometimes she is not interested... and my husband works too... I have to help them with homework. If I go off to work all day (7 to 7) then I will not be able to instruct them.”

Mrs R’s own experience tells her how important it is to get an education. She comes from a farmer family, all her siblings went to school and they are professionals. Instead, she had to drop out due to lack of money. She regrets that her children were not able to maximise the opportunity they had to study.

Education, my children do not want to attend school. I am always hurrying them, taking them, and fighting with them. They do not want to do their homework. How I wish I could have gone to school! My father took me out of school when I was just 14. He said my brothers had to go to school and there was no more money for my education. Now my brothers are professionals.

But when asked if she would like to return to farming, she was agreeable with the idea. She sees it as an opportunity to have a house, which is one of her greatest desires. She also has the hope that the young people will become professionals.

The young people in the focus group have the same hope or vision.

“Farming pays good money, but we do not want to do that because we want to become professionals, dress nice, be respected because we live in the city. We are used to living here; if they take us to the field maybe we will be fine for a few days but would get bored

because we are used to living in a city and everything it offers. This is why it is difficult for young people to become farmers...” (Youth Focus Group)

However, Mrs P who is retired shared with us a different and entrepreneurial vision of farming. To her, it was more than an opportunity, it was a proposal.

“It would be great. I would like to ask the government for land uphill, not take it away from the government, ask if the land is idle perhaps we can cultivate it. We return the land whenever they ask for it. We would ask the government for tractors and all of us would farm. I would love to have a source of employment. We would buy and sell. I would like that. There are many plots of land...”

Interviewer: *“Do you think they [your children] would like to do that?”*

“Sure... why not. I would encourage them, my children too. If the government gives us the fertiliser, tractor and seed, why not? I would be first in line. I would have a cow, a pig, because you can sell milk and meat.”

The notion exists of an entrepreneurial possibility to generate money in the field, but this is something the other interviewees did not see; a strong participation of the State would be required. Mrs P has this vision because she has been following the information on food prices. She knows that prices will keep rising in the future and food will be scarcer, pushing the prices even higher.

8 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The population in Pirhuas as well as in Kami have the impression they lack State protection. Although institutional presence varies from place to place, access to social services and social protection are cumbersome to the population.

There is no State presence in Pirhuas. The population has to resort to health services in the capital of the province, where they pay for private physicians, but this is expensive for their limited family budgets.

In Pirhuas, some farmers received support from the “Productive Revolution” programme. They had to give a matching fund that they obtained through a loan which they are working hard to repay. They also received help from the “Evo Cumple” (Evo Delivers) Programme to build small brick houses, but not all of them were able to repay the U\$500 matching fund. They complain there was favouritism and corruption in the distribution of materials; also, there is contradicting information on State support.

“The Evo Cumple Project came to my house. They made an offer and we brought together a group of 25-35 families. We waited almost 4 years, until they gave up and left. Only 10 received a house.” (Woman in the low-income women group)

“We gave what was required from us: sand, gravel, 30% of all the materials needed, close to 3000Bs, but because of them we lost the land, almost half of it. The material –

iron, cement, bricks-- they brought was incomplete. So we built half of it, it looks like a rat hole. There is nobody to turn to and complain. On television they say it was all wonderful..." (Woman in the low-income women group)

"They used Evo Cuple to build their little houses. World Vision and the government built the bathrooms, they included the labour. They used Evo Cuple in the Lechería (a milk project). They built the shed for the cows. There was another project called "Agrícola Rural" (Rural-Agricultural) that is giving 1300bs per person. They use the money to build milking stables. They also have loans from PIL (the milk module) and receive incentives like presents. There are dairy organisations, loans, corn mills... AMELCO, they are the ones that help." (Mr.R., Agua Pura greenhouse manager)

Policy makers are not fully considering the changes in rural communities with regard to productive processes or the current needs of farmer families. People and smallholders are moving out from the rural areas at an accelerated rate. However, the State is placing great emphasis on food sovereignty as pillar for development. The other pillar receiving political support for the ongoing national change process is "social organisations".

