

Strengthening the human security of rural communities through the integral support to their resilience, response capacity and food security situation



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



Fast Facts

Country: Bolivia

Duration: March 2012 – March 2014

Implementing UN Agencies: WFP; FAO; UNICEF

Other Implementing Partners: National ministries; municipal authorities; local productive associations

Budget: \$2,041,177.83

Key Words: Climate change; minority groups; food security; access to basic services; poverty reduction

BACKGROUND

Bolivia is a disaster prone country affected by the ‘El Niño’ and ‘La Niña’ climate patterns as well as the consequences of climate change. In recent years, the population has been affected by consecutive climate change induced disasters, such as droughts and the impacts of natural hazards including severe floods and landslides. These events have caused injuries, resulted in displacement, and led to massive damage to

housing, infrastructure, agriculture, drinking water and sanitation services. Furthermore, they have devastated the livelihoods of a significant portion of the Bolivian population and have led to dramatic increases in food, nutrition, health and economic insecurities, particularly among the highly vulnerable indigenous population in rural areas.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project seeks to build the resilience of rural low-income and indigenous families in Beni, one of the regions most exposed to the consequences of natural disasters, including epidemic outbreaks and loss of livelihoods. Through building a coordinated local strategy and a multi-sectoral approach, the project focuses on reducing vulnerability and enhancing local capacities in order to help communities cope better with climate-related threats. Specifically, the project aims to: (i) rehabilitate the livelihoods of affected households, while preventing and mitigating future

economic and social losses; (ii) assure food security and income generation; (iii) improve hygiene practices and access to safe water and sanitation, while enhancing the nutritional and health status of mothers and children; (iv) create emergency preparedness and response capacity for local communities; and (v) encourage sustainability and replication through a common communication strategy that promotes the human security approach through highlighting best practices that emerge from the project.

BENEFICIARIES

The project targets approximately 12,000 low-income and indigenous people living in small communities in rural areas of Beni who depend on subsistence agriculture and small livestock production for their livelihoods. Beneficiaries also include small farmers

who rely on agriculture for their survival as well as landless agricultural labourers. In addition, the project provides access to safe water for 2,100 people in 15 communities and access to sanitation for 1,500 schoolchildren in 30 educational centres.

APPLYING THE HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

The strength of the human security approach lies in the opportunity to mitigate multiple interconnected insecurities in a targeted and contextually relevant manner. Through a comprehensive human security analysis, five interconnected insecurities were identified by the project as the most critical and widespread threats to human security in Beni. These included: (i) food insecurity (loss and failure of productive agriculture and lack of access to food); (ii) economic insecurity (severe decline in income due to drop in sales of products); (iii) health insecurity (malnutrition, water-borne and vector-borne diseases); (iv) environmental insecurity (flooding and drought); and community insecurity (destruction of crops and forced migration to dry-lands with no available productive activity).

Based on this analysis, an integrated strategy was developed in order to address the identified insecurities and to clarify the inter-linkages between them. Subsequently, the project reveals how upgraded water and sanitation conditions coupled with enhanced food production and nutrition practices can contribute to the improvement of everyday health of the beneficiaries, while also making communities more resilient during natural disasters and emergency situations. Moreover, the project underscores the way

in which improvements in skills related to food production can give people the tools to react more proactively to natural emergencies, thereby mitigating the long term developmental implications of emergencies such as malnutrition and high mortality levels among children. Together, the project recognizes how these activities and the subsequent resilience to natural emergencies can have a positive impact on the productivity and the future development prospects of rural communities.

Lastly, by focusing on the longer-term resilience of families, the project places emphasis on the protection and empowerment framework. That is, by creating the necessary institutional conditions and providing the relevant social services, the project aims to enhance the opportunities by which communities will be able to protect themselves in face of natural disasters. At the same time, through local capacity building that integrates the skills of different actors (from national to departmental, municipal and community level – both from the Government and the civil society) and across sectors (agriculture, water and sanitation, health education, nutrition and hygiene, and risk management), the project seeks to advance solutions that are based on community ownership, local empowerment and longer-term resilience.