

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

6 May 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 178 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Appeal No. 08/02

Launched on 10 April 2002 for CHF 1,824,000 for 4 months for 52,000 beneficiaries.

Budget revised to CHF 1,447,374 and appeal extended to 31 July 2003

Beneficiaries: Total, 120,450

Supported by Federation Appeal: 87,768

Supported by bilateral contributions: 30,522

Supported by domestic contributions: 2,160

Operations Update No. 4;

Period covered: 13 February – 13 April 2003;

Last Update: No. 3; 12 February 2003;

Next Update expected: May 2003

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: Covered

Related Appeals: 01.51/2003 South America

Outstanding needs : None

Summary: Following the revision of the plan of action, the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) has expanded food distributions and assistance is provided to 178 soup kitchens and 12 senior citizens' homes in 11 provinces, benefiting a total of 19,858 vulnerable persons. In addition, the operation seeks to provide support through the ARC branches to health centres and to vulnerable communities through the provision of medicines, health equipment, hygiene promotion and community education. Volunteers in the northern provinces have begun attending workshops on basic health and nutrition specific to the communities with which they work. After each module of training, volunteers pass on their knowledge to soup kitchen staff and take part in home visits with local health promoters.

Home visits have started in the provinces of Tucumán and Salta in order to verify the impact of the intervention, and to assess the health condition of beneficiaries. Delivery of medicines and equipment to targeted health centres and branches will take place in late April. The ARC is undergoing major reorganization and the implementation of the extended social crisis operation is also working to carry forward the change process in the National Society.

Operational Developments

The overall situation in Argentina, struck in 2001 by a major crisis involving all sectors of private life and public activities, continues to be critical. The middle class is finding itself more and more powerless, and the divide between a restricted number of rich and an increasing number of poor is widening.

The campaign for the presidential elections, scheduled for 27 April, started at the end of March in a climate of political distrust and concern for the internal and international situation, and is now characterizing the public debate on a lower tone, obscured by the events occurring in the Middle East.

The social crisis continues to affect every sector of the economy, and cuts in public expenditure are impacting on basic services, such as the availability of certain medicines previously easy to find. Recent trends and statistics confirm that a rapid solution to the crisis is unlikely to occur, and that northern provinces continue to be the most affected areas.

Thanks to an additional 800,000 Euros contributed by the Italian Agency for Development, the Argentine Red Cross (ARC) has now the possibility to extend its activities in the field of food distribution and health assistance until the end of July. Beneficiaries of the revised plan of action are the most vulnerable sectors of the population: children under 14, pregnant women and senior citizens over 65 in all seven northern provinces. This contribution has also enabled the ARC to respond to the crisis through activities promoting development with an emphasis on community education.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action



Reaching the most needy in their homes

Volunteers are distributing supplementary food rations to a total of 19,858 children and senior citizens in eleven provinces, in accordance with the SPHERE Project standards. During the period covered by this update, 80 per cent of the needed medicines and health equipment, destined under the revised plan of action for 36 northern communities, was stocked in ARC warehouses. Stocks will be completed by the end of April, and local branches will distribute these items to the selected primary health care centres.

Volunteers from northern branches are attending workshops on basic health and nutrition specific to the communities with which they work. Training includes, among other issues, prevention of diseases associated with poverty and poor hygiene. After every module, the volunteers train soup kitchen staff and local community health promoters, and also take part in home visits with the promoters. Field and home visits aim at both evaluating beneficiaries' health conditions and gathering of feedback on the training. It is estimated that a total of 62,500 persons will be involved in this campaign.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society

The Argentine Red Cross is implementing a process of reform and modernization, which involves all components of the National Society at both headquarters and branch level. These reforms, already planned, became even more necessary when the crisis hit the country and the ARC faced a situation of steadily-increasing numbers of those in need. Such initiatives to strengthen the National Society are taking place with funding granted through the Federation's capacity building fund. In order to respond effectively to the social crisis, new staff joined the offices, and almost 500 volunteers are working on a daily basis to provide support to the beneficiaries of this appeal.

The Argentine Red Cross benefits from the assistance of 2,280 nursing and paramedic students who fully participate in ARC activities. This is a key element of the social crisis operation given its focus on health promotion.

Objectives, activities and results



Children at Corrientes warehouse

In addition to the northern provinces, food distribution is now taking place in central Argentine provinces; the revised plan of action focuses on supplementary food assistance, medicines, health promotion and education activities.

