



ProjectsAbroad

The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad **Bolivia**

January 2012



Editor's Letter

Hi all ,

Welcome to the **January** edition of our Newsletter for Projects Abroad Bolivia. This newsletter aims to inform all our volunteers with news and information about the latest happenings in Projects Abroad Bolivia, and the country in general.

We encourage everyone to join us in making it interesting and exciting by sending in your own written articles and pictures of your experiences here with us. Your stories and pictures will help others to understand and learn about Bolivia.

Feel free to join us in our Facebook group so we can be in touch, before, during and after your trip to Bolivia!.

If you have anything you'd like to contribute, suggest, or comment on, please contact bolivia@projects-abroad.org

Best wishes from Bolivia!

Carmen Herbas
Country Director

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Le vendredi 4 novembre au matin, nous étions 9 volontaires à partir en direction du Salar d'Uyuni et du Sud Lipez. Pour entreprendre ce voyage, il était nécessaire de partir avec une agence, et après avoir beaucoup hésité entre plusieurs (nous avons le témoignage d'anciens volontaires qui avaient payé plutôt cher et n'avaient pas visité ce qu'ils voulaient), nous avons fini par choisir l'agence Takuaral Tours, que Mariel nous avait conseillée, qui paraissait plutôt sérieuse, et pas si chère que ça (1700 bolivianos par personne, nourriture et boissons comprises).

Les cinq jours de voyage incluaient en fait deux jours de transport (4 heures de bus jusqu'à Oruro, puis 7 heures de train jusqu'à Uyuni), et seulement trois de visite, mais ça valait véritablement le coup. Et puis, quand on part avec des volontaires que l'on apprécie, les longues heures de voyage passent en général assez bien.

Le samedi, nous avons visité le cimetière des trains d'Uyuni et le Salar en lui-même. Franchement, je pense que c'est l'un des paysages les plus impressionnants que nous ayons vu de notre vie. Du blanc, du sel à perte de vue, jusqu'à l'horizon, où l'immense étendue de sel se confond avec le ciel. Et comme tous les touristes qui viennent ici, nous avons joué avec ce paysage si particulier pour faire des photos plutôt amusantes. Notre journée a continué à l'Isla Incawasi, une île remplie de cactus, perdue au milieu de ce grand désert. Un véritable paysage de carte postale, qui paraissait presque irréel !

Nous avons ensuite passé la nuit dans un hôtel de sel. Bien évidemment, l'endroit n'était pas chauffé, et les nuits au Salar sont vraiment très froides. Un ou deux pulls furent nécessaires, mais la température intérieure était tout de même plus supportable que l'extérieure.

Le lendemain, nous avons fait le tour des différentes « lagunas » (lacs), toutes plus impressionnantes les unes que les autres. Nombreux flamants roses, sommets enneigés en arrière-plan, c'était véritablement magnifique ! Des endroits paradisiaques.

La nuit fut sûrement l'une des plus froides de notre vie. Pour ma part, j'ai dormi avec deux paires de chaussettes, trois pulls, deux couvertures, des gants, un bonnet, et j'étais frigorifiée.

Mais la nuit fut courte car nous nous sommes levés de bonne heure pour voir le lever de soleil sur des geysers, pour se baigner dans des eaux thermales qui nous ont largement réchauffées, et pour finir notre tour de lagunas et entamer le chemin du retour vers Uyuni.

Pour conclure sur ce voyage, je pense que, pour tous ceux qui l'ont fait, ce fut sûrement l'un des plus impressionnants voyages de Bolivie. Des paysages magnifiques, à couper le souffle, et l'agence était véritablement un très bon choix.



Melle Bos
Care, 1 month, Journalism, 2 months, Holland

Een maand zit ik nu al in Bolivia, eigenlijk zelfs iets langer. En in die eerste maand heb ik gewerkt in "Guardería San Pedro". Het is eigenlijk gewoon een peuterspeelzaal, maar er was een uitzondering; veel van de kinderen hadden één of twee ouders in de gevangenis zitten. Dat betekent dat ook de kinderen in de gevangenis leven en overdag komen ze naar opvangtehuis San Pedro.

