

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

ARGENTINA: SOCIAL CRISIS

25 June 2003

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Appeal No. 08/02: launched on 10 April 2002 for CHF 1,824,000 for four months for 52,000 beneficiaries; budget revised to CHF 1,447,374 and appeal extended to 31 July 2003.

Operations Update No. 5; Period covered: 14 April – 11 June 2003; Last Update: No. 4; 6 May 2003; Next Update expected: June 2003.

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: 100%; see the attached list of contributions for details.

Related Appeals: 01.51/2003 South America

Outstanding needs: None

Summary: The Argentine Red Cross (ARC) is providing some 18,542 children and 1,316 senior citizens with supplementary breakfasts, hot meals and snacks. Almost 500 ARC volunteers are distributing supplementary food rations to a total of 19,858 children and senior citizens in 11 provinces. To date, ARC has distributed 150,000 kg of food to 190 community soup kitchens and senior citizen's homes. At the end of April, devastating floods hit the province of Santa Fe. In April, the ARC responded immediately to the needs of hundreds of thousands of people sheltered in evacuees' centres, with unprecedented support from all the Society's branches. The Federation has supported this operation since the beginning of the emergency, and launched an international appeal to provide relief assistance, medical coverage and psychological assistance to 8,000 persons for three months. The Society's process of moving from emergency operations to development activities has already begun, and by the time the operation is complete, the ARC will have submitted development proposals to potential funding partners. Donors are therefore strongly encouraged to support this process through contributing to the Federation's Annual Appeal for South America (01.51/2003).



Operational Developments

Despite recent improvements in macroeconomic trends, the overall situation in Argentina continues to be particularly severe. Nutritional problems among the most vulnerable remain in both central and northern provinces, where basic health services are difficult to obtain due to lack of medicines and equipment. Even with differences among the provinces, living conditions in assisted communities are extremely precarious. In most of the cases: lack of basic infrastructures, precarious hygiene conditions, and unemployment are the common basis of this structural crisis, where the solution remains far from being identified (*to the left, ARC Volunteers delivering food items*).

The operation's plan of action is being implemented in all its components, and new areas of intervention were identified in the field of water and sanitation in northern provinces.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Almost 500 volunteers are distributing supplementary food rations to a total of 19,858 children and senior citizens in 11 provinces, in accordance with the SPHERE Project standards. The ARC is using its warehouses in Buenos Aires, Tucuman and Corrientes to reach branches in the central, north western, and northeastern provinces of the country. Warehouses receive stocks every second month, and deliver the stock to branches on a regular basis. The ARC headquarters is providing warehouses with the second round of stock, which is scheduled to reach the branches in the coming days.

In April, the first supply of medicine, and health and sanitary equipment was delivered to the 32 primary health centers (CAPS) involved in the plan of action, while the second supply of medicines will be delivered at the end of June. The CAPS attend to 36 northern communities.

Volunteers from northern branches participate in educational activities and workshops on basic health and nutrition issues. Four out of a total of five modules have been realized to date. Sensitization meetings are held with soup kitchen staff and local community health promoters, while volunteers, students from ARC nursery schools, and doctors from the CAPS participate in medical and nutrition controls in the communities.

During its visit to northern provinces, the coordination team from the ARC headquarters in Buenos Aires worked with branches in the fields of food assistance, health, water and sanitation, administration, logistics and education. The trip provided an opportunity to evaluate the activities carried out so far, and to visit communities, soup kitchens and health centres. New activities were identified in the area of water and sanitation in all of the provinces. The Federation reporting delegate and ARC communications and marketing officers participated on the trip to work on the visibility of the operation with branch representatives.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society

During the reporting period, the ARC responded to devastating flooding in the Santa Fe province, which occurred on 28 April. Volunteers from all over the country participated in the coordination and provision of humanitarian assistance to flood victims, which strengthened the ties among branches. Almost 7,000 volunteers participated in the process of collecting, cataloguing and stocking thousands of tons of relief and food items donated by the population, while almost 1,000 volunteers have been working in the province since April.

The Federation supported this process with personnel both in Santa Fe and in Buenos Aires, and an appeal was launched on 6 May to assist 8,000 persons for three months.

The coordination team for the plan of action is composed of a project coordinator, a health consultant, a finance officer, a logistics officer and an assistant. The Federation health and reporting delegates are also part of the team.

On 10 June the ARC, one of the oldest National Societies, celebrated its 123rd anniversary in all its branches and the communities in which it is working.

