



**Newsletter No. 11 – June 2025**  
By Sabrina Maass -  
An assignment from Comundo

**Dear family, friends and interested people**



*The “Pimientas” of the ENAF La Paz Fraternity.*

The Oruro Carnival took place at 3735 meters (12254 feet) above sea level at the beginning of March. Its cultural richness and popularity have made it one of the most important carnival festivals in the world alongside the carnivals of Brazil and Colombia. Every year, the carnival attracts around 400,000 visitors and has an estimated economic impact of 125 million Bolivianos. More than 28,000 dancers and 10,000 musicians in around 50 groups (organized in 18 different dances) take part in the parade and dance for twenty hours without interruption along the four-kilometre-long procession. Every Saturday, the procession is a pilgrimage to the El Socavón sanctuary; people enter the church on their knees and promise the Virgin that they will dance for her for a total of three years in return for her fulfilling a wish. In 2001, UNESCO declared the Oruro Carnival a “Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” (UNESCO, Wikipedia). This time I wasn't just there as a spectator, but as a Caporal Macha dancer.

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Comundo sends co-workers to Kenya, Namibia, Zambia, Nicaragua, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru.

Your donation makes these missions possible. You can find information on how to donate on the last page.





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### Time for action. Bolivia in transition.

Bolivia is still one of the poorest countries in Latin America: a large proportion of the population lives in poverty, especially children, indigenous people and women. Education, health and nutrition remain out of reach for many - not for lack of ideas, but for lack of support. Comundo works with local partners on projects for education, health, women's rights, environmental protection and food security. But now we are facing a dramatic cut: in December 2024, the Swiss parliament decided to reduce development cooperation by CHF 110 million (118 million euros/133 million dollars) from 2025 and by a further CHF 321 million (343 million euros/416 million dollars) from 2026-2028. As a result, Comundo will lose a big part of its project financing. For Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Nicaragua, this means the loss of public funds - and possibly the end of our work.

**Why Bolivia needs us:** The socio-economic crisis is exacerbating hardship in poor neighborhoods and indigenous communities. Inflation is driving up prices and many families are surviving on less than 5 francs (5.35 euros/6 dollars) a day. Without our projects in food security, environmental protection and democracy promotion, progress threatens to collapse. Malnutrition has risen by 50% since 2019 and now affects over a quarter of the population. We are fighting against this with our country program - but the situation is getting worse every day.

**Bolivia in crisis:** despite huge lithium deposits, the country is in a severe economic crisis. The currency has depreciated massively and foreign currency prices have more than doubled. Foreign currency reserves are exhausted, inflation is over 15% (even higher for food). A withdrawal of Comundo would leave vulnerable groups - children, young people, senior citizens - in the lurch and destroy decades of development work.

That is why we are asking you:

**Donate** - every Franc or Euro helps and secures the work for the people in Bolivia.

**Talk about the need in Bolivia and how you can help** - with family, friends and acquaintances.

**Call on politicians and business** to continue Swiss development aid in Bolivia and Latin America based on solidarity and values.

Now is the time for solidarity - not retreat. Let's act together!

**Your Comundo Co-Workers in Bolivia**

Further information on the current economic and political situation in Bolivia:

["Bolivia" \(Crisis Group\)](#), ["On the Ground" \(The Guardian\)](#).

["54 years Swiss bilateral cooperation in Bolivia" \(EDA\)](#).

["New UN Report: 74 percent of Latin American and Caribbean Countries are highly exposed to extreme weather events, affecting food security" \(PAHO\)](#).

["Bolivia" \(Global Hunger Index\)](#).

["Plurinational State of Bolivia" \(World Food Programme\)](#).

["The future of food system in the Amazon" \(World Food Programme\)](#).





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### My assignment will end soon - what has been achieved so far?

As soon as the assignment begins, there is a three-month induction phase to “get a feel” for the partner organization. This is where the first suggestions for improvement are communicated to the management. At the time, ENDA only had one major donor and its own income amounted to 42,172 bolivianos (5,263 euros/4,914 francs/6,106 dollars). No processes were defined, the handicrafts were no longer sold, there was no structure within meetings and project data was only collected at the end of the project (usually after three years). At that time, ENDA helped 226 children, 271 adults and carried out prevention measures with 1016 tutors and teachers.

I trained ENDA staff not only in the ISO 9001:2015 quality standard, but also in the Six Sigma method, which makes it possible to improve processes based on data in just five steps. However, a much larger part of my work was to advise and support the management in organizational development. ENDA can now look back on the following improvements, among others:

- Introduction of a process management system: all processes have been created, updated and linked in a process map with the associated documents.
- The organizational chart has been adapted and ENDA's projects now work independently. The position of operational director has been abolished. The program managers now report directly to the General Director, which has not only improved internal communication but also project innovation.
- Key figures have been collected continuously since 2023. All program managers work with Excel-based databases and regularly present their results to all employees.