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). The coordination office set up at the ARC headquarters in Buenos Aires is carrying out constant monitoring all phases of the distribution.

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.

The 178 soup kitchens and 12 senior citizens' homes in which supplementary feeding rations are distributed around the country were selected by local ARC branches and approved by the



Distributing food to children in Tucumán

National Society, according to number and needs of beneficiaries and hygiene standards. The nutritional content of the packages is designed to meet SPHERE standards taking into account local dietary habits, utilizing local suppliers and ensuring consistency with Federation purchasing procedures.

18,542 children and 1,316 senior citizens are receiving supplementary breakfasts, hot meals and snacks according to their needs. The distribution is made on a daily basis in the centres or in homes (this happens when some of the centres are closed, such as on Saturdays or Sundays).

The second distribution under the revised plan of action will take place at the end of April.

Distribution of beneficiaries in the selected provinces:

Province	Beneficiaries
Chaco	2,036
Corrientes	5,379
Formosa	2,270
Misiones	1,553
Jujuy	585
Tucumán	2,659
Salta	3,876
Buenos Aires	399
La Pampa	100
Córdoba	175
Mendoza	826
TOTAL	19,858

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 10 provinces of northern and central Argentina.

Health and care

The health emergency faced by northern provinces is threatening not only the provision of medical treatments and supplies, but also social security and possibilities of community development. For this reason, thanks to the revised plan of action, health and care issues are dealt with in accordance with a global approach. This includes not only provision of medicines and medical equipment, but also awareness-raising activities and training events.

This methodology is extremely important because it gives volunteers the possibility to work inside the communities and sets the basis for a sustainable approach to local development and disaster prevention. Nursing and paramedic students attending ARC state accredited schools are also participating in this process.

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

North west:	North east:
Salta	Posadas
Tucumán	Formosa
Rosario de la Frontera	Resistencia
	Corrientes (branches of Corrientes and Mercedes)

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: training and community/home visits.

1) Training:

A total of 175 volunteers from the eight northern branches are currently attending a training course for trainers on health, hygiene and nutrition. At the same time they are working in soup kitchens and community centres, teaching local staff how to cope with these issues.

The contents and schedule of this training course were defined during the month of February in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, which provided information material. Volunteers applying for the course were selected in the same period.

During the month of March, the branches involved received the training material and cooperated with the National Society in defining criteria and methods for the volunteers to teach in soup kitchens and community centres. The first module of the course is now almost completed and the second is about to start.

The five modules of the training course for volunteers, plus the introductory one, include the following subjects:

- Nutrition;
- Food chain;
- Hygiene;
- Water and sanitation;
- Waste water disposal;
- Poverty and climate-related disease;
- Family planning;
- HIV/AIDS; and
- Blood donation.

2) Community/home visits:

Field visits and awareness-raising meetings are occurring together with the above mentioned activities. Home visits have started in the provinces of Tucumán and Salta in order to verify the impact of the intervention and beneficiaries' health conditions, with a special focus on children and pregnant women. ARC volunteers are working with local community health promoters who are involved in the operation. This cooperation is proving effective since it allows volunteers to reach families and create a direct link with beneficiaries.

During the month of March, a meeting was held at the Red Cross community centre of barrio Quinta Ferré, Corrientes, with the objective of analyzing the health condition of the children attending. Special emphasis was placed on how to deal with skin diseases and provide support to children who are HIV positive.

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

The selection of suppliers took place in March in accordance with Federation procedures.

Almost 80 per cent of medicines and medical equipment designated for branches and primary health care centres in the field are now stocked in the ARC warehouse in Buenos Aires.

Delivery to the 32 primary health centres in the 36 selected communities will begin in April once all the items have been received.

The 32 primary health centres serving the 36 communities are as follows:

Salta	5
Tucumán	4
Rosario de la Frontera	3
Posadas	3
Formosa	2
Resistencia	4
Corrientes	8
Mercedes	3

A donation of USD 140,000 in new medical equipment was granted in March by the German Federal Army through the German Red Cross and the German Embassy in Argentina. This equipment was donated to cover the needs of the hospitals "San Miguel" de Yuyo (Jujuy Province) and "Dr. Guillermo Rawson" and "Dr. Marcial Quiroga" (San Juan Province).

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 60 ARC volunteers are being trained in childhood diseases.

Objective 3

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

ARC branches are currently evaluating potential durable and sustainable activities for implementation in the field of water and sanitation. These activities will be discussed together with those communities in which an intervention was requested and agreed upon.