Objectives, activities and results

In addition to the northern provinces, where the plan of action is being implemented (with funding from the Italian Agency for Development), food distribution is taking place in central Argentine provinces with funding from the British and Japanese Red Cross Societies, and the Swedish government. The revised plan of action added activities such as supplementary food assistance, medicine, and health promotion and education activities in seven northern provinces thanks to contributions from the Italian Agency for Development.

All the components of the project are being implemented, and new activities were identified during a field trip made by the coordination staff to the northern branches.

Relief distribution of food and basic non-food items

One thousand five hundred beneficiaries in the central provinces of: Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Mendoza and La Pampa are receiving food assistance through six ARC branches, and the ARC headquarters in Buenos Aires. Distribution of food items to the northern provinces under the revised plan of action started at the end of March 2003. The branches of Tucumán and Corrientes are collecting the stocks in their warehouses and delivering them to Rosario de la Frontera and Salta (Tucumán) and Formosa, Resistencia, Posadas and Mercedes (Corrientes). A new warehouse was identified in the city of Salta, which also covers the needs of Jujuy.

Objective 1: Improve the nutrition of 19,858 children and senior citizens who are living in extreme poverty and are utilizing the services of the community soup kitchens and/or senior citizens' homes in the target region.

To date, 150,000 kg of food has been distributed to 190 community soup kitchens and senior citizen's homes. A second delivery of food items under the revised plan of action is now reaching the regional warehouses, from which it will be distributed to the branches and then to the soup kitchens and senior citizen's homes. The stock provided is intended to cover a period of two months. Food items delivered to soup kitchens and senior citizen's homes under the revised appeal, to date:

Item	Quantity
Rice	19,848 Kg
Oil	4,962 Lt
Soup base	1,191 Kg
Pasta	29,772 Kg
Wheat flour	14,886 Kg
Maize flour	14,886 Kg
Soya beans	9,924 Kg
Canned peas	14,886 Kg
Salt	2,481 Kg
Tomato paste	14,886 Kg
Sugar	5,204 Kg
Cocoa powder	2,602 Kg
Powder milk	15,091 Kg
Yerba mate (tea)	7,806 Kg

The nutritional content of the packages is designed to meet SPHERE standards, and takes into account local dietary habits, utilizing local suppliers and ensuring consistency with Federation purchasing procedures.

Some 18,542 children and 1,316 senior citizens are receiving supplementary breakfasts, hot meals and snacks according to their needs. The distribution of soup kitchens and senior citizen's homes per branch is as follows:

Branch	Soup kitchens/ seniors' homes
Resistencia (*)	32
Corrientes (*)	48
Formosa (*)	22
Posadas (*)	14
Mercedes (*)	5
Rosario de la Frontera (*)	6
Tucumán (*)	19
Salta (includes Jujuy) (*)	28
Buenos Aires (°)	4
La Pampa (°)	2
Córdoba (°)	2
Mendoza (°)	8
TOTAL	190

The second phase of the "Cruzada Proniños y Prononos", (Crusade for Children and Grandparents) providing food relief, was implemented thanks to funds provided by the Spanish Red Cross. This project is assisting a total of 12,333 children and senior citizens in ten provinces of northern and central Argentina.

Health and care

Health and hygiene conditions in northern Argentina continue to be hampered by widespread poverty and the lack of means of local public institutions. With the winter approaching, risk of contracting seasonal diseases such as pneumonia, fever and bronchitis affects a vast part of the population, who are already threatened by endemic health problems, such as hepatitis, scabies and parasites.

Volunteers are working inside the communities together with primary health centers (CAPS) staff and ARC nursing and paramedic schools' students. Activities carried out include provision of medicines and medical equipment to the CAPS, and awareness-raising activities and training events with the population.

The seven northern provinces, in which eight branches operate, are:

North west:	North east:
Salta (branches of Salta and Rosario de la Frontera)	Corrientes (branches of Corrientes and Mercedes)
Jujuy (covered by the branch of Salta)	Chaco (branch of Resistencia)
Tucumán (branch of Tucumán)	Formosa (branch of Formosa)
	Misiones (branch of Posadas)

Objective 1: Improve the situation of 62,500 people in 36 target communities through a community based health promotion and disease prevention programme.

The health promotion and disease prevention programme is made up of two components: 1) training and 2) community/home visits.

Training:

All northern ARC branches are involved in workshops and training activities for volunteers and four out of five modules have already been followed. The final module about HIV/AIDS and blood donation will be realized before the end of June. At the end of the course, participants will receive a certificate of attendance.

One hundred and fifty persons are attending this training of trainer's course, and after every module they are able to inform community health promoters, soup kitchen and senior citizens' homes' staff and children's parents on key health related issues such as:

- nutrition.
- the food pyramid.
- hygiene.
- water and sanitation.
- waste water disposal.
- poverty and climate-related disease.
- family planning.
- HIV/AIDS
- blood donation.

