

Bolivia

Country Overview



Language: Spanish & 36 other indigenous languages

Religion: Roman Catholic (77%), Protestant (16%), other (2%)

Capital: Sucre

Currency: Bolivian boliviano

Government: Republic

President: Evo Morales

Population below poverty line: 39%

Willow Creek Partner: Red Viva

Location: Oruro

Environment: Urban & rural

Want to learn more about Bolivia?

www.willowcreek.org/globalinfo

Background

Bolivia is one of South America's poorest countries, despite their abundance of natural resources. The country's history of economic instability has been accompanied by a history of political instability. After Bolivia gained independence from the Spanish in 1825, there were several dictators that ruled the country and many periods of political unrest. More recently, political leaders have faced difficult challenges of wide-scale poverty, social unrest, and illegal drug production. In 2005, Evo Morales took office as the first president representing the country's indigenous majority, that had suffered centuries of marginalization. Bolivia is unique because of its vibrant indigenous population and culture that makes up two-thirds of the population. Indigenous practices and customs are reflected in Bolivian popular culture, language, and everyday life. The church in Bolivia faces different forms of persecution and scrutiny. Indigenous beliefs are often intertwined with Christian beliefs.

Education & Youth

- ◆ Educational opportunities are among the most unevenly distributed in Latin America; girls, indigenous, and rural children are less likely to be literate or to complete primary school
- ◆ In 2014, the government adopted legislation allowing children as young as 10 to work. 26% of children ages 5-17 are in the labor force and as a result can not attend school
- ◆ Child homelessness is a problem with nearly 10,000 children living on the street

About Willow's Partner: Red Viva

Red viva is a non-profit organization focused on preventative initiatives promoted through local church. Their aim is to equip people with the knowledge and resources to avoid homelessness along with identifying vulnerable children and reunifying them with their families.