

*Impact study of AXIS-projects in Bolivia:*

# Pro Joven & Aprender Haciendo

*Carried out for AXIS*

***Final version***

August, 2021

Anne Grue Nielsen

## CONTENT

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
AXIS' METHODOLOGY AND THEORY OF CHANGE .....	5
THE PROJECTS INCLUDED IN THE IMPACT STUDY .....	5
<i>Pro Joven, phase I-III</i> .....	5
<i>Aprender Haciendo – El modelo de Sacaba, phase I-III</i> .....	6
<b>RELEVANCE .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PROJECT IMPACT .....</b>	<b>7</b>
FEMALE EMPOWERMENT .....	7
ORGANIC PRODUCTION, FOOD SECURITY AND BETTER NUTRITION .....	8
ECONOMIC INITIATIVES FOR GREATER FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE .....	9
PARTICIPATORY METHODS DISRUPTING HIERARCHICAL EDUCATION PRACTICES .....	10
DEMYSTIFICATION OF SEX EDUCATION .....	12
ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND LEADERSHIP .....	13
INTEGRATION OF PROJECT ELEMENTS IN THE FORMAL SYSTEM .....	14
DEVELOPMENT OF PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS .....	16
<b>SUSTAINABILITY .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....</b>	<b>19</b>

## ***Selected quotes from informants:***

*Before there was a lot of shame and taboo about sexuality. Even with the teachers. They have had to demystify and little by little they have opened up.*

- Male change agent in the Pro Joven project.

*It [Pro Joven] has shaped us for life. It is a training for life. They told us: "You are innovators [innovadores], you have to be innovative and not stay still where you are." As "innovators" we were left with that. It is something that does not end. Now I can update my chip over and over again.*

- Female change agent in the Pro Joven project.

*Without the project we would not have managed to demystify sexuality.*

- Female change agent in the Pro Joven project.

*My participation was the best thing that ever happened to me - personally and professionally.*

- Female change agent in the Pro Joven project.

*Their [The Pro Joven project] influence was very significant.*

- Ricardo Condarco, Former district education director of the municipality of Coro Coro, La Paz.

*Here in Sacaba it is CETM that teaches us about our rights*

- Female participant in Aprender Haciendo.

*I had my self-esteem on the floor. I was quiet, I lowered my head, I didn't take care of myself, we as women forgot ourselves. Now I've learned to value myself.*

- Female change agent in Aprender Haciendo.

*[Before] we put up with violence and mistreatment. We no longer put up with it, we no longer shut up.*

- Female participant in Aprender Haciendo.

*CETM had a big impact. As a municipal government we supported the [Aprender Haciendo] project.*

- Humberto Sanchez, former mayor in Sacaba.

## Introduction

AXIS is a Danish NGO founded in 1995, working with Quality Education for All. AXIS implements projects in partnership with local civil society organisations in Peru and Bolivia in Latin America and Ghana and Sierra Leone in Africa. This specific report analyses the impact of two concluded AXIS' projects implemented in Bolivia between 2008-2018 with CISU and Danida funds:

- "Aprender Haciendo – El modelo de Sacaba" implemented in the municipality of Sacaba, Cochabamba with the local partner organisation CETM.
- "Pro Joven" implemented in the regions of Cochabamba, La Paz and Santa Cruz currently together with Pueblo Diferente.

Impact refers to the long-term, long-lasting effect that will remain in place after the project has ended<sup>i</sup>, i.e. durable changes in social, economic, or political systems, norms, and potential effects on people's wellbeing and human rights that last beyond the project period. Following the DAC Evaluations criteria, impact covers the question "What difference does the intervention make?"<sup>ii</sup>. Impact usually appear after several years of project implementation, thus can only be measured some years after the start of project implementation or after the project finalisation.

The specific objectives of this impact assessment is to evaluate to which extent the projects and the Theory of Change has contributed to:

- The improvement of the participants learning and especially their empowerment.
- The improvement of the involved teachers/promoters/change agents to deliver a dialogue and participatory education/service.
- The integration of element from the projects in the formal system (teachers universities, municipalities, regional and/or national educational systems).

This study was undertaken in August 2021. Data was collected in the cities of Cochabamba, Sacaba, La Paz, El Alto and Viacha through semi-structured personal interviews, focus group discussions, visits and observation in project sites and finally online interviews with informants located in different parts of Bolivia. A variety of stakeholders and project participants was included: primary target group of change agents, trained women and teachers, students, municipal and education authorities, collaborating partners and other civil society organisations and project staff (see Annex 2 for a complete list of informants).

