Despite Bolivia’s history of providing social programs for older adults, these programs are challenged by typical problems of access, particularly relating to the urban-rural divide and shifting networks of care. Location plays a large role in the lived experience of older age. Those living in rural areas are often isolated without knowledge of the resources available to them and face dwindling support from their communities and families. However, an active civil society and an organized population of older persons hold potential for improving equity in the future.

### Demographic

The share of the population aged 65 and older will more than double from 9% to 20% in 2022-50.

### Informal employment

The majority of workers are employed informally, who do not have secure employment contracts or workers’ benefits.

### Income inequality

The income inequality is higher than both the averages for lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) and high-income countries (HICs).

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**Ecosystem for equitable healthy aging:**

**Public institutions**

- **Health financial protection:** The government provides basic health insurance for older adults aged 60 and over through a limited policy enacted in the early 2000s.
- **Social protection:** Bolivia has a long history of providing economic programs to support both its poor and older populations—dating back to the social and economic reforms implemented by the government during the 1990s. These include a universal non-contributory pension program along with a contributory pension program. Official statistics suggest that these programs reach all older adults in the country.

Even so, despite the existence of economic programs aimed at alleviating poverty, older adults often lack the relevant documents (such as identification), which complicates access.

**Legislative and policy landscape for aging**

- **Aging policy:** The rights of older persons are enshrined in the constitution, an autonomous area, and the General Law on Older Persons, enacted in 2002, aims to regulate and promote the rights, guarantees, and duties of persons aged over 60. There is also a government agency where persons can raise complaints pertaining to rights violations or abandonment.

**Age-friendly society**

- **Civil society:** There is evidence of active civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bolivia advocating for older persons. During the pandemic, an “adapt a grandparent” campaign paired young neighbors with older Bolivians who needed support such as obtaining food and collecting aid packages sent to them by the government.

Other NGOs have worked to reduce poverty and increase the visibility and representation of older persons. Despite only representing a small percentage of the current population, and struggling to be heard on a national level, older adults in Bolivia have set up advocacy organizations and very lobby the government.

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**Methodology:** As part of the ARC 4.0 initiative, Economist Impact employed a technique to evaluate the ecosystem for achieving equitable healthy aging in 80 countries based on Kurt Lewin’s force field analysis. This approach compares forces that either promote or resist change, allowing for analysis of factors that may not be readily comparable within and across all countries. Building on our desk research and supplemented by expert interviews, we outline the forces that enable and hamper aging equity. We then conduct a qualitative assessment to score their relative strength on a scale from 1 (“weak”) to 4 (“strong”).

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Sources: IF, International Labour Organization, UN, World Inequality Database, Economist Impact.