

BOLIVIA

ACDI/VOCA Gives New Life to Rural Bolivian Kindergarten School

Chulumani is an extremely isolated municipality in the center of Bolivia’s traditional, legal coca-growing region in the Yungas. With most of the rural population living in poverty, the municipality was unable to maintain its local kindergarten. Without the funds needed to conduct routine maintenance, the roof of the kindergarten’s building fell into serious disrepair and, with the risk of completely collapsing, became a danger to its students.



ACDI/VOCA led an initiative to renovate the Chulumani kindergarten as part of its USAID-funded Integrated Community Development Fund (ICDF) project, which targets the Yungas and Chapare regions. ACDI/VOCA’s renovations were extensive and included improvements to three existing classrooms, electrical rewiring, and the installation of a new roof and better flooring. In addition to the structural improvements, ACDI/VOCA restored the degraded playground and equipped the school with desks, chairs and tables.

Following the repairs, representatives from ACDI/VOCA, the Chulumani municipality, the government of Bolivia and USAID held an inauguration of the revamped facility. On behalf of Chulumani, the kindergarten director thanked the delegation for the “school’s new life.” “We were waiting in despair until the American people came along to give a future to our children.” USAID/Bolivia Deputy Mission Director Peter Natiello congratulated the municipality of Chulumani for investing in its children’s education and the community’s future. “This is the most gracious way to do development,” Natiello said.

Already 65 students are enrolled and that number is expected to increase due to the improved quality of the facility. Teacher Shirley Pablo Lys said that ACDI/VOCA’s ICDF-led improvements “have brought the proper environment for the children to develop and a real joy and hope to the desperate parents of Chulumani.”

The kindergarten is part of a group of more than 12 projects currently being implemented by ACDI/VOCA in the municipality of Chulumani, including a potable water system in Colopampa, a sewer system in Tajma, and the reconstruction of schools and living quarters for teachers in Ocobaya, Colpar, Rio Blanco and Hauncane.

At the inauguration, the mayor of Chulumani, Damazo Torrez Cuba, gave a moving speech, expressing gratitude and leading the celebration in chanting “Viva los Estados Unidos!” (Long live the United States!).