In connection with obtaining information of the Pro Joven project for this study, it was a challenge to get in touch with especially two groups of participants: 1. secondary students as they had left school and due to widespread migration, it has not been possible to interview any representatives from this group, and 2. the indirect target group of authorities, both municipalities and the national Ministry of Education, as these have changed several times since the project ended and the project's impact in these structures is therefore covered to a lesser degree, i.e. to what extent the Ministry of Education has gained a strengthened experience base, concrete tools and increased incentive to implement curricula with sex education in the country's secondary schools.

## AXIS' methodology and theory of change

The backbone of AXIS' work is comprehensive, context-based and participatory education centred around the participants' often intercultural and bilingual reality. Education is a means and an end or in other words both as a method and a goal. The thematic focus area is "Quality Education for All" based on equity, inclusion, and quality in education in accordance with SDG 4, working both with education as a specific human right and as an enabler of other rights.

The interventions work to counteract and improve significant gaps in the existing education system such as monocultural, discriminatory and inadequate teaching practices or other challenges in the context related to human rights such as non-existent or deficient sex education and gender inequality. Participatory educational models are developed and applied in AXIS' various specific project topics such as sexual and reproductive human rights (Pro Joven/ Pueblo Diferente) and women's rights and food security (Aprender Haciendo/CETM). The methodology is used both in the formal education system and in informal education.

As a core strategic tool in AXIS' project planning and intervention is the Change Triangle focusing on 1. Strategic service delivery, 2. Organisational capacity building and 3. Advocacy. Strategic service delivery consists in firstly the development, testing and validation of models and approaches to Quality Education, and finally documenting and disseminating of these. AXIS engage in long-term partnerships with locally-based civil society organisations founded on dialogue and reciprocity where both partners add value, the local partner is the implementing part and strengthening of the partner capacity is an intrinsic part of the project strategy. Sustainability and change at an institutional level are sought to be achieved through advocacy by influencing authorities.

Another core tool is the Theory and Change (ToC), an approach to planning, learning, reflecting, monitoring and documenting change with a focus on the desired change. Quality education is used applying the three aspects of the change triangle as a means to achieve active citizenship, that is to inform and create confident and knowledgeable citizens who can and will influence the societies in which they live.

## The projects included in the impact study

This study covers two projects implemented in Bolivia briefly described below.

### Pro Joven, phase I-III

Overall development goal: All children, young people and adults in Bolivia have their Sexual and Reproductive Rights fulfilled based on their own ethnicity, language and culture.

The project consisted of three phases: Pro Joven 1 (2008-2011), Pro Joven 2 (2011-2012) and Pro Joven 3 (2012-2015). The project's geographical focus area was 14 municipalities in 3 regions (Cochabamba, La Paz and Santa Cruz) in Bolivia. The primary target group consisted of teachers in secondary schools (2515) and teacher seminars, ESFM (147), students in secondary schools (29.251) and teacher seminars (2753). In addition, municipal, regional, national education authorities were targets for advocacy.

The project focused on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Bolivia to address the lack of quality sex education in the public education system and contextual problems with

gender-based violence, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted adolescent pregnancies. The project developed a variety of contextualized, participatory sex education modules for secondary schools and teacher training colleges and advocated for the implementation of sex education with municipalities and the Education Ministry.

### **Aprender Haciendo – El modelo de Sacaba, phase I-III**

Overall development goal: Women in rural Bolivia are socially, economically and agriculturally empowered to exercise their right to food security and gender and ethnic equality through active citizenship.

The project consisted of three phases: Aprender Haciendo I (2011-2012), Aprender Haciendo II (2013-2015) and Aprender Haciendo III (2017-2018). The project was implemented in the municipality of Sacaba in the Cochabamba region of Bolivia. The primary target group included 190 women, 1045 children, men and others in the 190 women's households and finally 50 representatives from the women's organisation Bartolina Sisa. The secondary target group consisted of the municipal authorities of Sacaba and other civil society actors. The local partner is Centro de Estudio y Trabajo de la Mujer, CETM, a non-profit organisation based in Cochabamba founded in 1987 implementing projects that mainstream gender equality, environment and citizenship.

The Sacaba model is a 2-year agricultural capacitation process that educates poor rural Quechua women in sustainable organic farming methods and livestock through participatory and practical teaching methods to achieve a more varied, healthier and greater yield of their kitchen gardens. A group of women so-called "change agents" from each village, who received training in the principles of the model, subsequently passed on their knowledge to a group of women in their respective villages. Simultaneously, women were trained in human rights and self-confidence to express their opinions and gain influence both at home and in the local community.



