

Project Name	Argentina-Family Strengthening and Social... Capital Promotion Project-PROFAM (LIL)
Region	Latin America and the Caribbean
Sector	Institutional Development (BI)
Project ID	ARPE70374
Borrower	Republic of Argentina
Implementation Agency	Consejo Nacional de la Mujer (National Council of Women/CNM) AV. R.S. Peña 648, 7P. "A" (1035)-Capital Federal Buenos Aires, Argentina
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Country and Sector Background

1. Family and Poverty. Poverty and family organization are intrinsically linked because it is at the family level and based on how gender and generational roles are organized that individuals make decision on their time allocation and on acquiring and spending resources. Whether gender roles are too segregated, or whether they are more interchangeable and balanced, will affect the allocation of resources, including reproductive, the acquisition of human capital and the earning of an income. One of the most conspicuous consequences of the association between poverty and segregation of gender roles has been the deterioration of family cohesion and consequently its ability to mobilize resources to face the challenges of poverty. Moreover, when gender roles are too segregated and the opportunities to fill their expectations are not available, family and community are disrupted with frustration and violence easily erupting. PROFAM has been designed as an instrument to strengthen family cohesion, solidarity between male and female members, and capacity for conscious socioeconomic .

2. Since the launching of the Convertibility Plan in 1991, Argentina has experienced a strong average growth, with the size of the economy doubling from 1990 to 1999. However, since 1995, when the economy shrank after the devaluation of the Mexican peso, and principally since 1998, as a result of the combined effects of the East-Asia crisis, the devaluation of the Russian ruble and of the Brazilian real, and the deterioration of commodities prices, growth decelerated and the GDP is estimated to experienced and overall decline of 3.5 percent in 1999. Unemployment, after falling to about 12 percent from the high of 18 percent reached in 1996, increased to almost 15 percent. Moreover, while many social indicators have improved in the past ten years (infant mortality has decreased from 25 deaths per 1000 birth in 1991 to about 18 deaths per 1000 births in 1998), poverty levels have remained high.

3. Argentina's noteworthy achievements in reducing gender gaps and

addressing gender-differentiated has not yet, in many ways, reached the poor. As indicated in the most recent Poverty Assessment (Poor People in a Rich Country) and as highlighted in the most recent CAS, the poor in Argentina are those with the greatest family obligations and dependents. Looking at the urban poor, only the poor: (a) have a significantly large family, and consequently 43 percent of the population live below the poverty line; (b) have younger families with a high dependency ration; and (c) have high unemployment - twice the ratio of non- poor. The 1997 household survey shows that 52 percent of the Argentinean families have children under the age of fourteen, with one fourth of families in the poorest quintile having three or more children under the age of fourteen. Results from a more recent survey (2000 Social Capital Survey) show that households located in the lowest income quintile, 32.4 percent of residents were less than 12 years, whereas in those in the highest quintile, this proportion dropped to 8.4 percent. Also, the same survey indicates the presence of at least one unemployed person in 52 percent the poorest households in contrast with their presence in only 11.2 percent in the highest income quintile.

4. According to the 2000 Gender Issues Report in Argentina, while fertility rates is low in comparison to other countries in the regions, rates vary widely across socioeconomic groups, with rural and marginal urban areas in disadvantage in terms of access to services and information. Indeed, women consulted for the social assessment during project preparation were unaware of the linkage between multiple pregnancies, poverty and their poor health status. To be either pregnant or nursing was very often accepted women's destiny. Potential PROFAM beneficiaries consulted as through the social assessment (SA) also revealed that despite already having numerous children at a very young age (sometimes five children before 30 years old) they were refused contraception by the public health facility of their neighborhood. NGOs noted that a family having ten children is not a surprise in the shantytowns of metropolitan Buenos Aires.

5. According to a 1999 United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) report (Violencia de Género), pregnancy among teens is on the rise in Argentina, with about 15 percent of all mothers under the age of twenty. In absolute terms, of the 700,000 annual births, about 100,000 mothers are less than twenty years old. A small percent (3.3), but significant in social, biological and psychological terms, is the proportion of babies born from mothers between the ages of 10-14. Evidence also shows that precocious pregnancies are more frequent among those with less schooling or living in more precarious socioeconomic situations. Fathers of babies born from women between the ages of 9-13 are on average ten years older than their mothers. Information reported by the UNDP also shows that in 1997, in some municipalities, there was a lack of paternal responsibility in half of all children born that year. Absence of information and of access have resulted in illegal abortions - the third cause of maternal mortality in the country. Domestic violence and street violence are also commonly reported, becoming one of the most important items in the agenda of local governments and service NGOs. Individuals under the age of 21 are the victims in seventy six percent of all sexual crimes, and in 87 percent of the cases, the victims are women; but in about 90 percent of the cases, the victims were familiar with the perpetrators. In 1997, of the 13,376 telephone calls to Telefono Te Ayudo (a telephone hot line) the highest proportion of violence was committed against children, and while the majority of perpetrators were the father, in 20 percent of the cases, the mother was the perpetrator.

