

## Improving nutrition in Bolivia

### Background



Photo: Richard Hanson/Tearfund

Malnutrition is a serious problem in Bolivia due to poverty and a basic diet of potatoes and wheat. Around 27% of Bolivian children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition.

In the mountainous departments of Chuquisaca and Potosí an estimated 80% of the mainly indigenous inhabitants live in poverty. Levels of agricultural production are low due to poor soils, erosion, unpredictable weather patterns and inadequate agricultural practices. Most people also lack access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation and health care. As a result the communities suffer from chronic shortages of food, high levels of preventable illnesses and high infant mortality rates.

### The YANAPANAKUNA Project

The Yanapanakuna project, run by **Tearfund's partner SETESUR (Seminario Teológico del Sur)**, was initiated in the early 1990s. Through participatory training and accompaniment, the project aims to improve nutrition and health in Chuquisaca and Potosí, whilst empowering families to lift themselves out of poverty.

The project focuses on the following, working with local promoters to develop activities which are appropriate and sustainable for each community:

- **Agriculture:** sustainable agricultural techniques; the use of greenhouses for fruit and vegetable cultivation; animal health; environmental conservation; construction and repair of water tanks and irrigation systems.
- **Health and wellbeing:** nutrition; toilet construction; water supply improvements; basic community health care (e.g. vaccinations, first aid, HIV prevention, family planning and sexual health); family leadership based on Biblical principles (including issues such as gender, child abuse and domestic violence).

### Impact on beneficiaries

Through these activities, the health of the poorest people in Chuquisaca and Potosí is improving. They no longer eat mainly wheat and potatoes but enjoy a more varied diet including fruit and vegetables. Their immune systems are being strengthened, their ability to concentrate has improved and illnesses are less common.

People are also learning about the relationships between God, man, woman and the earth. Alcoholism and domestic abuse are becoming less frequent as there is more dignity and respect within communities.