### **Relevance**

The interviewed project participants emphasize the relevance, importance and utility of both projects as they responded to needs and contextual problems in the target population.

Concerning the Pro Joven project, the Bolivian authorities wanted to strengthen prevention efforts of GBV, STI and adolescent pregnancy and legislation supported mainstreaming of SRHR in education as well as intercultural and context-based education based on ethnicity, language and culture. Educational institutions lacked practical pedagogical teaching methods to effectively teach this sensitive topic and the project provided just that at an optimal time, which is confirmed by ESFM in El Alto, educational authorities and the participating teachers.

The Pro Joven project proposed a creative, dynamic pedagogy to counteract highly sensitive contextual problems like high rates of adolescent pregnancy, STIs, gender violence, femicide and sexist culture. The current academic director at ESFM in El Alto expressed: "The subject arises from a need and problems in the context [...] It was a very interesting way to approach sexuality. Also because it goes hand in hand with the current national education model that was introduced at the beginning of the project."

The former mayor of the municipality of Sacaba also highlights that the project Aprender Haciendo "responded to the needs of the municipality" such as patriarchal culture, gender-based violence, women's lack of recompensed economic productivity and therefore financial dependence of their spouses.

## Project impact

In the following sections, the identified impact of the AXIS projects is organised by thematic area or type. Some types of impact are only relevant for one project, while others are for both of them.

### Female empowerment

The participating women in the **Aprender Haciendo project** describe how abuse, violence and discrimination against women was a normalized part of their everyday life as well as their exclusion from decision-making, paid work and access to own funds. The situation of the women was characterized by strict gender roles and division of labour: "husbands are very jealous", "I always needed to ask for permission to go out", "they don't let you go out on your own", "they are very narrow-minded" and "the wife has to be at home and the husband goes to work" (excerpt of informants' testimonies).

Many of the female participants have gone through a personal transformation as result of the project. Today they have more confidence in themselves and their own abilities, mindset and self-image has changed, they now dare to make demands, have improved communication with their spouses, work and help to support their family, they organize and they engage with their communities. In addition, they have become aware that gender roles are largely socially constructed, what rights they have, are familiar with the public institutions and in which institutions they can seek help and support if, for example, should they be subjected to violence. In general, women testify that there is now more reciprocity, freedom and less or no violence in their relationships and marriages.

” *“Before he hit me. It was fists here and there and everywhere. Also with the children. I walked around with green and purple eyes. But not anymore. Now I tell him: “not anymore”. Now he is afraid of hitting me. Now I am well informed, and everything is written in the law [referring to her rights]”, Female participant in Aprender Haciendo.* ”

One woman even broke out of her violent and controlling marriage. Now she provides as a single parent for herself and her children and even became departmental Bartolina Sisa leader:

“My husband didn't want me to go [to participate in project activities]. He was jealous. *They [the project] are messing with your head*, he said. I had to beg him to go. I had to wait for him to give me money because he controlled the money. He was violent, and before I did not defend myself. He left us because he didn't like how I started to defend myself. Then he wanted to come back but then I didn't want him to. I am calmer now. I work and I have more freedom. [...] They have always told us that women had to cook, take care of the house and the children. I realized I wasn't like that. My thoughts have changed. We as women can become leaders, we can participate. I can do the things that I like. [...] I can't let my daughters be treated badly. I'm not going to stop anymore,”

It was mentioned by participants that there are few exceptional cases where the empowerment has had the opposite, unintended negative effect on women's lives, especially in the beginning, that violence and control have increased in the home. However, this is a structural, multifaceted problem and the project has produced predominantly positive impact in the women's lives.

Some women also emphasize "that women should support each other", "help each other to grow" and "fight for other women's rights" (excerpts from interviews), which show that the project has succeeded in creating a certain kind of solidarity among women.

A large part of these women's empowerment can be attributed to Aprender Haciendo's and CETM's efforts in personal development, rights and self-confidence. The project also aligned with the municipal and national government's support to indigenous peoples rights, including indigenous women in rural areas who have been double or triple stigmatized for centuries, which provided favourable conditions for both the government and the project.

### Organic production, food security and better nutrition

**The project Aprender Haciendo** succeeded in creating awareness of the benefits of sustainable, organic production, self-sufficiency to guarantee food safety and increased nutritional value in the food consumed and subsequently change behaviour within the target group.

