

not know enough English to write a letter. Those who do not know English will be assigned to community workers and volunteers who will explain your letters and help the children compose their responses.

Here are a few phrases in Spanish that you can use in your correspondence with your sponsored child:

- ☀ **Hola**
Hello
- ☀ **¿Cómo estás?**
How are you?
- ☀ **¿Que tal han estado?**
How is everything?
- ☀ **Feliz Cumpleaños!**
Happy Birthday!
- ☀ **¡Hasta luego!**
See you later!

Holidays

Holidays are very important to your sponsored child and family. The most important ones have religious or political significance:

- ☀ **January 1**
New Year's Day
- ☀ **February/March***
Carnival
- ☀ **March/April***
Easter
- ☀ **May 1**
Labor Day

- ☀ **July 16**
Day of La Paz
- ☀ **August 6**
Independence Day
- ☀ **November 1**
All Saints' Day
- ☀ **December 25**
Christmas

**date varies*

Religion in Bolivia

Ninety-five percent of the Bolivian population is Catholic. The remaining 5 percent are largely Protestant.

Catholicism and Protestantism are denominations of the Christian faith. **Christians** are followers of Jesus, a carpenter and a Jew from the city of Nazareth in present-day Israel. Christians believe that Jesus is the only son of God, born of a virgin woman (Mary) in a stable in Bethlehem. His story is told in the New Testament of the Christian holy book, the Bible. The Christian symbol—the cross—reminds the faithful that Jesus died for them, for the forgiveness of their sins. Christian holidays include Christmas (December 25), which celebrates the birth of Jesus; Good Friday (March/April), which commemorates the death of Jesus on the cross; and Easter (March/April), the most holy of Christian sacred days that celebrates the resurrection of Jesus on the third day after his death.

Additional sources include the CIA World Factbook and State Department websites.



Population	10.5 million
Capital City	Sucre/La Paz
Official Language	Spanish
Per Capita Income	US\$2,220/year
Youth Literacy Rate	100% male/99% female
Access to Safe Water	96% urban/72% rural
Under 5 Mortality Rate	41/1,000 live births

Source: The State of the World's Children 2014 (UNICEF)

Bolivia is a diverse land of vast mountains; cold, desolate plateaus; and semitropical and fertile lowlands. One-third of Bolivia is high country: the rugged Andes Mountains and the Altiplano (high plains). Windswept and snowcapped, this harsh environment holds tremendous beauty and solace in its terrain. In contrast, tropical lowlands and the rain forests of the Amazon Basin bordering Brazil in the east provide warm temperatures and ample rainfall. Completely landlocked, Bolivia lies entirely in the tropics; extreme differences in altitude and rainfall result in a variable climate. The fluctuating topography in Bolivia allows for extreme climatic differences within a few miles and also reflects the different cultures and languages of a people who belong to a country that is considered the “Heart of South America.”



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A Brief History

At Tiwanaku (Tiahuanaco), near Lake Titicaca, stand the impressive remains of a pre-Inca civilization. The Aymara-speaking Indians of this area emerged around 1000 BC into a civilization characterized by massive stone buildings and monuments, as well as exquisite textiles, pottery, and metalwork. This phase seems to have ended abruptly by some unexplainable reduction in the size of Lake Titicaca around 900 AD. The Quechua-speaking Incas of Cuzco (in what is now Peru) conquered the area around 1200 AD and found the Aymara living among the city ruins.

Other pre-Inca civilizations flourished outside of Santa Cruz in southeast Bolivia and added to the richness of the emerging country. In 1538, Spain conquered what is today Bolivia, and the highly advanced Inca communication and economic organization fell into ruin. The revolutionary movements against the colonial rule of the Spaniards began in 1809. After the Battle of Ayacucho in Peru, which was led by Simón Bolívar, the Spaniards were finally defeated and independence declared in 1825.

Plan's work in Bolivia covers five key areas, all of which are rooted in the rights of the child:

- ☀ Social governance
- ☀ Healthy and happy children and mothers
- ☀ Learning for life
- ☀ Improved income and participation
- ☀ Healthy environments

Social governance in favor of children and adolescents

Children and adolescents have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. This program addresses the issue of exclusion for children and adolescents, as well as women and indigenous populations. Plan's

activities include enabling these groups to exercise their rights and participate in networks and alliances that promote their agendas.

Healthy and happy children and mothers

Our early childhood care and development program improves the development and growth of children up to 5 years of age. We also run programs to tackle childhood illnesses and to promote maternal health through our "safe motherhood" program. The program increases the capacities of communities to address the main child development and health issues through effective use of community health workers. These volunteers are chosen by their own communities and are then trained and equipped by Plan. They are provided with materials for holding educational meetings with parents, supporting vaccination campaigns, and carrying out periodic family visits.

Learning for life

Plan Bolivia strives to ensure that children from 6 to 14 years of age access quality education that will develop skills, abilities, and awareness of their rights in support of their personal development. Our activities include teacher training, research with action plans to solve learning problems in the classroom, and follow-up on teacher and student performance.

Improved women's and adolescents' income and participation

Families enhance their children's quality of life through improved income and increased participation of women and adolescents in decision-making. Plan promotes healthy feeding practices, provides access to income-generation activities such as vocational training, and supports the empowerment of women and adolescents.



Healthy environments

Children and their families maintain healthy environments through access to safe water and sanitation, as well as the active control and prevention of endemic diseases related to environmental conditions. These results are achieved with the participation of children, families, communities, and municipalities. We support the improvement of existing water systems or build new ones and construct toilets and latrines. This infrastructure and equipment is accompanied by behavior-change strategies to ensure the long-term use and maintenance of these systems.

Diet and Nutrition

With three meals a day, the Bolivian diet consists of potatoes (the main staple), rice, and corn. Fruits and vegetables are eaten seasonally in the tropical zone, and almost never in the dry, cold climate of the Altiplano. Hot sauces, made from tomatoes and hot peppers, are a part of the diet and are often used in the preparation of many dishes.

Economic Security

The average urban family lives in the poor areas of cities, and the principal source of income is from working as a day laborer, vendor, office employee, or

public servant; alternatively, men and women are self-employed as informal street salespeople, bricklayers, or carpenters. In rural areas, families are mostly self-employed. They earn money from their farms, and their cash income is considerably lower than the average family living in the urban areas. Their financial assets consist of crops, milk, and meat from their animals. Specific crops differ from region to region.

In the Altiplano, families may own sheep and/or llamas, the famous Andean animal that provides meat and warm wool to the people of the area. During the dry season, many farmers migrate temporarily to work as agricultural day laborers. Animals represent valuable savings, as families sell these when an emergency arises and when they need cash quickly. Bolivia's economy was traditionally supported by the tin industry until the mines were closed due to low world market prices. Since then, policy has been oriented toward agricultural expansion and the promotion of private investment.

Language

Bolivia's official language is Spanish, which is spoken by approximately 88 percent of the population. The Aymara and Quechua languages are still widely spoken in the highland areas. It is likely that you will encounter a language barrier in communicating with your sponsored child, as the majority of the children do