

The Bolivian School Making Agriculture Pay

Generating enough income from school business activities to provide a free education to your students is a tough challenge - but one which Colonia Piraí in Bolivia has more than conquered. What's more this school has achieved full financial self-sufficiency through agricultural activities alone!

The students come from poor rural backgrounds where typical family income is in the range of \$200-\$600 per year - for a household of up to 20 people! This makes the student's practical, 'learning by doing' education all the more crucial as they are quickly able to apply new farming techniques at home and help support their family while they study.

The school's two main income generating activities are the production of eggs and pork products, both of which operate on an industrial scale. These businesses provide employment for the local community, strengthen the school management's entrepreneurial credentials, and deepen the school's understanding of local markets - both as an employer and vendor.

At school, the students spend the morning getting hands-on experience in all aspects of agribusiness, enhanced by classroom theory in the afternoon.

Central to each student's education is an entrepreneurial community project which they set up and develop throughout their three years at Colonia Piráí. These projects spread new ideas and innovative agricultural techniques among local farmers and adding value to the local economy.

Each year graduating students take the skills they learnt at Colonia Piráí and set up their own agricultural enterprise or are employed in agribusiness as technicians and middle managers. Some even go on to further study at university - an incredible achievement when you consider that without Colonia Piráí they wouldn't have been able to even make it to high school!