- Introduction of a Six Sigma improvement group consisting of permanent members who meet to optimize processes according to the General Manager's instructions.
- Mental health market analysis in El Alto: in 2020, the market was analyzed and demand confirmed. ENDA has been selling services in this area since 2024.
- Sale of handicrafts: A display case was set up in ENDA's entrance area and handicrafts are being sold again. There are also ideas for new products to be sold through a cooperation with a church in Holland

In addition, employee surveys and knowledge surveys on the child protection policy are carried out regularly. Safety training courses on fire and earthquakes were held at both centers. ENDA has joined forces with organizations from the Comundo Cluster and recorded these collaborations in writing (e.g. on the topic of allotment gardens). Training videos on Six Sigma were produced for their website. Annual employee qualification meetings have been firmly integrated since 2021. All employees now only use the institutional email address and its calendar function. The team meetings have been restructured. The complaints system has also been systematized. ENDA now has several donors, currently four, and its own income has risen to 88,585 bolivianos (11,055 euros/10,320 francs/12,826 dollars).

**In 2024, ENDA helped 1796 children, 1520 adults and carried out prevention measures with 3879 tutors and teachers.**

I am currently working on training other organizations in El Alto in the Six Sigma quality method. In addition, I would like to continue to support ENDA in working even more in the network, which should not only serve the exchange of knowledge, but also help with the treatment of patients if they no longer have to travel the long distances through El Alto.



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## Prevention program

Probably the most efficient area of ENDA! Not only because of the high workload of its two employees, but also because of its motivation, transparency and excellent cooperation with the schools, this project is a flagship. On average, their program reaches 1755 students, 1468 parents, 215 teachers and trains 150 students as Líderes (=leaders) every year. And they do this with just two employees and the support of a communications intern. Since this year, the program has been supported by seven volunteers. In addition, cooperations have been entered into with other organizations in order to be able to offer further training in the schools. Since the restructuring of ENDA in 2023 and the transfer of responsibilities to the program managers, this project has truly blossomed! For the "fine-tuning", I meet with everyone every Monday and the current week is planned and documented on a large board in the office - who conducts which training courses in which school, where the volunteers help, how the transport of the materials is organized and what is published in which social network - are the questions that have to be clarified every week.



Jacqueline Condori and Claudia Chirinos in front of their weekly plan, which we draw up together every Monday.

## Líderes

The prevention program has already trained 153 Líderer and Líderes, and another 200 are due to be trained this year. I wanted to find out more about their work.

### 1. why did you become a Líderer/Líderes?

Because I have always thought that there is a way to be the first to do something and help others, to lead and not to order. Also, in my family, personal and social context I have been trained as a hegemonic man so learning these topics was a great revelation because I always wanted to be a good person.

### 2. what are your tasks?

My tasks as a leader are: to constantly practice what I have learned, both by reading and by acting in the daily activities we have. As well as questioning everything to get better and always believing that I and my group are one.

### 3. has anything changed at your school since you became a Líderer/Líderes and if so, what?

Yes, during my training of one year and a little more I have tried to make a positive impact in my class and in my school by being more transparent and critical of what was discussed in each class, meeting or organization. My school was more aware and empathetic, and so was I as a person.





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## Personal

**“Dancing along to Carnival in Latin America, that would be great...”**

...and was fulfilled in March of this year! Since November, I have rehearsed up to five times a week for two hours each, learned eight choreographies, passed an exam and internalized the rhythm of the caporal music. Together with seven other women, I was able to dance in the men's block of the Pimientas at the Oruro Carnival.



*The Pimientas of the Fraternidad (brotherhood = association) ENAF La Paz, 89 men and 8 women.*



*I can be seen four times between minutes 7 and 11.*



*Together with Comundo experts Lia, Loren and Eric and friends on the way to Oruro.*

It was a great experience! I already know that I want to remain a member of ENAF when I am in Bolivia. We are 250 people in total, consisting of the founders, the Pankochis, the Miskis, the Wara Waritas and the Pimientas with whom I get to dance.



*My 1st year as a Caporal Macha dancer.*



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## Gemeinsam für eine gerechtere Welt

Comundo ist die grösste Schweizer Organisation in der Personellen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (PEZA). Derzeit sind fast hundert Fachleute in sieben Ländern des Globalen Südens im Einsatz. Sie arbeiten täglich eng mit Kolleg\*innen unserer lokalen Partnerorganisationen zusammen und suchen nach innovativen, nachhaltigen Lösungen, um Ungerechtigkeiten und Ungleichheiten zu bekämpfen. Wir setzen drei Hauptinstrumente ein: die Personelle Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, die Finanzierung von Projekten und die Förderung von Netzwerken.

Bei Comundo sind wir davon überzeugt, dass jeder von uns die Verantwortung mitträgt, gegen Ungerechtigkeiten und Ungleichheiten vorzugehen. Sich gemeinsam mit uns zu engagieren, ist eine konkrete Möglichkeit, einen Beitrag zu leisten. Gemeinsam können wir nachhaltige Veränderungen für eine gerechtere Welt bewirken.

Unsere Mission ist die Vernetzung, den Austausch und die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Menschen und Organisationen verschiedener Kontinente, Kulturen und Religionen zu fördern. Unsere Vision wird von der Überzeugung geleitet, dass eine Welt möglich ist, in der alle Menschen in Würde und Frieden zusammenleben. Auf diese Weise tragen wir zur Erreichung der Ziele der Agenda 2030 bei.

### Comundo

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**Your donation  
in good hands.**

## Ihre Spende ist wichtig!

Die Kürzungen in der Internationalen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit sind eine Realität, sowohl auf Schweizer als auch auf internationaler Ebene. Deshalb bitten wir alle Menschen, die an eine gerechtere Welt glauben, uns weiterhin zu unterstützen: Nur so ist unsere Arbeit möglich. Herzlichen Dank!

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