

## The Chacha Emprende Project

Country: Bolivia

Nominating University: Princeton University

Gustavo Blanco (Bolivia; Princeton University), Dayana Blanco (Bolivia; Technical University of Oruro),  
Stephanie Guarachi (Bolivia)

Instagram: <https://tinyurl.com/2w9xs8bd> Facebook: <https://tinyurl.com/cramaute>

### SUMMARY

The Chacha Emprende project is the first ever innovative solution to the alarming femicide issue in Bolivia from a man's perspective rather than the traditional woman's one. The project includes a) "New Masculinities" workshops; so the femicide is addressed from a new approach, b) indigenous community values study; as well as c) entrepreneurship skills; therefore, femicides can be addressed by community and entrepreneurship perspectives with men as partners and the ones part of the problem; femicide.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Bolivia's most alarming issue is women's violence or femicide. Bolivia is the fifth country in Latin America with the highest rates of femicide, above more populated countries like Mexico or Brazil (Statista). Statistics present how critical this issue is in Bolivia. Being mining cities in Bolivia, the ones that report the most femicide rates since the provision of goods, security, education, and health services are deficient due to the isolated, rugged geography and deficient road conditions. That is why Oruro, a small mining city, was chosen. Due to these alarming issues, some solutions were implemented. However, the violence against women and femicide rates are alarming and still growing today. A new approach was necessary.

The "Chacha Emprende," project, instead of proposing another project with the women, decided to try the men's perspective. Men in Bolivia are often into many stereotypes, such as going to the military service, not being allowed to cook at home, or always holding the title of the most robust and significant authority in a house. Stereotypes provoke violence against women and society because of the superiority men believe they have. The "New Masculinities" concept proposes that men, willing and conscientiously, leave those stereotypical distinctions changing masculinity based on respect and equal contribution in the house with the women.

Similarly, Chacha Emprende boards the indigenous community vision based on the respect of everyone in the community. A balance in the Aymara community is called the CHACHA – WARMI principle, a value from years ago before colonization in Latin America that distributes equal roles for the Mother and Father of a family. A mother could work on the ground like the father, and he would be cooking likewise. Adding to this, an entrepreneurial component that helps men to be bright thru their initiatives, keeping the respect and community component, thus, collaborating with reducing femicide. We believe we can significantly contribute to gender equality in Bolivia. However, introducing such a new concept, "New Masculinities," to the indigenous participants would challenge keep them motivated and compromise to continue with the project since the necessity to work day-to-day to find their way to subsist after being tremendously hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. That is why the project was not only a learning experience but also an opportunity to start with an entrepreneurship initiative and have the chance to win an initial funding amount. Introducing

this new aspect would make our project broader in goals and very attractive to our goal-public, men. This contributes to the project's success. Then, the "Chacha Emprende" project would provide a unique opportunity for 20 young Indigenous leaders to learn about "New Masculinities" and "Entrepreneurship" through experimental workshops given by experts in the field and with an opportunity to make an impact in their communities.

Oruro has indigenous ascendancy, or that has migrated, like me. We were very optimistic about the public we could reach and also be able to benefit a city in which entrepreneurship has been frozen because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the government's lack of attention. The first step was looking for the most prepared facilitators for "New Masculinities" and the "Entrepreneurship" aspect in Bolivia by creating an application we shared on social media and reached professional networks in the country. We were amazed when we got many applications from professors/recognized activists/successful entrepreneurs. We had to add an interview stage to the application to select the most prepared people for the position. It was tough to select amongst an excellent pool of applicants, but, in the end, we got the best team of facilitators there in the country, and we were ready to find our participants.

In the project's next stage, we had to identify our project participants. For that goal, we created a form application in which we all included questions to identify participants that could be very compromised and eager to learn from the project. In the first two weeks of advertising our projects, we got a meager percentage of applicants that did not meet our expectations, so we had to apply new methods of reaching out to applicants. For example, we used Tik Tok as one of them; Tiktokers have become very popular among youth in Bolivia. We worked with two Tiktokers, who spread the word about our project application, always highlighting that there was no cost associated with being part of it. Using that strategy, we got more applicants than we expected, which was a total success.

