



Photo by Marijke Kodden

The most pressing community development issue in Bolivia is its lack of essential infrastructure. In the nineties, many important services were put into the hands of private companies. One of the results of this privatization was that certain neighborhoods were denied access to basic rights such as clean water, proper sewage and garbage systems, irrigation, plumbing, and basic housing. Families that live without these important services are more likely to contract illnesses, be malnourished, have problems with their children's education, and have difficulty sustaining their incomes. These problems in turn affect community development, so that in Bolivia, supporting fundamental infrastructure is essential to building strong communities.

Safe drinking water is at the center of many community development initiatives in Bolivia. Those who suffer from illnesses related to the paucity of safe drinking water lose more than their health. When sick, the community members are unable work in their fields, thus losing potential income due to this decreased time planting, weeding, and harvesting their crops. Also, local school teachers say that the youngest students are especially susceptible to becoming sick from unsafe water - resulting in missed school days and a fragmented education.

Many NGOs have already stepped in to address these pressing concerns. FSD partner organizations work to bring safe drinking water to rural communities and support infrastructure on various levels. Interns in Bolivia have the opportunity to work on the front-lines with these issues without needing engineering experience.

Internship/Volunteer opportunities in community development in Bolivia include:

- Organize work projects with the community of Maria Auxiliadora, a communally owned neighborhood for women who have experienced intra-familial violence. Build houses, widen and cobble roads, plant trees, and work with city officials and community leaders to help improve the water, garbage management, and composting systems.
- Support the construction and maintenance of the school's infrastructure, including school buildings, school dormitories for children and staff, as well as the infrastructure of greenhouses and model gardens.
- Support construction of a media center for hosting plays, art exhibitions, and videos that address issues such as HIV/AIDS.
- Assist in the design and construction of housing improvement projects such as internal bathrooms and kitchens for low-income and peri urban areas.
- Research social, political, environmental, economic and cultural issues and assess their impact on marginalized communities.
- Conduct radio appearances to raise HIV/AIDS awareness. Prepare material for radio and television programs that provide information on HIV/AIDS, such as public service announcements. Write and publish articles for national and international newspapers and magazines to promote health, human rights, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS education.

For more opportunities in community development in Bolivia visit our website or contact us directly.