

# Women's Empowerment:

## Strategic Impact Inquiry Research Summary

**The Context:** Bolivia is the second poorest country in the Americas with 64 percent of Bolivians living below the poverty line and one-third of Bolivians living on less than \$1 per day (FCO, 2008). In Bolivia, CARE has operated for over 30 years and continues to work in the country's nine departments. The Strategic Impact Inquiry focused on two projects that had no gender-specific objectives in Bolivia's mining towns and border cities. While the individual contexts of border cities and mining towns differ immensely, both are critically affected by high poverty, few income earning opportunities, a failing economy and lack of infrastructure (only 5 percent of roads are paved) that isolate towns from markets.

**The Projects:** CARE Bolivia reflected on how two non-gender-specific projects impacted women's empowerment:

- **Project for Progressive Elimination and Prevention of Child Labor in Mining (PETIM)**, which ran from 2002 to 2006, and aimed to end child labor in mining, through an educational approach that improved quality of education, explored the issue of child labor, and engaged government, grass-roots organizations and mining families;
- **Ciudades Fronterizas (Border Cities)**, 2004-2007 aimed to reduce poverty by working with local government, civil society and private enterprise to support job creation and sustainable incomes. The project focused on linking women and youth in urban border cities to economic activities.

The [Strategic Impact Inquiry](#) (SII) seeks to evaluate CARE's impact on women's empowerment. For more information on CARE Bolivia's SII please contact: [pqlibrarian@care.org](mailto:pqlibrarian@care.org).

### CARE Bolivia's Strategic Impact Inquiry (SII):

CARE Guatemala undertook the SII in 2006 to review both Ciudades Fronterizas and PETIM projects' evaluations and the extent to which they addressed women's empowerment. Specifically, CARE Bolivia focused on the following areas:

- Changes the project promoted in women's lives;
- External factors contributing to or hindering change;
- Project actions that were most influential in contributing to change; and
- Evidence that the project contributed to change in the lives of women.

**The Methods:** For the SII, CARE Bolivia engaged staff in a process of reflection, dialogue, documentation and peer review to identify, assess and share innovative practices resulting in women's empowerment.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

- **Researcher:** External evaluator
- **Workshop:** Participating countries in Latin America met together to discuss women's empowerment, plan and select evaluations to be reviewed for the SII

#### DATA COLLECTION

- **Document and Secondary Data Review:** Evaluation report and program documentation, terms of reference and monitoring reports
- **Self-Assessment Workshop:** Project staff, partners and participants explored changes in women's lives, factors impacting change, project impact on women's empowerment and promising practices

#### DATA ANALYSIS

- External evaluator analyzed findings and conclusions based on workshop and document review

# BOLIVIA

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### CARE Bolivia used the Global Empowerment Framework:

#### AGENCY

Self-image, self-esteem  
Legal, rights awareness  
Information, skills  
Educational attainment  
Employment, control of labor  
Mobility in public space  
Decision influence in HH finance and child-rearing  
Group membership, activism  
Material assets owned  
Bodily health, integrity

#### RELATIONS

Consciousness of self/others as interdependent  
Negotiation  
Alliances  
Pursuit of accountability  
New social forms

#### STRUCTURE

Marriage, kinship roles  
Inclusive and equitable notions of citizenship  
Transparent information and access to services  
Enforceability of rights, access to justice  
Market access  
Political representation  
Share of state budgets  
Density of civil society representation

**Implications:** *An examination of key factors impacting project impacts on women's empowerment revealed numerous implications*

**Commit to learning the local context and collaborating with strategic partners within communities**

- Valuing local knowledge, strategies, interests, challenges and culture, as well as strong communication/relations with the community are critical to reassure marginalized women that their views and ideas matter, and are worth pursuing.
- Foreign models taken out of context can prejudice women's actions/thinking.
- CARE worked with municipal governments to incorporate local economic development into their annual operating plans (AOPs).
- Public and private consensus-building forums for economic development allowed women to establish alliances with other micro-entrepreneurs and with the government in order to receive support and benefits for productive activities.

**The political context can help or hinder impact**

- Decentralization and participation laws create enabling environment that women can leverage.
- Changes in authorities can be problematic to sustaining projects over time (and across election cycles).
- Political patronage and instability at the local government level can affect policy implementation that promote productive activity and inhibit impact.

**Engaging women in committees can contribute to both women's agency as well as enhance community oversight of education**

- Education management can inform/transform teaching methods and bring greater levels of interaction between groups.
- The community participation approach focusing on mothers encouraged women to use skills for income earning activities.
- Mothers active in education administration decisions leading to more transparent and inclusive educational administration.

### Impact on Empowerment

	PETIM	Ciudades Fronterizas
Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive outlook on life, self-esteem, seek new opportunities for work, problem-solving</li> <li>Mothers active in community management</li> <li>Mothers formed women's group</li> <li>Girls plan for the future, know and pursue rights, value education</li> <li>Mothers and teachers make plans to combat child labor and these plans have been adopted by other schools beyond the project</li> <li>Teachers see selves as change agents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confidence, motivation to develop initiatives and activities that will generate income</li> <li>Learned from trainings that enhanced their skills in vocational skills, business administration</li> <li>Yacuiba women's group obtained municipal funding for economic activities</li> <li>Gradual increase in family income</li> </ul>
Str.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information made available on human rights</li> <li>Cooperation agreement with an NGO for supplying food to Plata Children's Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trainings, support available to women</li> <li>Municipalities assign specific budgets for women's economic activities</li> </ul>
Rel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women laborers and mine keepers began coordinating with other organizations to ensure better education for their children</li> </ul>	