Community/home visits:

ARC volunteers and nurses are working in schools and soup kitchens monitoring children's nutritional status, weight and height in cooperation with local health authorities. Awareness-raising meetings with local community health promoters, families and staff from the soup kitchens are also being held.



ARC volunteers and Nursery School students monitor the weight of children in Tucumán.

At the community level, volunteers are conducting a broader analysis, which includes the families of the primary beneficiaries, according to a framework developed by Federation and ARC health representatives.

This framework is used to identify existing health problems among the population, and to verify the impact of the intervention. It analyzes population distribution according to age, gender, occupation, school level, chronic and transmittable diseases, and hygiene and epidemiological aspects, with a special emphasis on children and pregnant women. The same format is also a useful tool for developing a health strategy, which accounts for variations among the individual communities.

Objective 2: Improve access to basic medicines through the provision of determined items to primary health care centres located in 36 target communities.

This plan of action implies three deliveries of medicines to the 32 primary health centres involved. The first one occurred during April, while the next one is scheduled for the end of July.

The items distributed so far in the medicine kit are:

MEDICINE KITS	
Item	Quantity
Iron + folic acid	25,600 cps
Iron (liquid)	2,560 doses
Anti parasite (liquid)	3,200 doses
Anti parasite	19,200 cps
Rehydration salts	6,400 packs

A unique delivery of sanitary items to primary health centres was made on the occasion of the first delivery of medicine. The distributed items included:

SANITARY KITS	
ITEM	Quantity
Gloves	1,900 pairs
Alcohol (500 ml)	19 bottles
Distilled water	19 bottles
Tongue depressors	1,900 units
Gauze	2,120 units
Physiological solution	19 bottles
Potablezator	36 units
Adhesive tape	950 units
Scissors	19 units
Stethoscope and blood pressure kit	19 units
Weight scale with height measurement	19 units
Infant scale	19 units
Thermometer	19 units
Tensiometer	19 units
Rehydration salts	19,000 units
Disinfectant	19 units

The Spanish Red Cross and the Municipality of Madrid are financing the delivery of basic hygiene items and medicines to 16 hospitals and two health centres in Tucumán, Salta and Santiago del Estero provinces. Forty soup kitchens in the same provinces are benefiting from a donation of 229 hygiene kits, and sixty ARC volunteers are being trained about childhood diseases.



Rubbish is spread on streets in where children play (Salta).

With children spending most of their time outdoors, the problem of rubbish in the streets is very serious, as there are high health risks associated with these conditions.

It should be noted that some communities are more conscious about hygiene and sanitation issues than others, in which hygiene promotion and sensitization is urgently needed. This component of the plan of action is now in the drafting and budgeting phase.

Coordination

Meetings are held on a regular basis with national institutions and international organizations, both at the central and local levels. Relations have been strengthened at the central level with the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNDP. The Federation's sub-regional office in Buenos Aires is working closely with the ARC in developing its network of contacts. ARC branches work closely with municipalities and local health institutions, and coordination meetings are organized with soup kitchens and health centres' staff.

A 15 day visit to northern ARC branches was organized between the month of May and June, in order to plan and coordinate the necessary activities to implement the project.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement - Principles and Initiatives

- The operation in Argentina responds to the needs of the most vulnerable affected by the social crisis in the country.
- Diversity and gender issues were fully taken into account while defining the beneficiary criteria.
- The operation includes many activities, which are carried out through partnerships with governmental authorities, international, national and local organizations.
- Every training course given to the volunteers and the beneficiaries has an introductory Red Cross module.

National Society Capacity Building

The ARC is currently involved in a major process of structural reform and reorganization, implemented with funding granted through the Federation's Capacity Building Fund (CBF). The strategic plan 2003-2007 was drafted and will be discussed by a special assembly in the month of August. A new project cycle management plan and an electronic project database were also introduced as a part of the modernization process.

The flooding of Santa Fe province at the end of April acted as a catalyst for cooperation and solidarity among ARC branches, as well as with public institutions and habitual partners. Federation delegates and ARC staff trained volunteers in PAHO's SUMA procedures for stocking and logistical dispositions, disaster response courses

Objective 3: Improve the health situation of the 36 target communities through water and sanitation activities.

New projects were identified in the domain of water and sanitation in cooperation with beneficiaries' communities. Among the new activities are: the provision of pipelines and water tanks to soup kitchens which do not have enough stocking facilities, and the improvement of the garbage collection system in depressed areas through dust bin networks.

are being held and a PAHO delegate is now working with the National Society in order to implement its relief strategy.