In the urban and peri-urban areas of Sacaba, where the project was implemented, no vegetables were previously produced, there were few or no urban family gardens, there was also little knowledge of vegetables and their application and thus also a small consumption of vegetables. None of the interviewed female participants had experiences with organic vegetable gardening before the start of the project, also because of the prejudice that "the soil was a man's job". To date, all the interviewed participants still have the vegetable garden they established during the project, to a greater or lesser extent, and make use of the learned techniques for organic gardening such as compost, use of animal manure, rotation of crops. Animal husbandry such as guinea pigs, ducks and fish has to a lesser extent been maintained due to the need for constant maintenance, but about half still function (within the group of informants). In addition, the participants expressed that the knowledge about animal husbandry remains: "I now know how to keep ducks and guinea pigs, so I can buy some cubs at



any time and start again", a woman whose guinea pigs died after emigrating for a short period.

A few participants are self-sufficient in vegetables for family consumption, while the majority has reduced their spending on buying vegetables. Several informants also indicate that they eat more vegetables and more variety of vegetables now than before the project. They have been convinced that organic production is a good and sustainable idea and the project thus managed to change the habits of the target group: "it tastes better", "it stays fresh longer",



"it is healthier and without toxins", "it's worth the extra effort", "vegetables from the market are poisonous to my health", "our vegetables we can eat with peace of mind", "I have full control over the food I give my children and family", (excerpt from informants' statements). The following quotes from participants demonstrates how the awareness-raising and education of the project have translated into changes in attitudes and behaviour:

"Before we consumed vegetables from the market [...] Now we only consume our own produce. We do not sell the natural to buy transgenic. We buy corn, wheat and quinoa, but which are organically produced. We raise ducks so as not to buy "fast" chickens<sup>1</sup>", male participant.

"I no longer buy any vegetables, I no longer want to eat vegetables with chemicals. I sell the surplus of my production. So we also save money on food. [...] For a while my husband did not want me to participate and earn money. Later he realized that it made sense. He accepted his defeat [laughing] [...] I no longer depend financially on my husband. I don't have to ask for money, not even 10 cents", female change agent and local Bartolina Sisa leader.

An unplanned, positive effect of the project occurred during the Corona crisis, which implied extensive, strict quarantines in Bolivia with far-reaching economic consequences for the poorest part of the population. During this period, the family gardens and livestock have been particularly useful in providing families with fresh food, for some the only source of fresh produce and allowing some families to make money selling produce in their neighbourhoods.

### Economic initiatives for greater financial independence

**Based on the Aprender Haciendo project's** learning and empowerment, several former participants have initiated small or micro-businesses, which include sales of surplus garden production and animals in organic and conventional markets as well as in their neighbourhoods, sale of food made from own vegetable and animal production, production of organic fertilizers to control or prevent pests and fungal attacks, sale of processed food products such as preserves and baked goods and also seeds and seedlings for planting. These small businesses are in most cases a subsidy for the family economy, which needs to be supplemented with

---

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the conventional mass production of chickens.

other economic activity, while in some cases it is sufficient as the family's or woman's sole source of income.

Other women have started other small businesses, which are not necessarily related to the project's educational area of organic production, but which can be partly attributed to the project's empowerment that has given the women the needed confidence to dream and venture into starting a small business.

These economic initiatives have given women a source of income where they previously had none and were dependent of their male spouses. It has allowed them to dispose of their own resources and made them more financially independent as women. Finally, it makes them proud of their own achievements and courage.



### Participatory methods disrupting hierarchical education practices



**The Pro Joven project** proposed a new methodology for sex education in the formal education system based on participatory approaches, consultation and dialogue, co-construction of reality, perceptions and norms and a horizontal relationship between teacher and recipient/participant/student. This stands in diametral opposition to the Bolivian traditional hierarchical and vertical one-way teaching practice.

"The greatest impact that the Pro Joven project has had was in the teaching practice of the teachers in the classroom. They [Pro Joven project] very constructively supported the somewhat routine practices of the education sector," former district education director of the municipality of Coro Coro, La Paz.

The teachers' encounter with this new methodology has for many been eye-opening and even paradigm-shifting and life-changing. The most significant impact generated by the Pro Joven project identified in this study is in the change agents, the trained teachers who replicate the methodology in the education system.

