

# " Socioeconomic Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Bolivia"

## External Evaluation

### Executive Summary

The “**Socioeconomic Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Bolivia**” project is part of the Bolivian HI Country Program, whose objective is that “women and men with disabilities and their fathers, mothers or guardians have access to inclusive professional training services and of economic insertion, which allows them to achieve their professional projects ”for which they seek to reinforce the support and training services in favor of people with disabilities; sensitize and inform about inclusion and the gender approach to the population of La Paz and El Alto; offer opportunities to people with disabilities and their guardians through job placement services; generate a favorable framework for inclusion in the companies participating in the project and; reinforce the capacities and resilience of productive enterprises of people with disabilities and their families.

As part of the activities programmed for the implementation and completion of the Project, an external evaluation has been planned, which aims to evaluate the fulfillment of the goals and the results of the Socioeconomic Insertion for the People with Disabilities project defined in its design. Through the selected evaluation criteria related to their relevance and pertinence, the efficiency of their implementation, the effectiveness of their results, the sustainability of the effects and the levels of participation and involvement of the different actors.

Based on these criteria, the summary of the results of this evaluation, are shown in this document.

The Project "Socioeconomic Inclusion of people with disabilities in Bolivia" shows a high degree of **relevance** in relation to national regulations, particularly with the Political Constitution of the State, Law No. 223 of March 2, 2012 "General Law for People with Disability ”and Law No. 977 of September 27, 2017“ Law of labor insertion and economic aid for people with disabilities ”, contributing to the Bolivian State and its institutions to guarantee people with disabilities the fulfillment of the right to work in adequate conditions, according to their possibilities and capacities, with a fair remuneration that ensures a dignified life and the development of their individual potential.

Regarding the State's long and medium-term planning instruments, the Project has contributed to the fulfillment of the Patriotic Agenda 2025 and with the Economic and Social Development Plan (PDES 2016-2020) in its Pillar 1 (Eradication of the Extreme Poverty) and Pillar 3 (Health, Education and Sports). At the sectoral level, the Project contributes to the fulfillment of the Ministerial Strategic Plan 2016-2020 of the Ministry of Labor, which raises as one of its strategic goals to promote and generate opportunities facilitating the access to employment for the benefit of the Bolivian population with emphasis on vulnerable groups through the development of promotion plans and policies, as well as the promotion and protection of cooperative organizations.

In the same way, the Project is highly **relevant**, in relation to a sensitive problem and subsistence needs related to the generation of economic resources of people with disabilities, since one of the main problems is that they have to be able to apply for a job lacking certifications of their skills and abilities, and having to deal with stereotypes related to their abilities and few labor inclusion policies in public and private institutions, a situation that has worsened with the COVID-19 Pandemic which has caused many companies to reduce their staff instead of hiring new employees. In this sense, the relevance of the Project is about looking forward to contribute as a solution to the lack of

opportunities for access to vocational training and economic insertion services for this populations' dignified subsistence.

Regarding **efficiency**, budget programming and execution is reasonable and consistent for a project with these characteristics, having reached 95.1% of budget execution as of October 31, 2021. The form of administration of these resources is adequate and responsive to the policies and procedures established by HI, which shows a good organization and clear procedures, this has made it possible that, during the health crisis generated by COVID-19, an execution of resources can be carried out without major inconveniences, despite the supply limitations of inputs generated by the quarantine decreed at the national level as of March 2020, which shows a capacity for adaptation and adequate response to adverse contexts.

Although it is generally highlighted that the organizational structure of the project was sufficient during most of the project's implementation, the need to reinforce the work team with someone professional and with a social profile has also been identified to contribute to the social assessment and the accompaniment of the project users. Additionally, the alliances generated with strategic partners and with experience in the subject, such as the Fundación Educación para el Desarrollo FAUTAPO or the operational units of the Ministry of Labor or the Municipal Governments of La Paz and El Alto, have contributed to having more Human resources with knowledge of the problem, which has contributed to the programmed activities and to the efficiency of the intervention.

The allocation for logistical and work support resources has been sufficient, which has contributed to the achievement of the established goals in the project design.

Regarding the **effectiveness** of the project, the activities that have been carried out have strengthened the work of public administration offices for the accompaniment and training of people with disabilities and have managed to sensitize and inform the population of La Paz and El Alto municipalities about inclusion and gender approach. New opportunities have been generated thanks to training and job placement services; some companies have been able to introduce an inclusion approach for people with disabilities into their organizational culture. Skills, and resilience of people with disabilities and their families have been strengthened on a productive corporative level.

All these actions are undoubtedly helping women and men with disabilities and their guardians and/or parents to have access to inclusive professional training and economic insertion services, which allows them to achieve their own professional projects, with which the goal of the project is being reached.

Additionally, and as a consequence of the project's actions, differentiated **effects** and sustainability are identified in the target audience and in the actors who have had some degree of participation. Highly positive effects are identified in people with disabilities who have received some type of training and who have managed to obtain a job thanks to the efforts made by the Project. A change has been perceived in them, not only in their individual condition, but in their role within their closest environment, since the possibility of generating their own resources has allowed their self-esteem to be strengthened and the idea of "I can" which is an important element, and also constitutes the most significant change attributable to the project, which is highly sustainable.