6. Social Capital. Work conducted in the Bank demonstrates that a community with a high level of social capital is more likely to organize itself,

defining and pursuing common goals. Moreover, social capital is an important asset in any ongoing program or project requiring collective action, as in the case of PROFAM.

7. The 2000 Social Capital Survey in Argentina indicates that the diversity and frequency of networking in the lowest income quintile is lower than in the highest. For example, among those living in the poorest quintile, only 32.8 percent socialize with friends in contrast with almost the double that in the highest quintile (59.5 percent). Whereas the 58.4 percent of residents in the highest quintile households affirm their participation in activities with their families, this is true for only 43 percent of residents in the poorest quintile households. On the other hand, among the poor that participate in any association, they are more likely to participate in philanthropic organizations (33 percent) or religious organizations (48.8 percent) than those in the highest income quintile (33.8 percent and 23.7 percent respectively).

8. These results indicate that generosity may be a characteristic of the poor, and that there is a need for actions that mobilize and expand this generous characteristic of their social capital by: (a) supporting civil society organizations which are community-based and able to enrich family and community life; and (b) supporting actions that bridge gaps between poor families and community and service organizations. PROFAM will provide support to both actions and test the hypothesis that the promotion of a more cohesive and less segregated family life will positively impact the ability of families to face challenges posed by poverty.

Government Strategy

9. As observed in the CAS, Argentina faces a set of social problems that are not easily resolved in the short run. While understanding its fiscal constraints, the Government, in partnership with the provinces, has a strong commitment to greater social justice. Recognizing the need to strengthen the social safety net, reduce social risks, and stimulate community development, it is the Government's intention to revamp many social programs, with particular concerns to the indigent and children and to target vulnerable groups through a gender perspective.

10. The National Council on Women (Consejo Nacional de la Mujer, CNM) is a politically autonomous, decentralized entity that pertains to the Jefatura de Gabinete de Ministro de Poder Ejecutivo Nacional. The CNM was created in 1994 with the responsibility to ensure compliance with the Convention for the elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by Law 23.179. The objective of the CNM is to promote shared responsibility among men and women within the concept of citizenship through the equitable participation of women in social, political, economic, and cultural life of Argentina, and it functions with the philosophy that a democracy without equality is not democracy. CNM supports sectoral strategies to improve the quality of life in the following areas: (a) health--to promote gender equity and quality of health care; (b) education--to analyze gender associated with school; (c) justice--coordination among government agencies to reduce violence against women and ensure international conventions associated with women's and children's rights are upheld; (d) legislation--to work with parliament on the promotion of laws that strengthen gender equity; and (e) communication--to develop information campaigns. CNM has also promoted the establishment of a Forum on Civil Society, comprised of civil society organizations, to create a space for the exchange of ideas, debate, and promotion of proposals for the design and monitoring of public policies and programs.

11. Through the proposed Programa Equidad to finance small community-based sub-projects, CNM has emphasized a strategy of working through civil society organizations, but particularly through service NGOs. Indeed, it will follow results from a recent evaluation of the Small Grants Program in Argentina which indicated that, more than beneficiary organizations, service NGOs tend to be more effective in their actions.

Project Objectives and Strategy

12. The development objective of the Argentina Family Strengthening and Social Capital Promotion Project - PROFAM, a Learning and Innovation Loan (LIL), is to facilitate the mutual learning and piloting of local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) to capture the potential human and economic capabilities of poor families for promoting the equitable welfare of all its members by contributing to the reduction of domestic violence, the fostering of incentives for increased maternal and paternal responsibility, and the introduction of the values of peaceful sociability among youth. PROFAM will test an approach in the public sector that targets families as an integral unit rather than as a client of segmented programs. Since there is limited Operations experience with this type of innovative approach in Argentina and the Bank, the project shall be implemented as a LIL.

13. To achieve this objective, the project will: (a) support and monitor different types of initiatives from service NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and local governments (Programa Equidad) to expand the capabilities and promote cohesion among family members and solidarity among poor families in the same community; (b) expand community social capital by advancing opportunities for capacity building for the creation/ strengthening of networks of civil society organizations; (c) facilitate the exchange and dissemination of best practices on community interventions dedicated to family development and equitable gender relations; (d) increase the understanding about gender issues and rights of children among critical stakeholder groups; and (e) promote the establishment an information system which details the socio-economic characteristics, dynamics and structures of families in order to contribute to the development and improved targeting of social policies and programs.