The Federation is also supporting the ARC communications department in the implementation and reorganization of its long distance learning programme for communicators, intended to train ARC volunteers from the branches and the headquarters in media and communications issues.

Federation Delegation

The Federation's sub-regional office for South America based in Buenos Aires is working closely with the Argentine Red Cross on all aspects of this appeal and in other local activities. Meetings are held regularly with staff, donors, local authorities and humanitarian actors. Staff from the Federation Panama based Pan American Disaster Reduction Unit (PADRU), and Lima based Regional Delegation temporarily joined the Federation sub-regional office in order to organize the response to the floods in Santa Fe.

A new coordinator for the sub-regional office arrived in early June. The staff also includes a youth officer, an information officer, a finance officer, a disaster prevention officer, a health delegate and a reporting delegate. A PADRU Relief delegate joined the staff in order to follow the evolution of the operation for Santa Fe and help the National Society with implementing its relief strategy.

Advocacy/Public Information

ARC branches, soup kitchens, seniors' homes and health centres were provided with branded items in order to improve the visibility of the project and its actors. Items include flags, stickers, t-shirts, caps and jackets. Different activities are carried out both at the branch and headquarters level in order to promote the image of the ARC, the Federation and the donors.

During the period covered by this appeal, contacts with press, television stations and radio stations have continuously increased. There was good media coverage of the visit of the Federation's Secretary General to Chaco and Corrientes on 29 and 30 of April, while a press conference with the Italian Embassy took place in Buenos Aires on 8 May, International Day of the Red Cross.

A series of benefit concerts took place around the country to collect funds for ARC activities assisting the Santa Fe flood victims. Some 7,000 spectators attended the largest of the concerts in Buenos Aires. National pop stars demonstrated solidarity and support for the beneficiaries before the media. Around USD 18,000 was collected on that occasion, and the proceeds were used to buy mattresses, blankets and other relief goods for thousands of beneficiaries.

The coordinator of the plan of action and the person in charge of ARC communication and marketing services were interviewed in Posadas by local media during a field visit to the branches involved in the programme. During the same trip, the Federation reporting delegate and the ARC communication and marketing officers met with branch staff and volunteers to define a new presentation of activities carried out by the Society. This new presentation will soon be available on the ARC's web page.

On the occasion of its 123rd anniversary, 10 June, the ARC launched a press release, which was released to the media by all 76 branches. At the same time interviews and other celebration activities were carried out both at the branch and central levels.

Outstanding needs

Structural problems, such as the ones confronting Argentina, will not be solved quickly, and certainly not without a global effort sustained by the international community.

The ARC board, technical directors and branches have committed themselves to ensuring that community work continues once funds from the operation have been exhausted. Volunteers will continue to do follow-up work related to health activities, and students from the nursing and paramedics schools will carry out practical work in targeted communities.

The strengthening of institutional ties with the Ministry of Health, municipalities and other organisations will help to sustain ARC strategies. Local health centres will help to ensure the technical integrity of the work, and maintain continuity, as the work will be integrated into the day-to-day operations of the staff.

This process of moving from emergency to development has already begun, and by the time the operation is complete, the ARC will have submitted development proposals to potential funding partners. Donors are therefore strongly encouraged to support this process through contributing to the Federation's Annual Appeal for South America (01.51/2003).

For further details please contact:

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

Argentina social crisis

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 08/2002

PLEDGES RECEIVED

26.06.2003

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

					TOTAL COVERAGE	
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1'448'000		100.0%
BRITISH - RC		10'000	GBP	22'962	13.09.2002	SOUP KITCHEN
BRITISH - RC		10'000	GBP	23'083	05.12.2002	
CHILEAN - RC		500	USD	806	03.05.2002	DIRECT TO DELEGATION
FINNISH - RC		33'000	EUR	48'388	14.05.2002	
ITALY GOVT		800'000	EUR	1'184'000	15.12.2002	FROM ITALIAN DREF
JAPANESE - RC		36'300	USD	53'506	14.08.2002	
SWEDISH - GOVT		292'000	SEK	47'129	16.10.2002	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1'379'874	CHF	95.3%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
GERMANY	MEDICAL	45'000	USD	67'500	29.07.2002	BILATERAL - COMMUNITY HEALTH
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				67'500	CHF	4.7%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
GERMANY	HOSPITAL ITEMS	103'774	USD	155'661	29.07.2002	BILATERAL
SPAIN - RC		71'860	USD	104'916	19.06.2002	DIRECT CONTRIBUTION
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				260'577	CHF	