De eerste dag dat ik daar begon, was ik nogal zenuwachtig. Niet voor de kinderen, maar voor de busrit. Ik dacht dat ik er klaar voor was, ik had gepast geld, ik moest bus 212 hebben en ik had het zinnetje om de bus te verlaten uit mijn hoofd geleerd. Je raadt het al, ik stapte toch de verkeerde bus in, wel in 212 maar in de verkeerde kleur 212. Ik eindigde in een heel ander stadje dan gepland, en ik wist niet wat ik moest doen. Na een tijdje rondgelopen te hebben, besloot ik het Projects Abroad kantoor te bellen. Daar kreeg ik het bevel om een winkel te zoeken en de telefoon aan de winkeleigenaar te geven. Zo gezegd zo gedaan, en Projects Abroad legde de situatie uit aan de winkeleigenaar en die belde een taxi voor me. En toen arriveerde ik alsnog bij het dagverblijf, maar wel flink te laat.

De kinderen waren blij me te zien en ik werd meteen belaagd met allemaal vragen in het spaans. Ik spreek geen spaans dus ik antwoordde alles met "si." In de ochtend beginnen de kinderen met kleuren en schrijven. Mijn taak was vooral het slijpen van de potloden. Om 11:00 was het pauze, en ik was de eerste jongen die met deze klas werkte, dus ze waren blij dat ze eindelijk iemand hadden om mee te voetballen. Na de pauze was het lunchtijd, meestal krijgen ze soep met wat vlees. Daarna gingen de kinderen slapen, ze sliepen ongeveer van 12:00 tot 14:00. Mijn dag zat erop om 12:00, dan was het weer de missie om de goede bus te vinden.

Zo verliep zo'n beetje de eerste week. Toen ik meer spaans sprak en de kinderen beter leerde kennen, voelde ik me meer een leraar. De kinderen zijn allemaal rond de vijf jaar oud en voor mij is dat de ideale leeftijd. Ze zijn jong genoeg om nog schattig te zijn en oud genoeg om zelf naar de wc te gaan. Het is niet moeilijk om ze te vermaken, toen ik liet zien hoe je een vliegtuigje vouwt, waren ze de hele dag entertained. Dus voor iedere Nederlander die dit leest en een "Care" project gaat doen; vliegtuigjes vouwen, ballonnen, kinderen natekenen, etc. is allemaal erg aan te raden.





De vijfjarigen zijn de oudsten en zitten dus in het laatste jaar. Toevallig was op mijn laatste dag (22 december) ook de "graduation." De kinderen hadden allemaal een dansje ingestudeerd en alle ouders kwamen kijken. In het begin werd er meer naar mijn blonde kop gekeken dan naar de kinderen, maar dat veranderde snel. Mijn klas was compleet verkleed als traditionele folklore band, en playbackte een bekend nummer. Aan het eind van de ochtend kreeg iedereen zijn diploma en werd iedereen gezegend door de lokale priester.

Na de diploma-uitreiking werd ik snel meegenomen naar een achterkamertje, want ik moest me vlug verkleden als de Kerstman. Daarna met een jeukende baard, rood pak en een zak vol cadeautjes terug naar de kinderen, die binnen één seconde doorhadden dat ik het was. Iedereen kreeg een cadeautje en daarna moest ik op de foto met ongeveer elk kind (150 kinderen). Het was een mooi einde van een leuke tijd.

Maar mijn tijd in Bolivia is nog niet voorbij, want ik werk nu, terwijl je dit leest, bij het journalistieke project van Projects Abroad.



Carmen Herbas – Country Director

Working with Projects Abroad since: May 2003

Born in La Paz and raised there and in Cochabamba, Carmen previously studied Veterinary Medicine before she completed her studies in Linguistics at the University Mayor de San Simón. She is a single mother of 4 year old Adrian.

"I like dogs. I have a pointer, Braco, who is like my second son. I love heavy metal and all variations of rock music."



Ximena Noya – Deputy Director & Project Supervisor (Journalism, Teaching)

Working with Projects Abroad since: August 2003

Born in Cochabamba, studied in Argentina and Bolivia and then started full time as Project Supervisor.

Has managed to turn the Cochabanner Magazine into the great publication it is today! "I like music, photography, cooking, travelling and meeting new people."

"I like read a lot about philosophy, politics, economics and social analysis."



Freddy Mita – Project Supervisor (Care, Sport)

Working with Projects Abroad since: January 2008

Born in Pulacayo-Potosí, Bolivia. Previous to working with Projects Abroad Bolivia, worked with Social Services in Cochabamba as an educator, mainly in the area of Special Needs. Speaks Quechua, Sign Language and can read and write Braille to perfection!

