

Consultations With the Poor

National Synthesis Report

Argentina

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The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the World Bank, its Board of Executive Directors, or the governments they represent.

Preface

This study is part of a global research effort entitled *Consultations with the Poor*, designed to inform the *World Development Report 2000/1 on Poverty and Development*. The research involved poor people in twenty-three countries around the world. The effort also included two comprehensive reviews of Participatory Poverty Assessments completed in recent years by the World Bank and other agencies. Deepa Narayan, Principal Social Development Specialist in the World Bank's Poverty Group, initiated and led the research effort.

The global *Consultations with the Poor* is unique in two respects. It is the first large scale comparative research effort using participatory methods to focus on the voices of the poor. It is also the first time that the World Development Report is drawing on participatory research in a systematic fashion. Much has been learned in this process about how to conduct Participatory Poverty Assessments on a major scale across countries so that they have policy relevance. Findings from the country studies are already being used at the national level, and the methodology developed by the study team is already being adopted by many others.

We want to congratulate the network of 23 country research teams who mobilized at such short notice and completed the studies within six months. We also want to thank Deepa Narayan and her team: Patti Petesch, Consultant, provided overall coordination; Meera Kaul Shah, Consultant, provided methodological guidance; Ulrike Erhardt, provided administrative assistance; and the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex provided advisory support. More than a hundred colleagues within the World Bank also contributed greatly by identifying and supporting the local research teams.

The study would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID), numerous departments within the World Bank, the Swedish International Development Agency, MacArthur Foundation and several NGOs.

The completion of these studies in a way is just the beginning. We must now ensure that the findings lead to follow-up action to make a difference in the lives of the poor.

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Acknowledgment

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1. Executive Summary

The Survey with the Poor in Argentina was carried out in 8 sites (3 rural and 5 urban). Seventy two groups were established with a total of 714 people divided into 132 poor men , 368 poor women and 186 poor young people. Sixty one individual interviews were conducted

The country has 36,1 million inhabitants.

For several decades Argentine economy was characterized by having instability showing high inflation rates. This reached its deepest point in 1989, that together with the change of the democratic government introduced a new economic policy. This sought to make deep changes in Argentine economic structure through the implementation of the Convertibility Law.

The new policy included the redefinition of the role of the State .This led to the privatization of the majority of the state-owned companies, decentralization and changes in the public sector.

Reform policies and a structural measure called the "Modernization", that is being carried out in Argentina , have an impact on popular sectors .Consumer goods and services rise. There are changes in the labor market : income reductions and dismissals. The quality of public services in health , education and security fluctuates due to cuts in budget.

The main conclusions classified by topic were the following:

Well-being / Poverty Perception

In general well-being is perceived in relation to the satisfaction of needs identified mainly with work , income access to water , daily food , proper housing , education for children and access to health care services. Both in rural and urban areas , the idea of isolation and the difficulties in having access to various services influence when defining well-being. In rural areas health is directly related to the notion of endemic diseases , whereas in urban areas with malnutrition.

The problem of security is added to urban areas. Criminality , thefts and muggings have gotten worse by drug addiction and alcoholism , together with lack of police protection. Demographic growth is also highlighted .There is an urban structure belief in these areas that follows a certain pattern :neighborhood , housing project , slum , settlement and emergency shanty town or shanty town.

The way of purchasing : cash or on credit , was added to the well-being perception in rural areas as a criterion for differentiating categories. Farmers ,as opposed to other groups, included having enough land , being land owners , having tools and dams , wire fence and access to credit.

The concept of work is not exactly the same between men and women. For men, work is related to income , that is to say , money. Whereas for women , it is related to resources. Women were always the first to point out the need to study ; who were immediately followed by the support of men.

The criteria for defining well-being/poverty were: occupational category , working conditions , type of housing , community infrastructure , isolation , access to social benefits , ownership of lands and environmental sanitary conditions.

Both the tendency of the criteria and the proportion of the categories show an image of social decline. The poorest categories increase , showing a social fall. Those categories showing good standards of living , decrease. "Today we are worse , we do not have work , we cannot feed our families" is the phrase that was heard throughout the survey. "We are robbed and killed" was added in urban areas. Living conditions became worse daily. All of them point out that the 1989 hyperinflation process was the starting point of the decline of the money value " today it is worth nothing", of products and the fall of the demand for labor. Future is perceived as being pessimistic or uncertain.

There are two meanings to identify **security**. One is physical and mental security due to criminality which is not felt in rural areas. This helps rural people to differentiate from people in the city "who have everything but are worse because there are a lot of crimes and drugs and not here (rural areas)". "We live with the door open here". This situation has gotten out of control in urban areas and has caused a social and moral crisis where human life has lost all value. The age of criminals who are younger every day , calls for constant attention.

