



# ProjectsAbroad

The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad **Bolivia**

*August 2011*



## Editor's Letter

Hi all ,

Welcome to the August 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](mailto:bolivia@projects-abroad.org)

Best wishes from Bolivia!

Carmen Herbas  
Country Director

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# Salar de Uyuni: whatever you've heard about it is not enough

Lorena Tomas Laudo  
Eco Media, 2 months,  
Spain

The Salar de Uyuni is undoubtedly one of the 'must see' places in Bolivia and after having been there I completely understand why.

It is the biggest salt flat in the world with 12000 square kilometers and it is also one of the most amazing places I have ever seen.

It is a long trip from Cochabamba, as you have to take the bus to Oruro and then the train to Uyuni. Overall, it takes around 10 hours to get there, however, once you are there you forget about the long trip straight away.

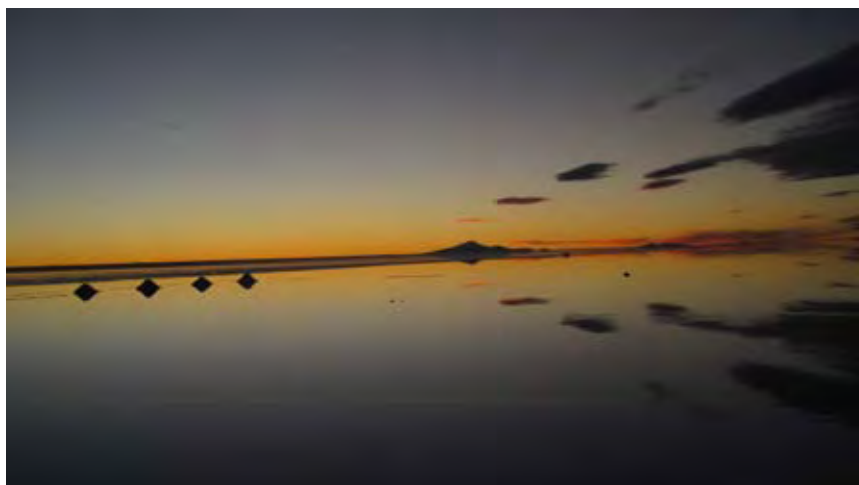


Gerben, a journalism volunteer from Holland, and I went there on an organized tour. We started by having lunch in Oruro, in one of the best restaurants where you have to eat lamb, as it is the specialty. Then we took the train to Uyuni and we had an adventurous start of the trip: we crashed into a lorry! In Bolivia anything can happen! Thank God the train had just come out of the station so it was not going very fast and nothing serious happened (but we have a funny anecdote!). Seven hours later on we arrived in Uyuni which is like a ghost town freezing cold.

The next morning we started our wonderful tour by going to the Cementerio de Trenes (Trains Cemetery) where the old trains that used to go to Oruro and Potosi remain. It is a magical place. We continued to Colchani, a tiny village where people work processing salt. Then we went to the Hotel de Sal (Salt hotel) to see how you can actually build a place out of salt and finally we went to La Isla del Pescado, a small island full of cacti, where we had the most incredible views of the Salar.

We went to all these places in a 4x4. It was actually a bit scary when we first drove through the Salar as it looks like the layer of salt may break! You have to go there with an expert driver because it is too easy to get lost - all you can see is white eternity. We were extremely lucky because as it had just snowed the week before, the Salar was covered by a thin layer of water that acted as a mirror creating perfect symmetries. The landscape was just breathtaking.

If you are lucky enough to come to Bolivia, you have to go to the Salar. It is a place that will stick to your mind for the rest of your life. It is simply beautiful.



# Chronics of a medical volunteer in Bolivia

Katherine Reichert  
Medicine, 1.5 months, USA

The day dawned like any other: a furtive burrowing under the covers to ward off the crisp Cochabamba morning until the last possible second, a quick cup of tea, a long wait for the right taxi-truffi, and arrival at the Centro de Salud Chavez Ranch. However, this Friday, as soon as I arrived, I was whisked off by a doctor, two nurses, and a score of medical students armed with mysterious coolers and chocolate bars to a nearby elementary school. En route, they explained the purpose of the expedition. Today we would run a vaccination campaign to inoculate all the girls in the school against cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer affects about 500,000 people worldwide each year, and about 250,000 women will die from it (National Cancer Institute). Human Papillomaviruses (HPVs) are the major cause of this disease, and while these common viruses are usually easily defeated by a woman's immune system, persistent infections can cause the cancer (National Cancer Institute). Merck recently developed the vaccine Gardasil to protect against four types of these HPVs, leading to the prevention of about 70% of all cervical cancers (National Cancer Institute). The vaccine requires three rounds of shots administered six months apart. This Friday marked the second round for this particular school.

When we arrived, the morning assembly had just started, but as soon as the students filed away to their respective classrooms, our work began. We quickly settled into a routine. One of the medical students checked the names of each girl in the class against a master list of all the students who had received the first shot, to ensure that she was eligible for the second. Often this process was made easier when the girls could present their green vaccination cards that delineated the dates of each round of shots she had received thus far. Then each girl would go to one of two nurse's stations. I had to prove myself to the small but powerful nurse at my station before eventually being allowed to handle the needles and vials of medication, but it was always the nurse's responsibility to delicately load the needle with the entire capsule of medicine, administer the shots, and stem the bleeding with homemade cotton balls soaked in alcohol. Finally, a last medical school student passed out chocolate bars to each girl that got a shot, making the pain and taunts of the boys a little more worthwhile.