"Labour is cheaper.... they [labourers] are sought after... The only bad thing is they come whenever they please, they are irresponsible and take advantage of the demand for labour." (Ibid)

The fact that people are moving out from the rural areas will have strong socio political effects. These people are leaving behind collective actions and moving on towards individualism. Farmers are going to join the work force. Their joining the market with commercial capitals places them on a different negotiation level with the State. It is no longer them seeking vindication; rather they will have entrepreneurial, private interests in mind and other "rights" what will be used to negotiate.

The decadence in the productive foundation, the land's reduced productivity, soil transformation, and accelerated urbanisation of rural areas (as in the case of Pirhuas) are transforming food production conditions. As was discussed in Chapter 3 (context), food imports increased in recent years, but the supply of food was also transformed. More industrialised products are replacing farmer products at the source and in the markets. Soy meat was present in the basket of goods of ordinary people in Pirhuas.

Cattle ranching which was a very important activity in the agriculture in Pirhuas, no longer use grass or local products like *alfa* to feed their cattle. Close to 70% of cattle fodder comes from the Santa Cruz market and it consists basically of industrialised products.

The trend to market milk as an industrial input is greater than the sale of it as a product for end-users. Prices are not an incentive despite the use of several strategies to maintain price stability. It becomes a problem when the price of inputs increases and producers cannot increase the price of milk due to fixed prices policies. Nonetheless, it remains the best economic alternative (in spite of the high risks) for those families who have a certain level of capitalisation.

The challenge for policy makers is monumental as they will have to correlate situations such as these that are, at the present, tense. Research work such as this one, gives us insights about the process of change and the demands of the population for accessing social security and achieving

food security. These are very important matters, especially if they tell the story of local-national-international trends.

“The authorities need to consider supporting farmers. When we go to the bank, they don’t give us loans. I had to mortgage my wife’s urban house in order to get a loan. The banks are closed to farmers.” (Mr J.C., milk producer, 48 years old)

“Farmers have realised this situation and this is why they are working in whatever job they can find in the city: as masons, shoe shiners, ice-cream vendors, whatever. To a farmer, work in the city is like placing a bet, he earns money one day not knowing if he will harvest in the coming months.” (Ibid.)

What we need to keep monitoring

Food price volatility is a very important topic. Not only for research, but also because of its impact on people and on the potential policies that will emerge in the future.

Monitoring should be accompanied with monthly data collection of prices in the rural area. Another important step is to hold a meeting every six months via Skype or other means to keep track of local and global conditions for further consideration. This topic, which is relatively academic, can be managed contractually in a different way. As CERES we are willing to do so and also to look for local funds in order to maximise opportunities such as this one and do benchmarking.

In the case of Kami, we can continue monitoring the progress of the Senda Nueva project as a very specific strategy used to cope with nutrition and price fluctuations. Also, as a specific strategy, we can monitor families and the social support system.

What needs immediate action, where and by whom

Support activities need to be designed according to the communities’ needs in order to continue thinking and discussing about this issue with the population. There is still plenty of things to be understood and analysed with them.

There are families in Kami, such as Mrs. R.’s family, that have no access to the Senda Nueva food programme because they cannot afford the daily fee. This means that there are segments of the population that have no means of accessing support systems. The problem is that these people are invisible to the system.

The focus group with co-op members shared heart-wrenching testimonies of a mother who had nothing but a glass of water for dinner. This is yet another example of the existence of segments in great need that are not present in the data. For this, we should remember that Quillacollo is not included among the poorest municipalities.

What we need to understand better or on a larger scale

- We should read all the reports and prepare some ideas for joint consideration and identify the trends for the wider set of changes and situations that have been analysed.
- Understand what is the effect of the school breakfast in the nutrition of children and how it affects (or not) the food strategies of families. During this research, the importance of this project was minimised, but it seems to be the single long-term element present, which contributes to the nourishment of the poorest families.
- The results in both sites surprised the researchers. We thought we would find greater difficulties with price fluctuations in the rural site than in the urban site. However, we discovered more difficulties in Kami. Has poverty moved to urban neighbourhoods?

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