The other meaning , perceived both in urban and rural areas , is related to the current socio-economic crisis that deteriorates living conditions. Unemployment , lack of compromise from the governments and politicians , not owning land or a house , not being able to feed a family produce a feeling of helplessness , lack of guarantees , protection and/or opportunities. Not having resources to live and the possibility of being displaced give them a feeling of permanent **risk**.

The most vulnerable groups are women as family heads , and women and children inside their homes as victims of social and family violence in urban areas. These differences were not perceived in rural areas. They frequently face various crisis such as floods , poor sanitary conditions and conflicts with landowners.

Social networks were developed as a result of the deterioration of living conditions. These are carried out by government projects , mainly in charge of municipalities; the church ; and in a lower degree by **alliances** among various community organizations. People who manage to become part of these networks are more protected.

There are no expectations to get better. Material and moral deterioration is seen as going down progressively. They used to perceive social mobility ; now that situation has changed drastically. **Opportunities** have decreased. They still feel there is a possibility with education in urban areas. In rural areas, they feel there are more possibilities in the cities , but then immigrants are considered as vulnerable groups and are treated unfairly. In addition , there is a strong possibility for women to get jobs as cleaning ladies in urban areas. Not only they can get jobs , but also earn more than men and sometimes they have become the main source of income. On the contrary , women in rural areas are more excluded from the labor force.

Regarding **social cohesion**, it is perceived differently in both areas. In rural areas, the feeling of belonging is high. Whereas in urban areas, it is low and deepened by the lack of solidarity among neighbors. This situation has gotten worse in the last years. "People were united before, now we kill each other". "Don't get involved" is a commonly heard expression. Only in some urban groups (La Matanza- settlement, Moreno- soup kitchen) and in a rural one (Los Juríes-Cooperative), community union is valued because they are recent settlements. They are facing the settling with the authorities so they need to be united.

Exclusion is identified with isolation because of distance and diseases. These factors were dominant in rural areas. In urban areas, exclusion is related to labor and it affects mostly men. These feel disregarded by their community and family and loose authority at home. They are often depressed and resort to alcohol. They are discriminated because they are from the shanty town or immigrants.

The main causes of poverty are: **lack of work and the government**. This is corrupted and has implemented bad policies which do not help poor people. Furthermore, they mentioned lack of education. In rural areas, other causes are the fall of prices, difficult access to credit, bad health care services, lack of infrastructure and communications. In urban areas, immigration from neighboring countries is pointed out as one cause of poverty because it occupies the few labor positions that exist. Other causes are the deterioration of solidarity, discrimination, and a large number of children.

The consequences are: mental and physical diseases, pregnancy at an early age, death, housing and infrastructure deterioration, lack of basic needs such as food, footwear and clothing. In rural areas, the difficulty in access to land, credit and working materials is added. Insecurity, violence, drug addiction and alcoholism are shown as consequences of poverty in urban areas.

Problems and Priorities

Lack of work is the main issue in all groups, with no distinction of sex, age or place (urban/rural). There are various factors: the closing of factories, dismissals and unemployment.

Lack of security is one of the main problems in urban areas.

Other common problems in both areas are related to infrastructure and housing such as water, electricity in the house, street lighting, sewage system, lack of transport, roads in bad condition, lack of telephones and lack of proper housing. In addition, problems derived from the poor health care system, diseases and education due to lack of institutions. Finally, those problems related to the lack of social assistance, lack of soup kitchens, of social programs, of help to poor people, mentioned mainly by women.

Problems related to security because of addictions, and bad treatment by the police were relevant in urban areas. In rural areas, problems related with the ownership of land, access to credit and the declining situation of the farming market were relevant.

Institutional Analysis

Their perception of institutions that are more(or less) worth is somewhat similar for both sexes in rural areas. Common features are:

- There is a central institution that articulates projects, inside and outside the community. This role was assigned to primary and secondary schools, almost always perceived as the most important ones. Also, to the farmers cooperative and once it was shared by the municipality and the church.
- The state is seen as "faraway " because certain government institutions are absent or inefficient. State schools and hospitals work with many difficulties and they lack resources. This worsens people's perception of the state. Worse opinions fall on political institutions, especially on political parties. Since the municipality is present in case of natural catastrophes (floods) , its perception is not so bad.
- The institutions related to communications are important. These are the radios, absence of telephones and vialidad provincial (provincial highway administration).
- Private companies are perceived negatively by people. In the case of farming companies, "nobody knows the landowners" or there are problems as regards ownership.

The criteria established by the groups are related to survival problems : food, clothing, health, and the support in natural catastrophes. Effectiveness is related to companies that are useful if they offer jobs or not, because they do not fulfill their mission. For example, a dam, that does not supply energy or a neighbors' association that is corrupted. There was only one institution where its members participated actively and openly. Generally, they feel excluded and unprotected. Associations such as clubs and those of neighbors, are related to political parties. Therefore, they lost value.

