



Newsletter 2016

We hope you will enjoy this update on our work with communities living on the Altiplano in the remote high Andes where harsh weather conditions can make daily life difficult.

Over the past year, the team in Bolivia has

- delivered a quinoa cultivation improvement project,
 - completed training and re-equipment at the trout farm in Khara Kota
 - provided llamas for the rural community in Rosapata Yaribay
- and worked on two projects to provide fresh water for remote communities.

In addition, they have started several smaller maintenance projects for water systems that have been in use for some years.

All these have been funded from QBL UK thanks to the generous donations from our supporters.

In 2017, we hope to start three more projects to bring water to remote communities .

Thank you for your support.
Please help us keep this work going.



One of the wells at Chullunkani being installed, ring by concrete ring.



Ximena from QBL USA using a manual pump on a completed well.

Richard Bloomfield from QBL-UK visits Bolivia



Richard with the QBL team in La Paz, Efrain, Ana, Eduardo, Alberto and Nilda

Earlier this year, I visited QBL's work in Bolivia with members of the QBL Board from the USA. Eduardo Mamani, who manages the team in La Paz, arranged for us to visit three very different projects. Each of the communities we visited was a 3 to 4 hour drive south from La Paz, beyond the mining town of **Corocoro** (Google maps can find this). The last 40 minutes or so is down unmade roads which would be very difficult to traverse in the wet. At each project, we were met by a large group of villagers; many speeches of welcome and thanks were made – there is a deep but dignified gratitude for the projects, which they are not afraid to express. Always, we were well fed and often gifts were bestowed on us from humble pots to hats, scarves, coca and quinoa.

At **Rosapata Yaribay**, we saw the llamas which have been provided for the community. Each family has been given two females and a male. All are tagged and individually monitored. Training in husbandry has been done and all the llamas have been treated for internal and external parasites. To the untrained eye, they looked a healthy bunch. Usually, llamas are used for meat after 3 years but the



Rosapata Llamas

new breeding stock purchased will be kept for at least five years to build up the herd. The dung is collected and used to fertilise the potato fields. At the village, we met some of the local school children. Jenny, who is a dental hygienist at home in the USA, had brought toothbrushes for children which she had persuaded Colgate to give her. Whenever the chance arose, she distributed those and gave the children some instruction on their use.

Our visit to the quinoa growing project in **Tupal Tupa** was a revelation to me in that I finally grasped the true importance of this project.



Quinoa soup for lunch.

When we arrived, the harvest was mostly in although some plants had been left to show us the improved harvesting techniques, enabled by the simple purchase of sickles. The threshing and winnowing of the quinoa was ready to begin and it is the two new, simple Bolivian-made machines that will revolutionise this activity. The villagers demonstrated both the old and new ways of doing these tasks and made the point that a job that previously took weeks will now take hours.



Harvesting in Tupal Tupa

This saves a lot of tedious labour but also vitally enables more quinoa to be grown, because more can be processed. The community will have improved food security and, they hope, a small surplus to trade. This is the first of these projects and once news of this spreads, I would expect similar projects will be proposed by other communities.

Another 30 minutes beyond **Rosapata Yaribay**, Yaribay Water is a large project which will see two sources tapped to bring water to a village and farmsteads spread out over many kilometres across a valley. Currently water is obtained from water holes shared with animals and from the local river which is brackish and not clean. Fortunately, there are clean springs up on the hillside that run all year. The project has begun and one spring has been piped to two tanks which have been built on a hill overlooking the valley at a spot which should provide a

good head of water for the network. The spring delivers 0.5 litre of water a second. There were piles of pipe in the village hall with the villagers about to start the hard work of laying the network.

QBL in Bolivia is a registered charity with its own Board of Quakers from Meetings in La Paz and El Alto. It was good to meet with them and deepen the relationships between us all. We realised that so far as anyone knew, this was the first time in QBL's 20-year history that the Clerks from



Welcome at the Yaribay Spring

the USA, the UK and Bolivia had all been together at the same time. It is a long way to Bolivia and such a trip has a high carbon footprint. However, the knowledge gained and the links established makes it worthwhile if this can be translated into more support for the poorest communities on the Altiplano.

P.S. – If you are interested in an aerial view of Yaribay, Google maps has a good satellite picture. The coordinates of the water source are: 17°16'15.0"S 68°20'44.3W



The Road to Yaribay

Cooperation is Key



All QBL projects now involve three way agreements between the benefiting community, the municipality in

which the project is located and QBL Bolivia.

This working relationship is formalised in a legal agreement. Efrain, one of Bolivian team said, "I think it is important to sign these agreements with any institution



where there is economic and technical cooperation as if there were no legal agreement one could not rely on the project being completed."

The community requesting the project establishes a committee which plans and manages the project both during its implementation and its operation. The local community also provides much of the manual labour involved. The municipality provides significant financial support and at times its professional staff offer their expertise. QBL makes a substantial financial contribution as well as providing technical and management assistance; it accompanies the community through the planning, implementation and follow up stages of the project.

Priorities for 2017

Our priorities are determined by the project proposals we receive from the QBL team in Bolivia. The staff there work in collaboration with community organisations to develop the proposals which are eventually sub-



mitted to us in the UK for funding. It can take a couple of years from the initial meeting with the community to reach the stage QBL UK sends funds and the project starts.

We are currently fundraising for three water projects in Challa Belén, Rumer Huma and Palcoma Alta. Water projects are a priority, but there are other projects in development as well. The Topohoco community is developing a project proposal which aims to develop improved methods of raising livestock, cows, sheep and llamas. On a similar theme, Butijlaca community is planning a project which will produce better quality fodder for their livestock. As well as providing food, livestock is one of the main sources of income for families in the Altiplano.

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A Quaker response to poverty

Quaker Bolivia Link grew from the concern of individual Friends to improve the living conditions of some of the poorest people in Latin America: the Aymara of the Altiplano. We welcome anyone interested in our work to come to one our meetings. If you would like to be advised of these, please write or email.

If you would like to make a donation to support our work, please visit our website www.qbl.org or send a cheque to the address on the left. Gift Aid and Standing order forms are available.