Their idea of the teaching approach changed form: "Teaching should be didactic and dynamic", one teacher explained. Words that resonate with the participants about what makes the method innovative and especially useful in their teaching practice are: Didactic, dynamic and playful, based on dialogue and reflection, participant-oriented. The change agents who are proud ambassadors of the Pro Joven methodology were thoroughly introduced to the pedagogy and prepared so that they have been able to continue to use the methodology - both in sex education and in other areas - after the end of the project and until today. For some, the methodology has become an integral part of their teaching practice: "I practice

parts of the methodology in any area, I no longer realize it and I don't think about it, but it is there," expressed a former teacher-student and now teacher. A change agent explained:

"The participatory nature of the methodology is very beneficial. Before the teacher's word was law, education was very vertical. It was mere exposition and the students were just looking at me. Later they participated much more. It is important to be a facilitator, to generate discussions among the participants, that they give the answers, they have knowledge. [...] I have also seen personal changes in my family. Not to impose anything. Instead I consult and dialogue. I am more consultative with my children and respect their decisions. [The achievement of the project] is that it changed the teaching of teachers and changed the lives of young people. Without Pro Joven we could not have achieved this change".

Many express that they have adopted the approach to other areas, further developed and put their own stamp on the methods and themes from the Pro Joven project. Virtually all informants describe how they have been able to use the new, learned methods in other spheres in their both professional and personal lives: family life, relationships, child-rearing as well as leadership, communication and broadly in pedagogy and teaching in subjects beyond sex education as it is found easily adaptable to other areas. The changes they have observed in the classroom are increased active participation from their students, which they describe as being passive listening in the past. A participating teacher explained the change in the students:

"Before the teacher explained what the student should know and then the student should understand. But now they draw their own conclusions, each one generates their learning, that makes them not forget, it sticks with them as a significant and very important learning."

Teachers have changed their perception towards the role of the teacher, they describe that they now see their role as "facilitators", "who should have charisma and create a democratic space" and "I facilitate and give direction, but others participate and all opinions and ideas are valid" (excerpts from interviews). A current teacher who participated in the project while he was still at the teacher seminar describes his role as a teacher:

"With my students, we can joke, we can laugh, they can look to me for help with very personal issues and problems outside the classroom. I try to be a more empathetic teacher, I try to look for the good in them and help find "the gift" of my students, encourage them in an integral way."

Furthermore, the "spirit" and climate of the project is described as contagious and has been adopted into the classroom pedagogy by the participants as they felt that they were part of a family participating in the project, experienced horizontal and friendly leadership and that good treatment creates greater motivation and commitment.



### Demystification of sex education

The material and method of the **Pro Joven project** have proven to be useful and timely for teachers to improve their practices in education on SRHR. The topic of sex education was previously treated "superficially", "very punctual", "only in biology and only covering reproduction" (selected comments from various informants). A former change agent ("innovadora") and current academic director at ESFM in El Alto explained: "Before, we teachers had to do sex education empirically. Now we do it with a methodology that works and has an impact". The teachers lacked skills to teach sex education and they were uncomfortable with the subject at the beginning, therefore both their personal and professional development has been significant.

The project's playful, creative methods made it easier to approach the extremely taboo and sensitive theme of SRHR.

"It was a new path. [Before] talking about sexuality was taboo and forbidden. [Pro Joven's] methodology was new, a more innovative way to approach it. We realized that you have to teach lifestyles, not rules. And also, make it eye-catching and interesting", Male change agent.

Teachers describe that their young students shook off their shame and shyness and through play created respectful physical conduct and mutual respect. According to the change agents' perceptions, the Pro Joven approach creates critical consciousness in the students, greater self-respect, self-esteem, self-understanding, co-constructs values, leadership and inclusiveness, which enables students to analyse the consequences of their decisions and take responsibility for their actions. According to the teachers, the sex education created changes in the attitudes among young people, they talk more openly about sexuality, and have more responsible sexual behaviour. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to supplement these statements with quantitative data on teenage pregnancies, STI's and school completion rates.

These effects are by some informants contrasted with other approaches to sex education promoted by other NGO's, INGO's or public institutions that are more clinically oriented, which are described as "cold", "just info, no dialogue, "teaching sex education like it was math" and as "not having an effect".



The flexibility of the Pro Joven approach is also noted by informants as having a wide geographical and sociocultural applicability: "[We saw] that the method worked both in Altiplano and in Santa Cruz - everywhere. Because it is centred in the subjective person, in dialogue and that everyone can participate", while another explained: "I adapt it depending on the context, the geographic location and the participants. I change the language<sup>2</sup> and the dynamics but I keep the essence of the methodology".



Examples have been found of change agents who, on their own initiative after project completion, have continued and further developed the method: added new themes, expanded the immediate target group to e.g. parent groups and in new ways, e.g. transfer them to virtual platforms.

