



# Franciscan Social Center

## Funding Lunches for the Poor

— Cochabamba, Bolivia —



Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full.

PROVERBS 19:17



## Executive Summary

### Description

This project will provide needy families with three lunches a week. In 2019, Bolivia's poverty rate was 37%, and the coronavirus pandemic has only made the situation more challenging. Many Bolivians have lost their jobs, and as a result, a troubling number of adults and children are becoming seriously undernourished. A team of about 20-27 volunteers at the Franciscan Social Center want to address this local hardship by providing hot lunches for the poor, but they are struggling to keep their kitchen suitably stocked (especially with meat). This project will help meet their needs and empower the Franciscan Social Center to better serve its community.

### Purpose

To provide essential nourishment to the poor in Cochabamba in a communal setting where they feel welcomed and loved.

### Location

Cochabamba, Bolivia

### Cost

**\$6,000** will cover the cost of dry goods and meat for a year, as well as contribute to the salary of the project coordinator of the Center.



*Albina depends on the Franciscan Social Center for its nutritious lunches.*

For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things.

PSALM 107:9



## The Need



*Some of the Center's beneficiaries receiving hot meals.*

Bolivia is one of the poorest nations in South America, and its extreme level of poverty, coupled with inadequate educational opportunities, threatens to bind future generations to this same life of hardships.

The story of Miriam Saldaña Hidalgo, a 55-year-old woman with a mild cognitive disability who lives on the streets, exemplifies the human impact of this poverty. For more than a decade, she has struggled to survive in the urban jungle of Cochabamba, feeling isolated and alone in a city of more than half a million people. When night falls, Miriam has nowhere to lay her head because all of the shelters she seeks help from are only available to men, leaving her to fend for herself in the darkened streets.

Were it not for the Franciscan Social Center, a ministry within Cochabamba that provides meals to needy families, the poor woman would literally have nowhere else

to turn for support. Its programs — if they remain sustained by Catholic donors in the U.S. — offer her the only hope and opportunity for restoration the city provides.

One of the goals of the Franciscan Social Center is to provide hot lunches three days a week, so struggling individuals like Miriam and local families with limited resources can receive the nutrition they need to survive. While these meals are an obvious benefit to Miriam, the goal of the mission is actually to provide much more than bodily sustenance. Its staff is aware of the isolation and despair many poor Bolivians are facing, and it wants to provide them with a welcoming, loving embrace - an escape from the hardships of life and a chance to experience the warmth and compassion of Christ.

Your support of the Franciscan Social Center will play a critical role in empowering the ministry and extending its merciful outreaches.

**We believe that God, the Father of the poor, has led Cross Catholic Outreach to help support the Franciscan Social Center, and with your generous donation, we can ensure Miriam and others who struggle with hunger will receive the life-giving nourishment they deserve.**



## Give Generously to Restore Lost Hope

Hundreds of people in Cochabamba are struggling with hunger and are searching for compassionate support as they work through the trials in their lives. For parents trapped in this poverty, the needs of their children also weigh heavily on their hearts. They know their sons and daughters face serious health risks if their hunger pains escalate to full-blown malnutrition, a condition that can stunt growth, severely weaken the immune systems and lead to early death.

Thankfully, Catholic leaders in Bolivia are aware of the poor’s hopelessness and despair, and through loving missions like the Franciscan Social Center, they are seeking ways to provide relief.

While the Center has been trying to enlist more help from the city’s supermarkets to secure the food supplies it needs (especially meat), it is also coming to Cross Catholic Outreach and generous donors like you for help. Together, we can ensure the Center is able to put food on the table and continue nourishing “hungry” souls.

Beyond the tangible benefits this will provide to the poor, your gift of support will be a huge encouragement to the staff and volunteers who serve at the Franciscan Social Center - dedicated men and women who have taken up Christ’s call to “love their neighbor” by serving these Bolivian brothers and sisters in their hour of need.

*Please, give generously to put food on the table and to bless those who need it most.  
Your compassion and sacrifice will make a difference!*

### Our Mission

We mobilize the global Catholic Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ.

### Good Stewardship

We consider every gift we receive as a precious resource from God. We direct every donation to its intended project, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to an industry low. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our ministry partners in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach. These detailed accountability measures have earned us ongoing accreditation by the following organizations:



The Chronicle of Philanthropy  
*The nonprofit world's No. 1 news source*

### Our Promise to You!

Donations from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred through June 30, 2023, the close of our ministry’s fiscal year. In the event that more funds are raised than needed to fully fund the project, the excess funds, if any, will be used to meet the most urgent needs of the ministry.

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