In the end, we vaccinated over 200 students. Only three vials of medication remained in the coolers when we returned to the clinic, indicating that only three girls had missed this round of vaccination from last time. There were two instances in which the girls decomposed into sobs and screams at the thought of a shot, but with the careful cajoling, chiding, encouragement, persuasion, and sometimes a little bit of force at the hands of experienced nurses, even these girls made it through. The team will return once more at the end of the term, sometime in November or December, to administer the third round of Gardasil and ensure that these girls have a bright future untouched by cervical cancer.



私は今ボリビアの盲学校で、音楽の授業の補助を行うプロジェクトに参加しています。

この施設では、3歳から15歳と幅広い年齢層の子供たちが勉強しています。

そして約3割の子供たちがこの施設で生活をしています。

盲学校で、ましてやスペイン語もままならないのに、どうやって子供たちとコミュニケーションをとればいいのか最初はとても不安でした。

しかし彼等は私を温かく迎え入れてくれ、日本にとっても興味を示してくれました。

子供たちは目が見えませんが、私が「hola(こんにちは)」と挨拶をすると、いつも「hola, ANAN」と言って私のところまで駆け寄ってきてくれます。声で相手を判別し、声のする方角で相手がどこにいるのか、子供たちはわかっているのです。

音楽の先生も目が不自由な方なのですが、彼は一回音楽を聴いただけで弾けてしまうという素晴らしい耳を持っています。

ボリビアの学校は、日本の学校のようにピアノやその他の楽器が満足に設備されていません。

その現状にも驚き、日本はなんて勉強する環境に恵まれている国なのか、そして私たちはその環境を当たり前だと思ってしまうということを改めて実感しました。

もう時期コチャバンパで行われる記念祭の為に、先週末、スタジオで子供たちの歌が録音され、私もそれに同行しました。

歌っているときの彼等はとても生き生きとしていて、心から素直に音楽を楽しんでいる様子が伺えました。彼らにとっては音が生きる手段であり、音楽は外部から入ってくる唯一の娯楽でもあるのです。

私は彼らの歌にとっても感動し、言葉にできないものを感じました。

音楽に国境はない、そう感じた瞬間でもありました。

私は子供たちとスペイン語で思うように会話ができませんが、音楽を言語として彼等と会話する術を学びました。

そしていかに今までの自分の視野が狭かったのか、ということ強く実感しました。

子供たちと過ごせる期間は残り少ないですが、彼等からたくさんのことを学び、吸収して帰国したいと思います。

この体験は私の視野を180度変える良い機会になりました。

たくさんサポートをしてくださっているスタッフの方にも感謝しています。



## Social Events Review

## Visitors from Los Yungas!!!

By Mariel Torrez  
Projects Abroad Staff



Bolivia is a country where you do not know what you may find. We proved this once more when we decided to bring a little piece of Los Yungas, the Bolivian paradise located in the north of La Paz, to Projects Abroad office, for one of our September social activities. For most of the people, Los Yungas is just know by the famous Death Road, a tourist attraction for adrenaline yonkies, which overshadow the wonderful culture developed by the Afro-Bolivian community that live and survive surrounded by one of the most beautiful Bolivian landscapes, the high jungle.

Therefore it was really a surprise for our volunteers when an Afro-Bolivian community of musicians and dancers arrived to our office playing drums and “regue-regues” while they sang “Oeoe Oeoe venimos de los Yungas sí señor Oeco Oeoe venimos de los Yungas sí señor” as an informal way to introduce themselves to us.

It was Saya time!!!

We did not remain toomuch time in our seats because they invited us to dance and discover some “Saya moves” that our hips did not know that they were capable of. It was quite an exercise actually because “Saya” is a catchy Bolivian dance that combines rythms from Africa, the Andes and the some other tunes all the same time.

We laughed, we danced, we enjoyed, and now we hope that someday this Afro-Bolivian group can go back to our office one more time.

### **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/ Journalism, Teaching Supervisor**

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 Supervisor (Medical, Eco Project)**

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 (Desk Officer - Social Manager)**

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!”*



**IBlanca 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 Chiquitanía, El Cerro Rico de Potosi and much more.

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



Alberto Carniel  
Journalism, 3 months, Italy

Queridos amigos y amigas,

Ya estamos con las maletas listas hacia Europa, hacia nuestras casas y nuestros seres queridos, pero el regocijo se mezcla con la melancolía. Dejar un lugar donde hemos sido tan bien acogidos, donde hemos encontrado tan buenos amigos, donde en fin, hemos vivido tan bien como en esta ciudad de la eterna primavera, nos provoca sentimientos de tristeza.

Querida Carmen, como Desk Officer has sido nuestro primer contacto con Bolivia y ya lo sabes... que el primer amor no se olvida nunca.

Ximena, siempre estuviste a nuestro lado, una roca para ayudarnos.

Freddy, Rocío y ahora Mariel siempre hemos recibido de ustedes una sonrisa, y el máximo apoyo (y clases de baile andino).

Querida Daniela, hemos visto y apreciado tu mano en lo bueno y buenísimo que es esta familia de Projects Abroad Bolivia.

Hemos visitado bastante las maravillas de Bolivia y pienso que este país representa un regalo del cielo para la humanidad en la tierra y cuando hablemos en nuestras casas de ustedes y de Bolivia, nuestros ojos brillarán y nuestros rostros se acordarán de puras sonrisas bolivianas.

Adiós amigos y hasta la próxima.



## 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 Junin*  
*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*

## Credits

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## Social Media links

**Join our Projects Abroad Bolivia - The Official Group on Facebook:**

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=72848635649>

**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 Country**

[http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group\\_blogs.php?gl=true&group\\_guid=268](http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group_blogs.php?gl=true&group_guid=268)

Thank you to everyone who has helped to create this month's issue of the Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Bolivia. If you would like to contribute your experiences, stories, photos or anything else to the next edition then please send them to: [bolivia@projects-abroad.org](mailto:bolivia@projects-abroad.org)