



# SACHA - Aula Forestal

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## Progress Report May 2024



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The SACHA<sup>1</sup> is a social project that emerged in response and as a mitigation strategy with the vision of: **“Inspiring a sense of belonging for everyone that visits or lives near natural sanctuaries”**.

The project aims to provide a nature based educational experience to foster conservation values, get a better understanding of the ecosystem and lead a behavioral change from an early age. As part of this initiative a four-month pilot project was designed to implement outdoor environmental education for children from marginal schools in Bolivia, aligned with SDG 4, 12 and 13.

Additionally, and to further contribute to the sustainable development efforts of our local partners in the region, the project hosted the program in strategic locations:

- Mollesnejta–Andean Agroforestry investigation center
- Ecological farm Polen

### **Relationship between the project and the SDGs:**

The project SACHA targets the SDGs: 4. Quality education and 12 Sustainable consumption & production and 13 Climate action.



The project works promoting a participative, respectful and outdoor environmental education with a current context to children between 8-10 years old from the city of Cochabamba. The pilot phase was focused on children from families that don't have the financial resources to participate in such programs.



The outdoor environmental education that the project promotes is based on sustainable food production and consumption that are offered taking into account the characteristics of the region and the current situation of the region.



The project aims to contribute as a mitigation strategy by raising awareness from early ages and strengthening resilience to the effect of climate change, conservation of natural resources and getting a better understanding of the local surroundings by offering a program where children can reconnect with nature.

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<sup>1</sup> SACH'A word in Quechua (one native language from Bolivia) for tree.



## 1. Timeline and Key Milestones

For 8 months at the International Sustainability Academy fellowship, SACHA project was developed and gained new insight on how to approach the activities, working on a business model and participating in various workshops that enhance the skill needed to coordinate the project.

In October 2023 we had a first online meeting with the Weltweit coordinator and February 2023 received the news of the funding. The project implementation started in March 2024 with a month for preparation. April, May and June 2024 were destined to execute the outdoor environmental program with the children.

Activities	2023			2024					
	Oct	Nov	Dic	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Raise Funding									
Preparation on-site									
Implementation-milestone 1									
Promotion material-milestone 2									
Partner enriching- milestone 3									
Phase II launching-milestone 4									

The milestones are as follow:

Project milestones	Indicators achieved until May 2024
1. Outdoor environmental education program was offered to six rural/public schools in the city of Cochabamba.	<b>503 children</b> between 8 to 10 years old from <b>six rural schools</b> have participated from a nature based education at out two partner locations.
2. Project promotion and awareness material about forest conservation and sustainable production & consumptions has been created.	Communication material has been created: 2.1 Picture compilation for each school. 2.2 Final video of four-months pilot project <b>(in process)</b> . 2.3 Creation of Social Media platforms: web pages, Instagram, LinkedIn for SACHA.
3. Partner locations gained more visibility within the society and have enriched their sites. Restoration practices at the local partner Mollesnejta have been done.	3.1 Local partners have been featured on the project social media for each visit received from school. 3.2 Local partners improved safety and established suitable spaces to facilitate children's outdoor environmental education. 3.3 Creation of material for the launching of a forest museum at the Mollesnejta Center <b>(in process)</b> .
4. Project SACHA Phase II "Corporate program" has been launched. <b>(in process)</b> .	4.1 One trial of the corporate program has been done. 4.2 Potential companies have been visited and the booklet with offers has been presented to them. 4.3 Three private schools have been contacted.



## 2. Tasks

**Activity 1:** Meeting school's principals

**Objective of the activity:** presenting the project to the selected school.

**Methodology:**

1. Creation of potential schools list made during the ISA fellowship.
2. Preparation of personalized documents for each schools that contained:
  - A formal invitation letter.
  - Page with the project objectives and education subjects.
  - A recommendation letter from ISA translated in Spanish.
  - A schedule of what the day would look like.
  - A responsibility agreement for both sides.
3. Visit schools and meet with the principal.
4. Small description of the project.
5. Fixing of visit dates that comprises two dates: one at school and second for the visit to our partner locations.
6. Signing of the agreement.

