

# ProjectsAbroad

The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad **Bolivia**



## Editor's Letter



Carmen Herbas  
Country Director

Hi all,

Welcome to the May edition of our Newsletter for Projects Abroad Bolivia. This newsletter aims to inform all our volunteers with news and information about the latest happenings in Projects Abroad Bolivia, and the country in general.

We encourage everyone to join us in making it interesting and exciting by sending in your own written articles and pictures of your experiences here with us. Your stories and pictures will help others to understand and learn about Bolivia.

Feel free to join us in our Facebook group so we can be in touch, before, during and after your trip to Bolivia!

If you have anything you'd like to contribute, suggest, or comment on, please contact: [bolivia@projects-abroad.org](mailto:bolivia@projects-abroad.org)

Best wishes from Bolivia!

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Elise Smines Eriksen  
Journalism, Norway

There are a lot of environmental conservation and protection projects that need your help all over the world. As a volunteer with Projects Abroad, you have the opportunity to help by researching and collecting data, reforestation, educating communities about conservation, and more. In Cambodia for example, you can join the Projects Abroad programme “Diving and Marine Conservation” and help protect the endangered seahorses. If you are interested in experiencing African wildlife up close, the “African Savannah Conservation” –programme in Kenya would be a good choice.

Though there are a lot of amazing volunteer programmes here in Cochabamba, Bolivia, there are sadly no environmental conservation programmes yet but that is not to say that the team here in Cochabamba doesn't have environmental conservation on the agenda! On the contrary: at the journalism project – where we write articles for the free, monthly published magazine called “Cocha-Banner” – environmental conservation is often in focus. A lot of issues over the past years have contained at least one article focusing on an environmental topic. Water is for example one of the topics that often is written about by the volunteer journalists. Since water conservation is a big issue here in Bolivia – considering the water-war and deprivation of water in some areas – many articles have focused on this topic in order to enlighten the citizens of Cochabamba, as well as the many tourists that visit. Another environmental topic that has been in focus of a Cocha-Banner issue is the importance of recycling. In order to get people recycling their garbage and used, broken



## Buy, waste, buy



While the phrases “save the planet” and “think green” are on everyone's lips, there are more unknown forces hidden in the world of economics that might be stronger. Planned obsolescence is a frequently used product strategy to make customers buy products over and over again with the goal to raise economic profit. Does the strategy create a healthy economy or only generate unnecessary waste?

things, they need to know how to do it, and – maybe most important of all – why they should do it. The article focuses on how you can take advantage of everyday things, such as toothbrushes and t-shirts, and use them over again or make them useful in other ways. Another focus area has been battery use in Cochabamba, where the article asks the question “what can we do to minimize the impact of this dangerous waste?”, and points out that there is missing recycling schemes for this environmental problem in Cochabamba. These articles help people to understand the importance of recycling and the lack of environmental efforts in Cochabamba – and what we can do to change it.

The difficult task of getting people to contribute and be more concerned about mother earth has one crucial component: information. As a part of the Cocha-Banner team here at Projects Abroad, the volunteers are able to directly reach out to the citizens of Cochabamba, and in that way indirectly contribute to the conservation of our earth. After all; knowledge is power, and writing for Cochabanner enables the volunteers to give people the knowledge and the power they need to help make the world better.



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Cochabanner Issue 70 August 2013

## The Batteries OF COCHABAMBA

By Jessica Eastwell  
Projects Abroad Volunteer  
Hochum, England

The results of the SGAB study on battery use in Cochabamba are in. So what can we do to minimise the impact of this dangerous waste?

Batteries ▼



Some readers may remember a previous article on the SGAB battery collection scheme in the May edition of the Cochabanner. Apart from keeping a large amount of hazardous waste out of landfills, the project has also collected important information about battery use in Cochabamba.

Since April 2010, the SGAB-Ciudades Focales project has collected nearly 4 tonnes of batteries in Cochabamba, in order to study what batteries are most frequently used in Cochabamba, and to find the best way to dispose of them.

They have discovered that the most common type of battery used in

Cochabamba is AA batteries (59.4% of the total, 45.2% of the total weight of batteries collected), and that the vast majority of these (81.73% of all the batteries collected) are zinc manganese batteries, also known as alkaline batteries. These contain dangerous amounts of heavy metals such as zinc, manganese and mercury, which can

**AA alkaline batteries are the most common type in Cochabamba. One AA battery can contaminate 3,000 litres of water.**

damage the environment and human health. The full findings about which types of batteries are most used can be seen in the table below.

Since AA alkaline batteries are the most common type in Cochabamba, and the ones we are most likely to encounter on an everyday basis - we use them to power our torches, radios and CD players. What can we do to decrease their impact?

