



Mano a Mano's Center for Ecological Agriculture (CEA) in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

## Background

Bolivia has the **most severe rural poverty rate** in South America. In a country in the midst of a severe drought and considered the **most vulnerable in Latin America to extreme weather events**, rural Bolivians face significant challenges in attaining food security, especially in the vital diversity of nutrients needed. Malnutrition is particularly prevalent in rural areas in Bolivia. Even as the stunting rate dropped from 33% to 16% over the last ten years, **rural areas** still face a stunting rate of **up to 23.7%**, indicative of the continued barriers to accessing nutritious foods. In response to the extreme prevalence of rural poverty, the Plurinational State of Bolivia's 2023-2027 strategic plan focuses on addressing food insecurity through **subsistence farming with climate resiliency and diverse nutritional outcomes**.

## 5 Counterpart Organizations

Mano a Mano partners with Bolivian communities to improve health and strengthen economic wellbeing. It is composed of 5 counterpart organizations focusing on health and education, roads and water, ecological agriculture training, aviation, and international partners.

## The CEA

Mano a Mano's CEA consists of:

- 1) Medical Supply Warehouse** – organize & distribute medical supplies donated from the US to medical centers across Bolivia.



- 2) Physical Therapy** – provide accessible physical therapy sessions to children with cerebral palsy, spastic quadriplegia, Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and more.

- 3) Sustainable Agriculture** – train students & farmers in sustainable practices to improve health, strengthen economic wellbeing, & expand capacity through workshop series.



## Why Mano a Mano?

- **Community-initiated** – all partnerships start with a request from the community, not from Mano a Mano (MaM).
- **Community-sustained** – each project is founded on long-term sustainability led by the community itself.
- **Capacity-building** – all trainings & workshops work to expand the capacity of individuals & communities involved.
- **Reaching the unreached** – partnering with isolated rural communities.

# Project

My project was split into 3 key components. After gaining greater knowledge of the community, context, & organization through 3 weeks devoted purely to hands-on support in MaM's different areas, my project focused on:

## 1) Capacity Expansion

Coming into the project, I set out to expand MaM's capacity, though the best manner was unknown. By responding to direct community & organization requests, the following components were added to my project, expanding both MaM's on-the-ground capacity & improving the communication pipeline with stakeholders.

## 2) Impact Assessment

Mano a Mano was seeking a way to evaluate their workshops & educational programs. By developing the framework for a focus group evaluation, MaM can use these results for measuring workshop impact & feedback for improving workshops.

Focus groups → best contextual & cultural fit

## 3) Sustainable Ag. Innovations

With over 85% of articles on agriculture inaccessible to non-English speakers, Bolivian agronomy students face significant barriers in discovering innovative farming techniques. By presenting & distributing relevant resources, I helped to equip students with knowledge of accessible ways to continue exploring farming innovations.



Published weekly bulletin



Workshops!



Presentation!



Filming educational bee video!



2-pager for students

Innovaciones en la Agricultura Sostenible  
Papas Aeropónicas

## Deliverables

- Started **weekly bulletin** conveying each week's events at the CEA with international audience.
- Designed **brochures** for 1) students visiting the CEA to learn the animals there & 2) producers to learn about hydroponic farming systems.
- Produced a **7-part video series** for students & **3-part video series** for producers.
- Wrote **articles** on events & developed **organizational structure** for tracking all CEA events moving forward.

1. **Completed evaluation** with first-year agronomy students → 10-page report to inform constituents and MaM staff.
2. **Baseline evaluation** for community of llama farmers → foundation for MaM to evaluate after 5 workshops with time for implementation.
3. **Evaluative framework:** with a procedure and framework for data analysis, MaM can now continue workshop evaluations moving forward → imperative for assessing educational programming.

- Researched innovations in sustainable agriculture & organic farming → **presented findings to MaM agricultural engineer staff.**
- Developed & gave **presentations on innovations in sustainable agriculture & aeroponic potatoes** to 1st and 2nd year agronomy students.
- Developed & distributed **2-pager summary & additional resources document** for students to explore.