Mothers of children with disabilities who have been trained to carry out productive businesses, it has been observed that the possibility of generating income with their own enterprises has given them a decent subsistence perspective. Additionally, this possibility of generating resources independently, but without neglecting the care of their children is important and it is allowing them to get ahead with their own ventures and the skills and abilities acquired can also be used in other ventures, thus ensuring the sustainability of the results becomes evident.

An indirect effect, which had not been anticipated, is related to the training provided to mothers in the use of information and communication technologies. There have been some testimonies from mothers who mentioned that their sons or daughters with disabilities, watching them use technology, have developed interest in the subject and have learned to use the different applications to help in the promotion and sale of (their) products. A situation that can have an important effect later, contributing to a potential autonomy and generation of resources, because they are learning and putting into practice product sales strategies through social networks.

At the level of municipal public institutions, where apparently there are better possibilities of continuing the actions related to this Project, it has been in the Autonomous Municipal Government of El Alto, where the technicians have appropriated the project and the tools and form to address work with people with disabilities, in addition to have been implementing the Socioeconomic Opportunities Program, which is closely related to the Project activities. With the Autonomous Municipal Government of La Paz, the project's sustainability has had more limits, since it has a different way of addressing the issue, and although they provide comprehensive support to people with disabilities, their actions are aimed at providing therapy services in the areas of psychology, kinesiology, special education, social work, psychomotor skills, meditation, yoga, among others, but they do not work specifically on job placement projects or activities. At the working level of these institutions and around the entities of the Central Government, we could observe that, although there is a favorable regulatory framework and there is recognition of the importance of the issue, the project's sustainability is conditioned to the job stability of public workers in their sources of work and, consequently, the sustainability of actions and results is weaker, which is why the actions developed by the Project such as the design of the compendium that has been working for the transfer of the project to these institutions are important.

The partner institutions of the Project are the ones that have best appropriated the subject and, although they have done this in a different way, they have shown interest of developing actions to give continuity to the activities related to the Project, which in some way guarantees the sustainability of the actions to be taken for the future.

Finally, the mechanisms of **participation** and accountability with the partners have been based on the conformation of inter-institutional steering committees that have made possible the programming and development of activities in an appropriate manner. With users of the Project, the issue of accountability has not been considered in the design of the Project, however, some spaces have been sought for daily listening and personalized monitoring, constituting the absence of spaces for socialization as one of the weakest elements of the Project.

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the main recommendations are the following:

- To consolidate the relevance of the intervention and in view of the recent approval of PDES 2021-2015 and the forthcoming development of plans at the sectoral and territorial level, which opens the possibility of incorporating the issue of labor inclusion in the medium-term planning of related to public workers, it is important that a new project design prioritizes advocacy actions so that this issue is incorporated into these new planning instruments.
- In order to contribute to the sustainability of the effects of the intervention, a sustainability strategy must be considered from the very design of the Project, which identifies actions and processes for the transfer of the methodology and tools designed for the implementation of the Project.
- To help consolidate the effects and their sustainability, based on the strategic alliances generated with state agencies, efforts must be multiplied so that public and private

institutions comply with the current regulations related to labor insertion, this with the purpose to increase the possibilities of access to work for those people with disabilities who have not yet been able to have access to a job.

- In order to optimize the efficiency in the use of the project's human resources, it is important to consolidate the relationship and coordination policy that the Project has implemented with strategic allies (private and public) who, based on their academic experience or skills they have in the public function, contribute to the activities and objectives of the Project.
- For the design of future interventions, it is important that strategies for the involvement of other state entities can be generated and that they can contribute to the fulfillment of the purposes of the Project. We refer to the participation on entities such as the Ministry of Productive Development and Plural Economy, the Ministry of Justice and Transparency Institutional, the Ministry of Education or the Ombudsman.
- With educational (public or private) institutions it is recommended that there is an integration of a component, that, through agreements, allows the allocation of scholarships, enabling the most prominent users and those who show the interest to continue strengthening their knowledge, to opt for courses at a higher technical or even an academic bachelor's level.
- Due to the great interest and demand for access to new education and training courses shown by the people with disabilities and/or their families, it is recommended to design specific online courses that can be pre-produced, that is, courses that can be accessed anywhere and at any moment online.
- In order to adequately measure the effectiveness of the project's implementation, it is important that, in the formulation of the goals' indicators and their results, the values and their measurement methodology are precisely defined and identified, establishing base values, including the general value that is estimated to be reached at the end of the intervention.
- Regarding the participation, we think that in future designs, it is important to incorporate spaces for the results' socialization and for some feedback (knowledge management) from the users or beneficiaries of this Project. This would work as a mechanism for transparency and communication on the reach and the achievements that the project has been having in the implementation process, which affects positively the motivation of the team to continue in this type of process.

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