*First school Avelino Merida at Vinto Cochabamba Bolivia*



*Meeting with the principal and signature of the agreement []*



*Documents given to principals*





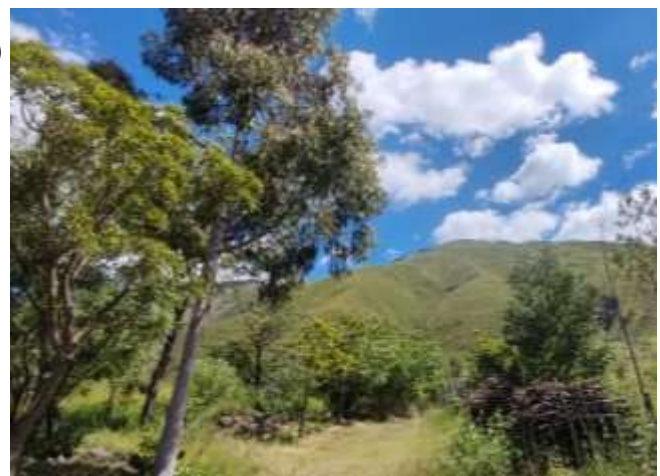
**Activity 2:** Visiting the local partners and physical meetings with the SACHA team.

**Objective of the activity:** To look at the sites and decide where the dynamics would take place, what improvements needed to be done in order to be a safe place.

**Methodology:**

1. Tree separated meetings with members of the Team to socialize their time availability and the level of involvement (Communication officer and two facilitators).
2. Four team meetings and three location visits as a team.
3. Preparation of site for the program: grass cutting, improving the walking paths, finding a proper snack area and marking the road to the toilet, cutting hazards.

Visiting the sites: Mollesnejta (Month of March)





**Activity 3:** Physical creation of toolkits for both sites.

**Objective of the activity:** based on the sites, the schedule and the subjects to address, the dynamics and toolkits were developed.

**Methodology:**

1. Creation of initial toolkits during the ISA fellowship.
2. Adaptation of the initial toolkit ideas based on the current characteristics of the local partners.
3. Buying of the necessary material.
4. Creation of a document for every dynamic and making of the toolkit

Toolkit for Forest Functions (Find in annexes the description of both toolkits)

*National Park Tunari Animals*



*Trees from the region*



*Water cycle and soil erosion experiment*



*Forest provisioning (wood puzzle)*





*Introduction to 3R and trash separation game*



*Photosynthesis game*



#### **Activity 4: Day at the school**

**Objective of the activity:** Visit to each class to introduce the project SACHA and give an introduction to the conservation of natural resources and to give them an importation of how to be prepared for the visit.

#### **Methodology:**

1. Introduction of the project objectives.
2. Game to address conservation of natural resources.
3. Video of the climate changes with satellite images from Bolivia and the region.
4. Giving a small paper with important information about the visit for their parents.
  - Where the project is held and what it covers.
  - What children would do.
  - Time bus is picking up and bringing back children.
  - How to be prepared for the day (hat, water bottle, sport cloth and closed shoes)





#### **Activity 4:** Day at the partner location

**Objective of the activity:** depending on the partner location we address: Forest functions of sustainable food consumption and production.

#### **Methodology**

##### **Sustainable food consumption and production - Polen Farm**

8:00 Arrival of bus at school  
8:30 Start of program - Introduction and rules  
9:00 Tour of 7 farm stations  
10:30 Refreshments  
11:00 Scavenger Hunt  
11:50 Planting a future and reflection  
12:00 End of program  
12:20 Arrival to school

##### **Forest functions – Mollesnejta**

8:00 Arrival of bus at school  
8:30 Start of program - Introduction and rules  
9:00 Tour to five stations in the center  
10:30 Refreshments  
11:15 photosynthesis game  
11:50 Small walk to animals and reflection  
12:00 End of program  
12:20 Arrival to school

#### *Polen farm*







*Mollesnejta center*





### 3. Stakeholder's participation/Impact

Distrital education departments: In order to approach the schools it was needed to initially approach the Distrital education departments from the two regions (Vinto and Quillacollo) where the project has been implemented. This department is the main instance and has all the school information from their region. We present the project to the authority and for their approval to visit the list of schools selected. It was a positive encounter as they were happy to let us offer that opportunity to the schools of the region and to further collaborate with the promotion of our activities.

