

Bolivian Quaker Education Fund

History

BQEF grew from two distinct roots. One is the long missionary work of Northwest and Central (Indiana) Yearly Meetings, through which evangelical Quakerism grew in Bolivia, starting in 1920, to approximately 30,000 Bolivian Friends today.

The other is the Quaker Study Tour series, beginning in 1995 with British Friends led by Pam and Ken Barratt, through which numerous liberal Quakers from the UK and US became acquainted with Bolivia and Friends there. BQEF sprouted from these roots in 2001 when Newton Garver of Buffalo Meeting and Bernabé Yujra (now BQEF's Coordinator in La Paz) entered into substantial discussions about how to improve educational opportunities for young Bolivian Friends.

Purposes and Objectives

The primary purpose of BQEF is to strengthen ties between Andean Quakers and those of North America and Europe. This is done through programs that:

- Enhance the educational opportunities of Andean Friends
- Nurture their service work
- Bring apprentice teachers to work in North American and European Quaker institutions and visit with Friends during Quaker gatherings and meetings
- Bring this work to the attention of Friends in North America and Europe

Functions and Activities

At the organizational level, BQEF seeks to:

- Explain to interested people in the US and Europe the aspirations and circumstances of Bolivian Quakers
- Work with Bolivian Quaker leaders to devise specific practical programs that will help realize their aspirations
- Raise funds to implement these programs

Organization and Method of Appointment

BQEF is a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) Federal IRS status. BQEF has an independent Board of Directors, Officers, and paid workers to manage the day-to-day operations both in the U.S. and in Bolivia. The organization is not a committee of New York Yearly Meeting or under the care of any member meeting of NYYM, but given its origins with considerable support from members of the Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting funds, the Yearly Meeting does appoint, through the usual nominating process, a representative to BQEF with an expectation that this representative will be a member of the BQEF Board.

The functions of the Yearly Meeting representative are to serve as a liaison with BQEF, write a yearly Advance Report, serve on Witness Coordinating Committee, and generally inform the yearly meeting about BQEF's activities and programs.

Meeting Times and Places

The BQEF Board meets by phone conference every other month, with the additional intention to hold a Board retreat at least once per year at some designated location. Board members also serve on committees that meet as needed.

Finances

BQEF appreciates being among the Friends organizations supported by the Sharing Fund. The bulk of BQEF's funding comes from individual donations and responses to the organization's fundraising activities.