Firstly, we can try to use rechargeable batteries. Unfortunately, rechargeable AA batteries (normally cadmium-nickel or nickel metal hydride) also contain harmful chemicals. Despite this, they are a more environmentally friendly option, as they can be recharged up to a thousand times, whereas standard AA batteries are only used once. While they may seem more expensive than alkaline batteries at first, they can be recharged so many times that they work out cheaper in the long run. Zinc carbon AA batteries are also available, and the SGAB has described their toxic characteristics as “very low”, as opposed to alkaline batteries, which are classed as “toxic”. The main disadvantage of zinc carbon batteries is that they do not last as long as alkaline batteries.



Batteries ▲



Volunteers recycling batteries. ▲

## Projects Updates

# Equine Therapy Program - Getting back on the horse

Mariel Torrez  
Communications Officer

Every new month gives us the opportunity of meeting new people here at Projects Abroad, and this time we are especially glad to welcome a new volunteer for our Equine Therapy Program, Selja Deinboll from Norway, as we were forced to put this programme on hold during the rainy season.

Selja Deinboll, who just arrived a couple days ago, told us that she chose this particular programme because it offered her the opportunity of combining her interests: working with special needs children, animals and nature after revealing she is planning on changing her career upon her return to her home country.

“I’ll start studying to become a teacher next fall, and eventually plan to specialize to be a teacher for children with special needs. So I will use this year to gather as much knowledge as possible on this subject as I hope that this stay will give me new perspectives and knowledge of children and horses”.

However Selja is not the only person excited about this new start. The staff of Tunari Equine Centre, our co-partner in this program, was eagerly waiting for new volunteers to get ahead in the project too.

Jackeline Alvarez, the owner and director of the centre, adds on this matter that volunteers are a very important part because thanks to them, they can carry out their job.

“The volunteer gets here, helps us and allows us to keep going on with this job at very low fees. We’re very grateful for all the volunteers that come here. In the future we hope to get more children and more volunteers to work with”.



But neither of them, staff or volunteer, is as enthusiastic as the children that had been waiting for the program to start. The little Mateo, a five-year-old boy with Down syndrome, seems to recognize his old friend Maximito, a gentle brown horse whom he worked with last year; when he sees it again he says, “Hello horsy, I’m back”.

Yes, we’re back!



## Outreach

All those who have been following Projects Abroad in our social media must be aware that we're promoting eco-friendly ideas within the international campaign: Every day is Earth Day.

Here in Bolivia we decided to take words into action and plan our social and outreach activities based on this premise.

We visited a school in Vinto, a country town nearby Cochabamba, and helped to build a new greenhouse made with plastic bottles for the community.



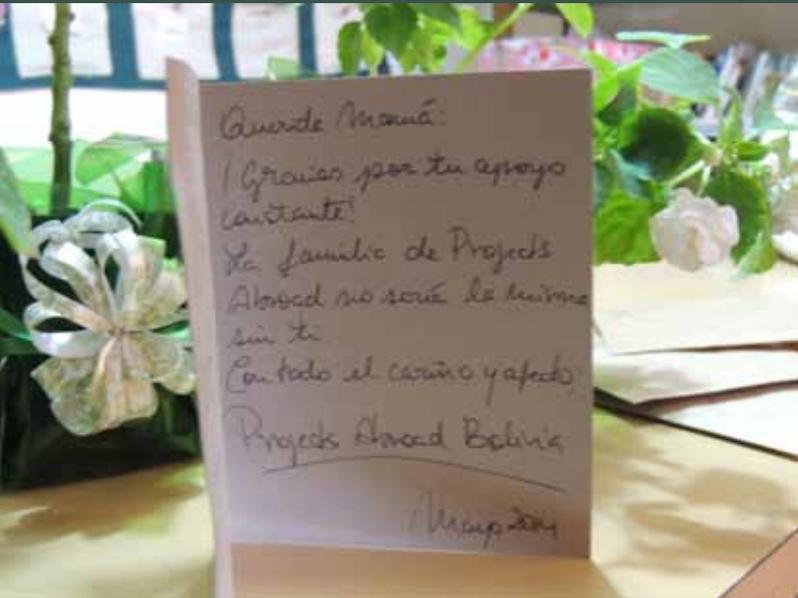


The first phase, cleaning the grounds and a 17 meter wall was completed, and pretty soon we'll return to finish up the work.

Great job guys!



## Photos of the month: Mother's Day



Following the Each Day Is Earth Day Campaign, we gave all our dear host moms an eco-friendly present to commemorate Mother's Day in Bolivia. Each one of our host mums received a small plant and a card made with recycled materials. Who said that you can't find or make a nice eco-friendly present for your mum!

## *Credits*

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Thank you to everyone who has helped bring about this month's issue of the Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Bolivia. If you would like to contribute your experiences, stories, photos or anything else to the next edition then please send them to:  
[bolivia@projects-abroad.org](mailto:bolivia@projects-abroad.org)

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