### Active citizenship and leadership

**In both Aprender Haciendo and Pro Joven**, several examples have been obtained that previous participants have gained the desire and courage to take on different roles, leaderships and voluntary duties in their local community and thus engage in their communities as active citizens. In many cases, this can be attributed in whole or in part to the project's participatory, empowering teaching methods. This demonstrates that the projects' strategic focus on a combination of technical knowledge and empowerment has had an effect.

**In Pro Joven**, the participation has made teachers and participants grow as professionals and take new positions as well as responsibilities in the education sector. Other engage in voluntary work to strengthen quality education. One former female participant became a city council member and later mayor, which is extraordinary in a Bolivian context, and she attributed the personal growth to her participation in the Pro Joven project: "It helped create my path".

**In Aprender Haciendo**, an impressive number of women have subsequently taken on voluntary posts and leaderships: in their children's schools, in their neighborhoods, in local associations and as leaders of the women's organization Bartolina Sisa at both local, municipal and departmental level. Two women explained:

"Women in skirt [pollera] we don't walk with our head down anymore. Now we are at the meetings, we work, we leave the house, we can do anything: be leaders [dirigente], city councillor [consejal], assembly member and even minister", participant and local Bartolina Sisa leader.

"Before as women we did not participate, [the men] did not let us speak. I was kicked out of union meetings [sindicato] twice. Not even the women supported me." Why do you treat the president so badly? Why are you so capricious?", they told me. I had to

---

<sup>2</sup> For example between castellano and Aymara.

assert myself in that space, we are equal men and women. CETM promoted "The Bartolina Sisa point" on the agenda and now all organizations have this point. We have valued ourselves as women. Now we know our rights. We did not exercise our citizenship, we were silent [...] At first the advocacy was scary, now with practice it is not anymore. Now we know with whom and how to speak in the mayor's office. We want the laws that protect women to be enforced ", change agent and local Bartolina Sisa leader.

It is estimated that the project's inclusion and active participation of the target group in advocacy activities has had a very positive effect on women's current leadership and citizenship.

### Integration of project elements in the formal system

The consultant was able to identify examples that **both projects** have been successful in their advocacy efforts to influence government actors to create sustainable long-term transformation.

The ESFM in El Alto acknowledges that the **Pro Joven project** had an impact on the institution both in terms of creating an increased focus on SRHR and inducing a new methodology. One point that the ESFM emphasized is the coherence of the Pro Joven methodology with the National Education Model (Modelo Educativo Socio Comunitario Productivo (MESCP)) and the Education Act (Act 070 from 2010). The educational institutions received a new law, and the Pro Joven project proposed a creative and didactic methodology for its practical implementation as mentioned in the section on Relevance.

**For both projects**, the municipal governments still allocate budget and human resources for activities that fall within the thematic areas of the projects. An example for the **Pro Joven project** is the municipality of Viacha in La Paz. In their annual budget, financial resources are allocated to information and educational material on sexual and reproductive health and the municipal Youth unit ("Unidad de Juventud") has the operational responsibility for carrying out information and educational activities. In addition, a municipal law from 2015 guarantees young people access to sex education<sup>3</sup>. Putting sexual and reproductive health, "Educación Sexual Integral", on the municipal agenda is believed to be fully or partly attributable to the project:

"Thanks to Pro Joven, the prejudice of sexuality began to break in the municipality [of Viacha] in 2010. Now it can be spoken about in a more natural and open way", "Innovador" and former social worker in Defensoría de la Niñez y Adolescencia in Viacha y currently working in the municipality of Viacha.

**The Aprender Haciendo project** succeeded in advocating for sustainable, organic production in family gardens. The municipal government of Sacaba previously only focused on large-scale agriculture in rural areas and especially the cultivation of cereal grains. Through the

---

<sup>3</sup> Municipal Youth Law No. 025/2015, Promulgated on December 24, 2015: "The Autonomous Municipal Government of Viacha, public and private institutions within the framework of their powers and the general population, in order to contribute to the comprehensive development of youth, from an inclusive approach must guarantee the youth as a priority: [...] V. Programs of orientation, prevention and comprehensive sexual education, comprehensive health services with differentiated care, sexual and reproductive health and prevention of unplanned pregnancies in young people."

collaboration with CETM and experiencing the results of the Aprender Haciendo project, they have started to focus on family gardens in urban and peri-urban areas with the cultivation of organic vegetables. There has been responsiveness in the municipality and consistency between the project's objectives and the municipal government's wishes, which has contributed positively to the project's impact on the municipality. Today, the municipality distributes vegetable seeds regularly, has distributed water tanks to irrigation systems in connection with campaigns and permanently supports various eco-markets in Sacaba city, which is now enshrined in municipal law. The area for Productive Development has increased from two people in 2012 to more than 10 in 2021. In addition, today there is an employee in the municipality with specific responsibility for family gardens (huertos familiares) who provide training, distribute inputs and do follow-up with an annual activity budget of 10,000 bs. Both the former mayor and the current director of Productive Development in the municipality of Sacaba acknowledge the impact the project's advocacy had on the municipal government in creating interest and priority on women's empowerment and urban organic production in vegetable gardens:

“The municipality takes advantage of what was started by CETM, they started with the family gardens and we have given continuity. We have appropriated what they have started and now we follow up on their results. We are always ready to work with CETM. The municipality has bet on productive development,” José Bernardo Trujillo Castro, director for Productive Development in GAM Sacaba.

“It was profitable for the productivity of women. They began to empower themselves and generate resources in their own home by producing healthy and organic food. It was pretty good not to use GMOs and chemicals. It was something innovative and beneficial for the population responding to the needs of the municipality. Little by little the municipality began to contribute and follow-up do exist today,” Humberto Sanchez, former mayor in Sacaba.

**In both municipalities**, the continued work on focus areas of the projects (sex education, urban gardens) is currently supported and advocated for by other non-governmental institutions financed with development and/or foreign aid<sup>4</sup> and it remain a big challenge for the municipalities take over full financial responsibility with public funds.

In order to upscale efforts to other municipalities, regions and nationally to reach a broader target group outside the direct target group further and continued efforts are required. In the Pro Joven project the ministry showed interest and took steps to disseminate the project's methodological material, but the planned upscaling of the Pro Joven project to all ESFMs in Bolivia and the teachers' continuous, systematic execution of replicas was not implemented. The Pro Joven project was interrupted a little unexpected (both a phase 3 and 4 were planned) and therefore the planned advocacy and follow-up efforts to ensure the spread and long-term consolidation of effective sex education needs continuation, which current and future efforts could usefully focus on.

---

<sup>4</sup> In Viacha: UNFPA, Plan International and CIES. In Sacaba: AGRECOL Andes.

## Development of partner organizations

Through a long-standing partnership with AXIS, which also includes technical assistance, and the implementation of various phases of the projects, the partner organizations have been capacity-built and strengthened on several points. In relation to competencies, organizations have improved skills in effective implementation within participatory SRHR education (Pro Joven/Pueblo Diferente) and the link between organic production (including food security, environment, nutrition) and women's rights and gender equality (CETM). The Pro Joven staff has built up a significant knowledge base in relation to the development with close involvement of the target group, testing, validation and dissemination of teaching material in participatory, context-based methods. The Pro Joven staff created a new NGO, Pueblo Diferente, as a direct result of the accumulated experience and knowledge from the Pro Joven project based on a number of aspects related to learning from either the partnership with AXIS or project management: democratic organizational structure, active target group involvement, context-based methods for quality education and organizational sustainability.

In accordance with and by virtue of training in and application of the development triangle, strategic advocacy has become an integral part of the partners' work. In the relationship with authorities, the partners report that they have moved from a close, coordinating and friendly relationship with authorities to a more advocacy-based relationship, which is still good, dialogue-based and close, but where demands are made and they are constantly trying to influence decision-making. Service delivery and advocacy have been linked more closely. CETM now applies this advocacy approach institutionally in all their projects. CETM has become a well-known and recognized advocate for women's rights in Sacaba Municipality. Both organizations today have a much greater focus on the sustainability of results through dissemination and openness, including sharing methods and material with relevant bodies (other NGOs, authorities, etc.) to disseminate results to larger target groups.

## Sustainability

**The Pro Joven** change agents and the educational institutions still have and, to some extent, use the teaching materials, which have been further developed and improved by the project over the years. The majority of trained change agents is today scattered in new schools, in other institutions and in new positions where they have spread methods - to a greater or lesser degree. Some change agents still implement the SRHR replicas, and teachers do to a high and satisfactory degree use pedagogical elements of the learned methods from the project in a broader context which is believed to create more participatory education. Moreover, to some extent, the change agents still transmit methods and techniques to colleagues informally (following the TOT logic). Change agents indicate that the methodology is easily applicable and adaptable to different contexts (urban as well as rural), and few materials are needed thus cost-efficient enhancing sustainability without the need for funding:

“I don't need anything else than a plastic bottle to teach sexuality, not a projector or electricity. Wherever you are [you can do it]. You use things from your immediate environment”, former change agent.

An SRHR network that was established and functioned during the project no longer works.



