

## **Floods in Chipaya - Bolivia**

### **Situation Report**

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#### **Introduction**

Country/Location: Bolivia –Oruro Region- Chipaya Autonomy

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#### **General overview**

Heavy rains in Bolivia this month have killed people, flooded crops and damaged roads, according to authorities.

Rainfall levels have surpassed records while the rainy season has just begun and it lasts until March.

The vice ministry of Civil Defense reported that 29 people lost their lives due to disasters resulting from the rain and 45 municipalities issued a disaster declaration (including the Uru Chipaya nation). An evaluation of the current situation establishes that 82,846 families have been affected by the heavy rains and consequent floods, of which 20,196 have been seriously damaged. Of the 188 municipalities affected, in eight departments, 45 have released a disaster declaration while six have declared the emergency.

Regarding to the hectares of crops and/or grazing 349,354 hectares have been affected, of which 9,650 hectares have been declared "completely lost"; 50.451 heads of cattle have also been affected.

Floods are causing unprecedented damages with immediate and long-term effects in a fragile country (ranked 108 HDI - Human Development Index) frequently affected by natural disasters.

Bolivia is a landlocked country located in central South America between the Andes and the Amazon. Due to remarkable elevation changes throughout the country, Bolivia has a varied topography and a wide range in climate. Bolivia is crossed by two mountain ranges (the western and the eastern or real) that are part of the



Andes mountain chain. This generates a subdivision of the country into six main natural regions: Western Cordillera, Cordillera Real, Altiplano, Sub-Andean, Chaco Plain, and the Brazilian Shield. Due to this diversity in the relief, multiple climatic phenomena are generated in the country and, in turn, these phenomena cause a specific threat for each region. In the highlands, plains and the Brazilian shield regions, **there are constant floods, droughts and landslides**, while in the mountain ranges and in the sub-Andean zone there are frequent landslides, floods and moderate seismic activity. In addition to this, these differences in the relief throughout the country cause very changing climates in the different regions so that there are places with perpetual snow, humid climate, and arid zones.

### **Overview of WeWorld/ChildFund response**

WeWorld first intervention in Oruro dated 2012 to support the Chipaya community to recover from a flood affecting the entire population and their livelihoods. Since then, WeWorld has designed and carried out a Disaster Risk Reduction program involving the local civil protection system to build its capacity. Among other actions, contingency plans against floods have been developed.

The Uru Chipaya region is periodically exposed to floods that fundamentally affect the health and livelihoods of the population. The heavy rains that have affected Bolivia in recent weeks have caused the total loss of the quinoa, potato and cañahua crops in Chipaya, which is the basis of their diet. For the next agricultural management they will not have seeds, since they have lost all their production. Livestock production is being affected by diarrheal diseases in animals, in addition to the fact that some of them no longer have food, they also died crushed by the collapse of their pens.

Both agriculture and livestock sectors have been severely impacted by the recent floods causing immediate and long term damages and treats to the already fragile food security of the Chipaya community.

In continuity with the programs carried out in the country, and after a joint analysis of needs, a first response plan has been drawn up in response to the DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY of the Uru Chipaya Nation. The Plan has been prepared jointly with the Risk Management Unit of the Department of Oruro and the Chipaya authorities.

***The objective of the plan is to alleviate the current difficult situation of the population particularly children, who have been affected mainly in: i) transportation and access to food, livelihoods with the consequent imminent risk of food insecurity, lack of availability of safe water. The plan aims to respond to the needs of all families living in Chipaya with special attention to children and women.***

**Chipaya** - Uru Chipaya is an indigenous nation located in the province of Sabaya, 206 km from the city of Oruro, capital of the homonymous department. The trip from the city of Oruro by road and dirt road takes about three hours. The town is located in a remote area northeast of Lake Coipasa, where the people have maintained special elements of their culture, considered by some studies to be the oldest living culture in the Americas. The Original Nation Uru Chipaya is structured in four Ayllus/community, which are called Aranzaya, Manazaya, Wistrullani and Ayparavi. Each of these Ayllus have smaller villages that make up blood-related families. The capital or populated center that converges is Santa Ana de Chipaya. According to the latest census (National Population and Housing Census) of 2012, Chipaya has a population of 2,003 people made up of 1,005 men and 998 women for a total of 322 families), of which 50.2% represents the child population (473 child population, including 255 girls and boys aged between 0 and 4 years). The Municipality, according to the new Constitution of 2009, is one of the few municipalities that has opted for a form of government based on its uses and customs, where the decision-making processes and the economic and social organization respond to the form of self-determination of the indigenous population. Therefore, the traditional system overlaps with the state one, often creating tensions. The Uru to which the Chipaya belong are one of the 36 native indigenous nations that conform the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

**Climate** - The annual temperature is between 8 and 11 °C, with an extreme maximum of 22 °C and an extreme minimum of -17 °C. The precipitation is between 115 to 329 mm respectively. According to Holdrige (1973), the climates correspond to the desert scrub - temperate plain life zone. Soil humidity varies considerably, depending on the dry and rainy seasons.