Project Description

14. The project will consist of three components:

Component 1- Family Strengthening - The strengthening of families through an approach which recognizes them as agents rather than clients is important to capture and support family capacity in order to work cohesively to face the numerous challenges of poverty. Recognizing the characteristics of families and communities, PROFAM will support different types of initiatives from service NGOs, CSOs and local governments which are directed towards supporting families, promoting more equitable gender relations and expanding community social capital. This component is comprised of three sub-components: (i) Programa Equidad - a demand-driven grant program for the development of small sub-projects which promote and strengthen the capacity of families to actively function within their community; (ii) Strengthening of Associative Networks - to provide an integrated approach to addressing problems of poverty and familial relations by promoting the collaboration and solidarity of these organizations and are more aware of the need to avoid prolonging clientelistic relations among the poor; and (iii) Strengthening of Civil Society and Local Governmental Organizations - to collaborate and work strategically in the design and management of programs that promote integrated approaches to family strengthening and poverty alleviation.

Component 2 - Family and Community Awareness - The objective of this

component is to promote an awareness-raising and communication strategy at a micro-level that seeks to directly impact the project target areas to further enhance governmental-civil society-community-family relations. Specifically, communication strategies will: (a) disseminate best practices on community interventions dedicated to family development and equitable gender relation; (b) promote an increased understanding about gender issues and rights of children among critical stakeholder groups; and (c) encourage the participation of families as protagonists in the definition of their priorities and evaluation of social programs from which they benefit.

Component 3 - Project Management - This component will build upon the existing project management capacity of the UEN within CNM as the entity responsible for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the project by providing technical assistance and capacity building of UEN staff and consultants. Specifically, this component will support: (a) consultants to support the technical and administrative implementation of the project; (b) capacity building for UEN staff and consultants; (c) the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system, including the definition of the baseline and performance indicators; (d) consultants for the project auditing; and (e) equipment (computers, printers, software etc) necessary for project implementation.

Project Costs and Financing

15. Total estimated project costs are US\$6.72 million with a proposed loan of US\$5.00 million equivalent, US\$1.00 million government contribution, and US\$0.67 beneficiary contribution, with a front-end fee of US\$0.05 million.

Project Coordination and Implementation

16. The CNM will be responsible for all project implementation activities, including accounting, disbursement, monitoring and evaluation, coordination, and supervision. CNM will implement the project through the existing Unidad Ejecutora (Project Implementing Unit - PIU) comprised of both technical and administrative specialists and managed by an Executive Coordinator. Short-term consultants will be hired for special tasks, when necessary. The Operations Manual details all the procedures to be followed during implementation. The project will be implemented in collaboration with the Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Medioambiente (Ministry of Social Development and Environment) to ensure the coordination of PROFAM with other similar initiatives targeted towards vulnerable groups.

17. The principal activity under the PROFAM project will be the implementation of a demand-driven small grants program - Programa Equidad - for the development of small sub-projects which promote and strengthen the capacity of families to actively function within their community. Potential grant recipients will include community-based networks comprised of civil society organizations, local municipalities and service NGOs that are implementing innovative projects with objectives compatible to those of PROFAM. Technical assistance for the preparation and implementation of the sub-projects may be included in the proposal amount. Proposals will be developed in accordance with procedures and criteria to be outlined in the Operations Manual and will be evaluated and selected by an external committee of specialists.

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

18. CNM will have primary responsibility for project supervision, monitoring and evaluation. The ongoing Bank-financed Programa de Seguimiento de Indicadores y Evaluación de Proyectos Sociales (Monitoring of Indicators and Evaluation of Social Projects Program - SIEMPRO) will also contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of PROFAM impacts. PROFAM will pilot and learn from both community-based and local government approaches to promoting gender

equity. Since there is limited operational experience with an integrated approach to families focusing on both male and female perspectives, the LIL would provide a learning opportunity for mainstreaming gender in future operations. The monitoring and evaluation system is designed to analyze different types of interventions and incentives to create models that can be replicated in other areas and sectors. The Forum of Civil Society will also play an important role in facilitating civil society participation in the monitoring and evaluation process and disseminating lessons learned.

Environmental and Social Aspects

19. Poverty and family organization are intrinsically linked because it is at the family level and based on family interaction that individuals feel economic constraints, allocate their time and make decisions on acquiring and spending resources. Whether gender roles are too segregated or whether they are interchangeable affects decision making with regard to these intra-family allocations. A review of the Bank portfolio in Argentina suggested that attention to family interaction framework and gender could improve the quality and development impact of the Bank's investments in the sub-region. PROFAM will foster community social capital by strengthening associative networks through capacity-building and technical assistance and by financing demand driven sub-projects which promote and strengthen the capacity of families to actively function within their community. Decentralized mechanisms and community-based organizations have comparatively more advantages than the central government to address issues which affect family cohesion such as substance abuse, family disintegration, domestic violence, violence among young men, maternal health, teenage pregnancy, and/or reproductive health. As a result, NGOs and other civil society organizations will play an important role in the implementation of the project, particularly in the design, management and monitoring of Programa Equidad sub-projects.

Environmental assessment: Environmental Category [] A [] B [X] C

No environmental impacts are anticipated from the proposed project activities.

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Note: This is information on an evolving project. Certain components, and certain

activities within a certain component, may not necessarily be included in the final project.

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