**In the Aprender Hacienda project**, the trained change agents still pass on knowledge about organic production and support for other women's empowerment on an informal basis when the possibility arises: to neighbors, their children, other family members and in women groups. The project established an organic market where around 50-60 women sold their surplus production, food and derivatives. The market still exists today, but with far fewer women from the project participating and is now mixed with conventional production where the original sustainable principles of no use of disposable tableware, less use of plastic and more nutritious food options remain to a small degree today. A new organic market has emerged, which is currently receiving support and promotion from the municipality and other NGOs, so some have preferred this option. Generally, the ecological and sustainable principles still lack acceptance in the context and in the general community of Sacaba although it has improved the last couple of years - e.g. slightly higher prices and smaller quantity for food with greater nutritional value and goods produced organically. Many female producers point out that it is difficult or impossible to get a higher, and thus fair, price for their organically produced vegetables. Part of the Aprender Hacienda project's sustainability was based on a rotating fund of livestock, where part of the pubs was to be passed on to the other women in the change agent's villages. The rotating fund of livestock has stopped working. A woman explained that "now they didn't have the obligation to pass on their pubs", referring to after the end of the project as the small village women groups were no longer functioning. In addition, the strategy was that Bartolina Sisa's team in Sacaba was responsible for the continuation of the Sacaba model independent of CETM. Bartolina Sisa continues to do a range of advocacy in the municipality, especially with a focus on skills training for women enabling them to start small businesses and to a lesser extent concerning the spread and maintenance of organic vegetable gardens. However, many of the interviewed women sustain their gardens independently by producing seeds themselves, exchange seeds between them or buy seeds when necessary, thus making their gardens sustainable without external help. In addition, several of the former participants now receive seeds provided by the municipal government as part of their program on urban and peri-urban family gardens. As described in the previous section, elements of the Sacaba model are continued under municipal auspices.



**For both projects**, one of the biggest challenges for the sustainability of activities is the change of municipal authorities, which often generates the replacement of large parts of the staff and priorities. In addition, the annual budgets are renewed annually. Therefore, a local, persistent advocacy effort is usually required to ensure the sustainability of projects. Collaboration with local actors<sup>5</sup> and incorporation of their active involvement in advocacy activities from the beginning could with advantage be incorporated in future initiatives, especially in Pro Joven.

---

<sup>5</sup> Actors could be the rural and urban teachers' unions, student federations, parents' organisations, student councils, municipal children and youth committees, local leaders and other locally-specific strategic organisations, who will remain in the context post-project finalisation.

## Conclusion

The impact of the AXIS projects is clear in the direct target group, especially among change agents, with whom the participation in many cases has been directly life-changing. The participants' learning is in various ways used in practice and their empowerment is noticeable. Change agents' ability to deliver and pass on a dialogue-based and participatory education has been enhanced as they have adopted the methods to a satisfying degree. In addition, this study identified examples of sustained integration of elements such as focus areas and methods from the projects in the formal system, thus causing systemic change in the context, such as municipalities allocating human and economic resources for the establishment and maintenance of urban, organic family gardens (Sacaba) and comprehensive sex education (Viacha). Upscaling efforts to other broader target groups and additional geographical areas would need further work. The education and empowerment of the projects has been effective as catalysing effect for active citizenship, which is in line with AXIS' theory of change.

In both projects, two groups of potential major opponents are to a small extent included and their future inclusion could affect the projects' impact positively. In the Pro Joven project, these are parents demonstrating resistance to sex education. In Aprender Haciendo, they are men, in particular, the husbands of the female participants, resistant towards female empowerment.

## Abbreviations and acronyms

CBE	Context-Based Education
CETM	Centro de Educación y Trabajo de la Mujer - Centre for Women's Studies and Work
CISU	Civil Society in Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DANIDA	Danish development cooperation
ESFM	Escuela de Formación de Maestros – Training schools for teachers
ESI	Educación Sexual Integral – integrated sexual education
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
TOC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

### **Mentioned NGO's and INGO's:**

- AGRECOL Andes: is an NGO working in the Cochabamba region with development of agroecology and food security.
- CIES: NGO working in various regions of Bolivia with promotion and assistance in comprehensive health.
- UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund implementing projects in various regions of Bolivia focusing on sexual and reproductive health, family planning, maternal health and GBV.
- Plan International: humanitarian and development organization, working with the rights of children and the equality of girls with a presence in more than 700 communities in Cochabamba, La Paz, Santa Cruz, Sucre and Tarija.

---

<sup>i</sup> Disabled People's Organisations Denmark, DPOD (2009): Monitoring and Evaluation Manual.

<sup>ii</sup> OECD Library: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/>