Schools: The project worked with six rural schools:

Partner location: Mollesnejta

- UE Avelino Merida
- UE Combujo
- UE Anocaraire
- UE Melcho cuadros

Partner location: Polen

- UE Nuestra Senora de Altagracia
- UE Arturo Quiton



Children from 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and sometimes 6<sup>th</sup> grade: benefit from outdoor education. On that day the class moved to the forest or the farm. Most of the children lived close by the locations with a similar surrounding and the same environmental straggles. Some of their parents are farmers and share their experiences with their farm animals and crops. By introducing different subjects regarding soil protection or trash selection, children could relate to their daily life and came up with interesting questions such as: Is it okay that my grandparents burn the plants they don't like?

Partner locations: Our partner locations (Mollesnejta center and farm Polen) benefit from the program as the project rents the spaces receiving a fee for each participant. Also before the program started in the month of March some renovations were done to prepare the sites to be children friendly free from hazards.

The project also contacted two different partner locations both in the city of Cochabamba (Mizque and Yungas Pampa) to try the toolkits in other regions, one of them already confirmed their participation.

Companies: As part of the financial sustainability the project will launch in the month of June one corporate program. Which will try the team building activities selected with the Hamburg University Students. The project gives the opportunity to the company to support the outdoor environmental education for children from rural schools and enjoy a forest or farm day at our partner locations.

#### **4. Results**

Until May the project had the following results:

- Contact with two detrital departments form the city of Cochabamba.
- Six rural schools contacted
- 503 children went through the program in our different locations.
- Development of two toolkits that can be easily adapted to other similar sites.
- Educational material developed.
- Social media platforms created.
- 3 facilitators trained.
- Local partners enhance their visibility.
- Partnership with local business for the refreshments.
- Selection of three grants to apply.

Waiting for their response:

- Three private schools contacted
- One company contacted.
- Forest pedagogics congress 2024 might show the implementation video at their event.



## **5. Challenges and lessons learned**

The project found a fund from the Stiftung Ursula Merz in collaboration with the action network and the Weltweit E.v. which allowed the implementation of a four-month pilot project. The project is on its third month and we have covered most of the milestones proposed however some modifications to the initial plan were made:

- a. Duration of the program with schools: Initially the program was proposed for 4 days however asking the schools for 3 days was not feasible. The program was reduced to two days – one day at school for a workshop of one hour and a second day of the visit.
- b. The project also thought of taking the same schools to both locations however the distance from one place to the other turned out to be too far and resulted as a not environmentally friendly and time-efficient idea – we selected the schools from the regions where our location partners are and took them to the closest location.
- c. The Project had a budget for the restoration of the burned sites at the Mollesnejta center which was carefully discussed with the partner and as currently the season is not favorable to plant trees (dry season) we jointly decided to use that budget to create material for the first interactive forest museum. The idea is to support the center giving another source of income and at the same time the possibility for visitors to know about the 27 years of work on soil and forest restoration, forest fire resilience and benefits of agroforestry. The project is helping to create the following interactive information stations:
  - Timeline of the history of the site with pictures of before and after.
  - Two interactive and mobile “banners” that show the benefits of agroforestry.
  - A location to show the most relevant investigations of international and national students that did their research in the center.

## **6. What are the activities still to be done?**

The short-term activities SACHA has been:

- Finish filling the documents to start the SACHA Foundation that way the application of funds can be managed.
- Meanwhile we have already started offering the program to private schools that can pay a fee for the program and also giving them the opportunity to support children from low-income families. Waiting response to the 3 schools contacted.
- Launching the cooperative program for at least one company.
- Offering the program to three orphanages.

The long-term activities are:

- Expanding the scope to different ages and locations.
- Keep improving the interactive forest museum at the Mollesnejta center.
- Apply for a 2-year grant with the Global Fund for Children.