After a long and careful selection of the participants for the project, the workshops started with our 20 selected participants, and discussions about "What it means to be men" and what we can do to contribute to gender equality were getting more profound as we had different workshops with different facilitators, who were recognized activist for Women Rights and New Masculinities. There were some challenges along the way too. Some participants did not feel comfortable talking about violence because they had lived experiences like that before. In those moments, being a leader and a confident listener was vital for the project's leading team, which helped the participant navigate the workshop. Being empathetic with their situation, talking with him, providing support, directing them to different resources of counseling in the city, and following up with the participant during and after the project was vital to make every participant feel they were important, listened to, and worthy. Entrepreneurship workshops were a practical experience in which the participants got to learn and apply their learning in conjunction with professors from the most prestigious Universities in Bolivia, such as the "Catholic University San Pablo" They also got to learn from the thriving local entrepreneurs in the Oruro hometown. Every workshop, they would pitch their different ideas of entrepreneurship, designing and improving them each time.

At the last project stage, the participants pitched their ideas for total funding of \$2000. They put all the effort into making a written application and a presentation to successful and experienced entrepreneurs judges. As a natural feeling of pride for the team, we can say we had the most unique entrepreneurial projects proposed for funding. The project awarded first place with \$1K will help marketing in Bolivia not only to be for Spanish speakers but also for Indigenous people through the Aymara and Quechua languages, "OVS Project;" the other awarded project, "One Muxic" will help produce folkloric music at cheaper costs for artists that come from jails and rehabilitation processes. The second place got a \$600 funding shared between "Campito." This project will help Indigenous families provide their agricultural production faster and at a fair price to cities; the project "El Arte de la Cultura" will help the Indigenous community "Urus Tinta Marias"

share their artistic culture attracting tourists through a digital repertory. The last project awarded with \$400 funding will create furniture with recycled material to be bought at a lower price, "Furniture Mechanics." These ideas were developed through the workshops, and some of them were inspired to look for solutions to gender equality and other social issues in Bolivia.

## REFLECTION

At the end of the project, we had a last dinner with the "Chacha Emprnde" cohort. We were so happy to perceive that participants got to make such a beautiful friendship bond among them, hearing them talking about how each other could support the developing of their entrepreneurship projects or talking about opportunities to share what they have learned in their communities. It was a mix of accomplishment feelings for the project's leaders. In the end, many of our participants gave testimonials about the project. Deymar, one of the participants, said that the program had changed his life because of the entrepreneurship project he will start and the "New masculinity" behavior he will start developing in his way. Albin Challgua said that all the workshops, especially the one about the "Chacha Warmi" Indigenous principle, made him value their indigenous roots more, which also inspired him to develop his entrepreneurship project directed to his community's benefit.

Many of our participants asked if there would be future versions of the project to spread the word to other young leaders in their communities. Our answer would always be that we are working on the way to making it a reality once again. Some of our participants volunteered to support the leadership team in the next version, which let us know the participants wanted to give back to the project. We strongly think that we are going to have great results not only from the entrepreneurship projects that are being funded but also because of the "New Masculinities" behavior our participants are going to replicate in their communities. We plan to share the significant impact we already had in this first version and hope to be able to continue with other versions of our project with more collaboration. Looking back, I feel astonished about how time has passed by very fast, and the first version of the "Chacha Emprnde" project has already finished. I created a relationship of mentorship with all the participants that I will miss a lot when returning to college. The definition of peace for me has turned into that hope I have that our participants to be the change agents for new masculinities in their communities. I strongly think that hope can be transformed into reality and mean for many households the avoiding an internal discussion that could derive into violence or new femicide. That possibility, I think, is the one that can bring peace to different communities and maybe be that new solution that is very needed for the Gender Equality issue in Bolivia.

Developing this project was a whole learning experience for me. From identifying some of the patriarchal behaviors, I was involved in learning how to create logistics for an event and coordinate facilitator's/participants schedules. It was a hard job to do, but, as I always answer, I did not get tired of doing it, and I think that realizing that is for me a great way to start thinking about what I want to do professionally during and after college, which thanks to organizing the Chacha Emprnde project, I am sure it will be serving my Indigenous Aymara and Bolivian community.

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

Organizing the Chacha Emprnde project helped me learn that the "New Masculinities" concept can be a new solution to the Gender Equality issue and that youth can be the one that can make it a reality. I am really thankful I got to contribute to peace in my community, a word that has changed its meaning for me into hope and vocation. Hope that because of the impact our participants will make in their communities and vocation for my path to keep serving my Indigenous Bolivia community no matter the distance. Sources: (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1102327/femicide-rate-latin-america-by-country/>)