"I like sports (soccer, basketball, squash, athletics, volleyball), chess, music and dance."



Roció Triveño - Project Supervisor (Medical, Physiotherapy)

Working with Projects Abroad since: April 2010.

Nurse graduate studied at the Universidad Siglo XX, in Potosi, working with Projects Abroad Bolivia since 2010.

"I like everything related to medicine, also work with patients."



Mariel Torrez Montenegro - Social Manager & Desk Officer

She has studied Social Communication and has a Master degree in Latin American Studies as well. In her free time she loves to read and watch movies. Her purpose of this year is to travel and know as many places as possible. You will read more about that in her own trip blog very soon.

"Knowing places and people is the best way to open your mind"



Alejandra Estrada – NA Travel Coordinator

Working with Projects Abroad since: July 2006

Born in Cochabamba, considers herself a citizen of the world. Spent her childhood in Tarija. Lived in Belgium for a year working as a volunteer at the Red Cross Centre for refugees teaching English, salsa and discovering the diversity of over 40 different nationalities.

“Love the taste of fruit in my mouth and the smell of rain before it falls.”



Ana Silvia Ramos – NA Travel Assistant

Working with Projects Abroad since: May 2007

Born in Cochabamba, also a graduate from Linguistics of the Universidad Mayor de San Simón.

Began working with Projects Abroad Bolivia as Social Manager, then Desk Officer and now forms part of the NA Travel Team.

“I love to swim, cook and bake. I also enjoy spending time with my family and my friends. And every weekend I teach English at an orphanage in Arani, so I have 47 children!”



Blanca Fernandez – NA Travel Assistant

Born in Cochabamba, Blanca has lived here all her life. She has also been to Brazil, Chile and the US. All of those beautiful countries! But what she loves the most are the small places nearby, such as Chapare, Cordillera del Tunari, the valleys and places all over Bolivia: Copacabana, La Chiquitania, El Cerro Rico de Potosi and much more.

“I love watching travel and food TV programs. Love travelling! Love eating! But cooking: No, No!!!”



Tatiana Muñoz Rocha– NA Travel Assistant

Working with Projects Abroad since January 2012

Born in Catavi, a small village near Potosi, the coldest city in Bolivia. She moved to Cochabamba when she was 9 years old and she fell in love with this beautiful city, full with flowers and perfect weather. She teaches catechism on weekends and makes some volunteer work with her church.

“I’ve been to the US for few days and the most beautiful thing I remember is the beach. I dream of traveling again. I love listening to music, watching TV, going to the gym, and I love my new job”



Spaceman Africa
Music three months, Journalism three months, Australia

As we jumped out of the micro-bus and surveyed our surroundings one couldn't help but think that we'd landed in the future, sometime after Armageddon. The rocky, treeless landscape with tangerine colored bricked houses as far as the eye could see; it looked like we could have been in a settlement derived from those people who had survived the end of the world.



However, that wasn't the case. Ximena, Projects Abroad Bolivia Deputy Director, my buddy Cristof, visiting from Germany, and I were in Villa Valle Hermoso, an hour outside of Cochabamba, to judge an English singing contest at the local school. We arrived and found a three-storied building full of students, from infants through to seniors - a hive of activity rushing around everywhere.

We were welcomed by the school staff and directed to our seats where we would overview the students' performances. We were kindly given some cakes and drinks to snack on. Bribes perhaps? We think not. Just gratitude for us taking some time out and taking an interest. The students appeared shy at first but it wasn't long before we were swamped by students wanting to get to know us. Cristof, tall, dark and 21 years old, was a big hit with the senior girls, whilst I, a lot older than 21, had a crowd of children clamoring around me to have their photos taken.

Our role was to judge the numerous groups of students singing a song of their choice in English. To help with the judging we were given a form each with the groups names and areas of performance that we might like to consider when judging the group, such as their pronunciation and how entertaining their performance was. A mark for punctuality was suggested but, being Bolivia, all groups lost that mark before the contest even began. We scrolled through the list of songs. Some we welcomed; others we weren't so keen on. The competition included songs from such acts as Lady Gaga, Roxette, No Doubt, Back Street Boys,



Robbie Williams, Madonna, Celine Dion and Justin Bieber.

Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, the groups were forced to sing without microphones which made it difficult for them. It was not clear whether we were to take the Simon Cowell approach and be brutally honest or to be supportive and encouraging. Because I suspected that I might be asked to get up and sing at some point, I took the supportive and encouraging approach. Thankfully, being asked to get up and show them how it is done never eventuated.



Many of the groups performed well - we could hear what they were singing and they moved around on stage - whilst others were visibly nervous and stood motionless wishing for the ground to swallow them up. However, we could see a lot of work had gone into the day's event with elaborate costumes and a lot of practice.

Despite being labeled a singing contest, many groups ignored this and concentrated on entertaining us with a dance show. With a strong gang culture in the school's neighborhood, the boys were into the break dancing style which they pulled off with great humor on some occasions. The girls chose a more graceful style, choosing to do the easier two-step from side to side.

All in all it was a great experience for both the students and the judges. Hopefully they learnt something from our feedback and I know we came away feeling better for having witnessed a side of Bolivian life that we wouldn't normally get the opportunity to experience. However, I couldn't forgive the group that was responsible for putting Back Street Boys in my head for the rest of the day.



Christmas photograph review

Mariel Torrez Montenegro
Desk Officer, Bolivia

We want to share with you some of our pictures from the Christmas weekend activity when we visited the nursery home situated in the lost valley of Candelaria. Enjoy!

Matias, a German friend of Projects Abroad, helping to distribute delicious “buñuelos”



Rebecca, one of our British volunteers, chatting with the grandmothers of Candelaria



Local kids on the road..



Helping to prepare the lunch.... Busy, busy, busy...

Does anybody know when I left my knife?



Chilling out...

Christmas hugs...



Yukiko, a volunteer from Japan... Wonder what she is looking at?

Practical Info

Teleférico & Cristo de la Concordia

This statue is the tallest as well as the highest statue of Christ in South America, to reach it; one needs to take a cable car from the end of Heroínas Avenue. It's possible to enter the monument climb up and have a



marvellous overview of the whole valley
Address: Parque San Pedro, at the end of Ave. Heroínas
Opening Hours: Tuesday – Sunday 10:00 – 18:00
** Take precaution when using stairs...pickpockets may be nearby*

Botanical Gardens

They were established in Cochabamba by the well-known Bolivian botanist, Martin Cardenas. It is a public park of modest size (about 4 ha.), serviced by ten gardeners.

Address: Avenida Villazón (Muyurina area)
Opening Hours: Monday – Sunday 07:30 – 16:30

Simón I. Patiño Cultural Center

This Palace provides evidence of the great wealth of tin baron Simón I. Patiño; the grounds are amazing, as well as its luxurious interior. Most of its decorative materials were brought from Spain. The architects and workers themselves came from Europe. Today this beautiful palace full of beautiful gardens serves as an art museum, cultural centre.

Address: Corner of Avenida Potosí and Buenos Aires



Opening Hours: Palacio Portales:
Monday – Friday 15:30 – 18:00
Saturday 09:30 – 11:00
Sunday 11:00 – 11:30
Opening Hours: Gardens:
Tuesday – Friday 15:00 – 18:00
Saturday – Sunday 09:00 – 12:00

Museo de Historia Natural “Alcides D’orbigny”

Named in honour of the prominent French naturalist of the early and mid 18th Alcide d’Orbigny; it has a collection of local natural history specimens. This museum is like an encyclopaedia of natural science, where you can appreciate a great collection of minerals and fossils that contain local rocks, the evolution of living things and the changes they went through over time.

Address: Corner of Avenida Potosí and Avenida America Oeste



Opening Hours: Monday – Friday 09:00 – 12:30
15:00 – 18:30

Museo Casona Santivañez

Declared historical patrimony, you can find a good collection of republican colonial paintings, in addition to various exhibitions periodically.

Address: Corner of Nataniel Aguirre and Junín
Opening Hours: Monday – Friday 09:30 – 12:00, 15:00 – 18:00

Museo Martín Cardenas

Address: Avenida Heroínas, between Junín and Hamiraya

Opening Hours: Monday – Friday 09:00 – 12:00
15:00 – 18:30

Museo Arqueológico

Works conjunction with the San Simon University, displays a wide-range of artifacts from different Bolivian cultures, including Tiawanacu, Aimara, and Mojacoya. Also you can appreciate painted ceramics from the Omereque culture, stone carvings, human remains, fossils and a display of textiles, weavings, instruments and ceremonial costumes from around Bolivia.