The importance of using clean water for domestic use and adopting hygienic behaviour in everyday activities is one of the central points of the training course for volunteers. Water and sanitation themes were also discussed in the branches on the occasion of World Water Day, 22 March.

Initiatives in water and sanitation are yet to be developed at community level during the course of the operation.

Coordination

The ARC coordinates its activities on a regular basis with interested parties including government departments at the national and regional level, as well as with municipalities, donors and the humanitarian community. There are frequent meetings with the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNDP. The aim of these meetings is to coordinate the activities carried out by different actors and to better target beneficiaries and people in need, avoiding overlapping of activities. The Federation's sub regional office in Buenos Aires is encouraging these meetings and is working closely with the ARC in developing its network of contacts.

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 in the definition of 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

As already mentioned, the ARC is currently involved in a major process of structural reform and reorganization. This implies a strong capacity building initiative at the decisional and administrative level, and implementation is carried out with funding granted through the Federation Capacity Building Fund (CBF). As a consequence, the National Society identified its priorities and is now defining its Strategic Plan 2003-2007, while six of its branches are running a pilot project regarding the development of local operational plans.

Three hundred and twenty-five administrators and managers from 60 branches attended the second integrated training meeting held in March aiming at creating the skills for the management and implementation of the Strategic Plan. The final draft of the new ARC Statutes is almost completed, and the General Assembly will grant approval in June. A new project cycle management plan and an electronic project database were also introduced.

The four month training course for volunteers on nutrition and poverty-related diseases is also part of the overall effort to strengthen technical skills among the branches.

Federation Delegation

The sub regional office for South America based in Buenos Aires is working closely with the Argentine Red Cross in all aspects of its work in relation to the appeal and in other local activities. Meetings are held regularly with staff, donors, local authorities and humanitarian actors.

In mid March, a reporting delegate joined the team in Buenos Aires with the task to ensure quality reporting on the social crisis operation and to strengthen National Society capacity in reporting, as well as to work with the National Society in the implementation of its communications strategy. The Federation's sub regional office is composed of a health consultant, a finance officer, a logistics officer, an assistant and a coordinator (from ARC).

Advocacy/Public Information

During the month of March, local branches were provided with specific equipment in order to improve the visibility of the project and its actors. The distribution included T-shirts, jackets, waistcoats, caps and bags for the volunteers and flags and stickers for the different offices. These items, as well as the bags used for distributing food and non food items, bear the logos of the ARC, the Federation and Cooperazione Italiana.

In the month of April, the national television shot a promotional spot in a soup kitchen in the suburbs of Buenos Aires, with the aim of raising awareness and collecting funds for ARC activities.

Other information and visibility activities specifically related to the appeal are planned for the near future in cooperation between the ARC, the Federation delegation and the Italian Agency for Development. A press conference in the field is planned during the visit of the Federation's Secretary General on 29 and 30 of April, and a second one, in Buenos Aires, is scheduled to take place on 8 May.

Outstanding needs

Structural problems, such the ones Argentina is facing, cannot be solved in the mid term and without a global effort sustained by the international community.

It is the belief of the Argentine Red Cross and the Federation that, following a time-bound emergency phase, the ARC should participate in the building of long-term development strategies to address structural factors behind the crisis. However, given the current pace of the social crisis operation, it is expected that the operation may be extended by several months in order to ensure effective implementation of each of the objectives outlined in the appeal. The ARC board, the technical directors and branches have committed themselves to ensuring that the community work continues once funds from the operation have been exhausted. Volunteers will continue to do follow-up work related to the health activities and students from the nursing and paramedics schools will carry out practical work in the target communities.

The strengthening of institutional ties with the Ministry of Health, municipalities and other organizations will support sustainability strategies. Local health centres will help to ensure the technical integrity of the work as well as support 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 completed, the ARC will have submitted development proposals to potential funding partners.

Donors are strongly encouraged to support this process through contributions to the Federation Annual Appeal for South America (01.51/2003).

For further details please contact: Olaug Bergseth, Phone : 41 22 730 45 35; Fax: 41 22 733 03; e-mail olaug.bergeth@ifrc.org

Donors providing in-kind relief in response to large-scale emergencies are urged to contact , and . in the Federation's Logistics and Resource Mobilization Department to avoid any unnecessary delays in the clearance and delivery of emergency relief assistance.

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>.

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Head
Relationship Management Department

Santiago Gil
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Argentina social crisis

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 08/2002

PLEDGES RECEIVED

12.05.2003

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	