**Land** - The territory of the Uru Chipaya Native Nation is used primarily to develop livestock and agricultural activities. The natural physical territory of the Original Nation Uru Chipaya, has sandbanks, bofedales, farmland, salt flats. The main crops are quinoa, cañahua, potato in some cases. Livestock is grazing sheep, llamas and pigs. However, the territory is not conceived as a simple resource to be exploited, but its connotation is sacred in all areas of natural, social and spiritual life. For generations, the population has dig and maintained channels in order to recover their soils, irrigate their pastures and make their land productive. This make the Chipaya people known as an ancient culture with great wisdom in such a hostile terrain, called "Men of the water".

According to a participatory diagnosis carried out, the municipality of Chipaya is exposed to threats of natural, socio-natural and anthropic origin, such as droughts, heavy rains (floods), frost and hail. Frequently, threats are associated with devastating consequences on the livelihoods of the population.

On the other hand, the population vulnerability is due to its limited capacity to recover and adapt to the impact of threats. The ongoing foods are seriously affecting the food security of the population.

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### 1. Security & logistics

We World operates in Bolivia since 1987 under a Framework Cooperation Agreement with the Government of Bolivia, which is currently in force.

We World has a Security Plan and all WeWorld international staff, national staff, consultants and visitors traveling, even if only temporarily, in Bolivia are covered by this security plan.

### 2. Partnership and coordination

Three members of the ChildFund Alliance are active in Bolivia. WeWorld is the only member active in the Chipaya region while ChildFund International, EDUCO implement their activities in other areas of the country. WeWorld has coordinated the present intervention with the other members of the Alliance and country level and informed them about the ongoing response plan.

The response plan has been designed and carried out in coordination with the Autonomous Government of the Uru Chipaya nation and with the Risk Management Unit of the department of Oruro. We World has already collaborated with local authorities on several occasions to deal with disasters occurred in the department of Oruro, such as periodical floods affecting the Chipaya population.

### 3. Program

***Priority will be given to children who are just back to school finally attending to face-to-face classes; they will access to safe water and adequate food.*** In order to guarantee the return of children to school the damaged classrooms need to be rehabilitated and safe drinking water need to make available for children and their community.

The response plan target also at the population as a whole: seeds provision is urgent to guarantee food security and prevent malnutrition in children belonging to highly vulnerable households. Pre-distribution and post-distribution monitoring will be performed to measure the impact of the program and adjust the program if necessary.

The first phase is intended to be a pilot phase that provides the opportunity to deepen the needs assessment and possibly formulate a medium-term response plan that provides alternatives to periodic flooding.

***Protection*** - Women and children face unique additional risks, in particular due to emerging conditions characterized by more restricted access to services, and weak environmental conditions and generally restricted movement due to disruption of transport and communications, ***including the disruption to safe return to school.***

***Feeding*** - The Uru Chipaya nation is currently suffering its second severe flood in the last 4 years (the last one was in 2018). Food production has been hit hard, livestock are highly stressed, and rural livelihoods face increased threats.

***Nutrition*** - We World has carried out a study showing that the age group from 5 to 9 years is the most affected by under-nutrition with a weight deficit in relation to their height. Food insecurity generated by the current flooding and crop losses could negatively affect the nutritional status of Chipaya children.

#### **4. Funds and funding needs**

We World ensures the presence of local personnel specialized in first responses, as well as personnel and teams from the UGR Oruro who have facilitated the analysis of initial needs and coordination with the local population. Thanks to the presence of the We World team, the contingency plan for floods in the Uru Chipaya nation has been launched, which was previously prepared in a participatory manner with the local population.

An amount of **30,000 USD** is necessary to ensure at least a first response for the entire population of Chipaya and at the same time to study a short and medium term plan for the economic reactivation of the Uru Chipaya nation.

#### **5. Next steps**

WeWorld team in Bolivia keeps monitoring the situation together with local authorities and civil protection system.