Address: Corner of Nataniel Aguirre and Junín
Opening Hours: Monday – Friday 08:00 – 18:00 Saturday 08:00 – 12:00



Practical Information

Here some ideas about best places to visit and shopping

Catedral Metropolitana (main cathedral)

The Cochabamba Cathedral was built in the early eighteenth century, on the site of an ancient temple of the sixteenth century. It is located in the main Plaza and remains one of the characteristic symbols of the city, called Catedral Metropolitana since 1975.

Address: Plaza 14 de Septiembre (main plaza)

Opening Hours: Monday – Friday 08:00 – 12:00.

17:00 – 19:00, Saturday - Sunday 08:00 – 12:00



Teatro Achá

Ballet, opera, plays, concerts and other fine arts.

Address: Calle España, between Ave. Heroínas and Bolívar



Teatro Adela Zamudio

Ballet, opera, plays, concerts and other fine arts.

Address: Ave. Heroínas, between Ave. San Martín and 25 de Mayo



Cerámica Cochabambina

An association of approximately 15 artisans produces many types of ceramics including table and kitchen accessories. Avenida Ayacucho between Calle Colombia and Calle Ecuador. Tel. 4522518.



Asarti

High quality alpaca and other handicraft items. Edificio Colón, Calle México and El Prado, Tel. 4250455.

Arte Andino. A newer organization that produces traditional textiles from the countryside around CBBA. With support from the European Union, the association has trained more than 1,500 artisans. Pasaje Cathedral between Calle Esteban Arce and Nataniel Aguirre. Tel. 4508367.



Wari

Textiles made of pure alpaca wool. Calle Potosí #2043.

Fotrama

An artesanía coop run by the progressive Maryknoll order of Catholic missionaries from New York. Fotrama has several outlets. The main store is located on Calle Bolívar #0439, Tel. 4222890, while the slightly cheaper factory store is at Circunvalación #0413, Tel. 4240567.

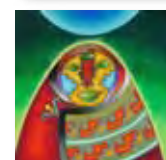
Gamboa

Carries handicrafts but specializes in music and musical instruments guitars and charangos. Avenida Manco Capac #541.



Mamani Mamani

Paintings by one of Bolivia's most famous native artists. Open 9:30 to 12:30 and 15:00 to 20:00 weekdays. Calle España #219.



Maya MacLean Casa

Features export quality lamps and other decorative accessories and silver jewellery. Upscale products. Calle Beni #329.

Book Store Los Amigos del Libro

With stores in the major cities, Los Amigos del Libro has a monopoly in Bolivia when it comes to English, German, and other foreign language books and magazines. This bookstore also carries interesting literature about Bolivia and a few local guidebooks. *Web: www.librosbolivia.com.* *Torres Sofer on Calle Oquendo E#654.* *Entre Libros, Calle 25 de Mayo N° 167* *Jorge Wilsterman Airport Terminal*



Announcements

Volunteers are issued either a one month (30 days) or three month (90 days) tourist visa on arrival in Bolivia. If you have only been given a 30-day visa upon arrival, and are staying in the country for a longer period, please inform the office staff when you have arrived. It is only a matter of visiting the immigrations office and getting it changed.

Please be aware that you need to always carry your photocopy passport with the Bolivian visa stamp

Important Phone Numbers

Aasana 459 1780
Aduana 422 6561
Ambulance Medicar 181 / 424 8381
Sar FAB 138 / 473 1313
Sar Bolivia 132 / 448 7380
Police 911
Tourism Police 450 3880
Fire Department 119
Sabsa (airport info.) 459 1821
Aerosur 440 0912
901 10 5555

Bus Station 155 / 422 0550
Local Phone Information 104
Post Office 423 0979
Immigration Office 452 4625
Hospital Viedma 422 0226
Chemists (on shift) 175
Tourism Office 425 8030 / internal line 419

Social Media links

Join our Projects Abroad Bolivia - The Official Group on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/projectsabroad.bolivia>

Read our Bolivia Newsletters: <http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-destinations/bolivia/newsletters-from-bolivia/>

See what is going on with Projects Abroad Blog. Read our <http://www.mytripblog.org/pg/groups/268/Bolivia>

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