The people's criterion for listing institutions in urban areas , was that they could **solve immediate problems** or they were **physically close**. Consequently, there are five institutions that share similar characteristics in various urban sites. These are:

- *Kindergartens / Day-Care Centers*. These institutions are important because they allow women to get jobs.
- *Life Plan ("Manzaneras")*. The Life Plan was put into practice by the provincial government .It is carried out by "reference" neighbors that provide food for mothers and children.
- *Primary School*. Primary school was highly valued everywhere, except for a male group in Moreno. It is always placed within the first four positions. This is not due to the quality of teaching, but to the fact that "it is a safe placed, where children are taken care of", "the possibility of getting lunch at school(soup kitchen)".
- *First -Aids Center*. It is also placed within the first four positions. People support unconditionally these primary assistance centers. They usually receive good assistance even if they have a precarious supply of medicines .They also offer answers to their needs.
- *The Church*. Their opinion of the church (Catholic) is good. Though, they sometimes see it as "a place for baptisms and mass only". They seldom consider the help offered by the church. Evangelist churches were rarely mentioned.

On the other hand, the municipality and the police are found at the bottom of the list . In the

middle, there are institutions such as sporting clubs, associations of neighbors and the hospital.

Generally speaking, the positive criteria for classifying in urban areas define five concepts : to be helpful, free, close (physically), reliable and that offer support. The negative ones are related to concepts such as: not doing, not listening, "taking a lot of papers"(bureaucratic) and not collaborating.

The neighbors seldom participated directly because it is associated with political parties and corrupt behaviors. Anyway, there are signs of improvement in one site.

It is interesting to highlight that the positive perception of institutions goes beyond the minimum resources required to be truly effective. In addition, there are no NGOs that support.

Gender Relations

Women's position has changed both at home and in the community where they have become important.. There is a tendency to complement activities between men and women at home. Currently, men feel that they have lost power to make decisions. There is more dialogue to make decisions now. The main cause is women's access to labor market and being an important part of the family income , the main or the unique.

Regarding activities in the community, it was said that women hardly ever participated in the past because there was no need. In some groups, they only went to church. In general, community activities are seen as collective self-managed undertakings whose purpose is to improve living conditions.

Women take the initiative in the community. They ask for , claim for and go to the municipality: "we go back and forth" "we walk the neighborhood". They know the needs and opportunities. They help and try to get means. They stay together and are in contact with authorities. This ensures survival and it even replaces a paid job. Women say that were not listened to in the past.

Nowadays, the main decision made by men is the way in which a job is done. Men's power of decision is still important as regards political an institutional issues.

Violence

Violence is completely different in rural areas than in urban areas. In the former, there is not violence at home. Though they talk about fathers who batter their children and couple under the effect of alcohol. Rape was slightly mentioned and is not perceived in the community.

Physical and psychological violence is a priority in urban areas, both at home and in the community. Women and children are battered at home as result of lack of resources and alcohol. Violence at home was kept along time. But it is different because it was not known in the past . Now there are places where one can get help and talk about it. Almost always men say that they lost their children's respect . They feel they lost credit.

There was no violence in the community in the past. There was solidarity among neighbors. Whereas violence is a daily issue nowadays. Thefts and muggings are constant. Also, verbal aggressions among neighbors. In some cases it ends up with death. These events are related to the lack of work and the increase in drug consumption. Lack of respect for women and the number of rapes have increased.

Lack of work and police protection were pointed out as ways of violence. Women as head of families is a phenomenon that was observed by groups of women in urban areas .These women support their families with no other help.

2. Background

2.1 Study Purpose

The purpose of the study is to find out the poor's perception/opinion about poverty in the Argentine society. To offer a perspective on the poor's experiences and their answers to poverty . In order to understand this situation better, the following points were taken into account : security, social exclusion, vulnerability, inequality, risks, social cohesion and opportunities.

To add contents to the World Development Report (IDM) 2000/1 of the World Bank. To provide help for policies and social projects but mainly to plan strategies to reduce poverty for national and international , state or private organizations.

This study is part of the social assessment carried out by the World Bank in Argentina, together with the research coordinated by Norman Hicks and Sandra Cesilini: ***Social Assessment of the Poor's Self Perception in Argentina*** .We shared our results with them.

This report summarizes the main results obtained from the Poor's Survey which shows experiences, priorities, reflections and recommendations from the poorest communities.

2.2 Methodology and Process

Qualitative procedure was used. A participative assessment of poverty that included 4 dimensions: 1) exploring well-being; 2) poor's problems and priorities; 3) institutional analysis; and 4) gender relations and violence at home and in the community. The methods and formats of the "Process Guide to Study 20 Countries" was followed to ensure its comparability worldwide. Regarding specific points, sequences were redefined and contents adapted. (See appendix V, Design).

At least 8 discussion groups (focal groups) and 7 individual interviews were implemented in each site. Visits were carried out by the same team, on consecutive days, to be in close and constant contact in most sites. Therefore, a genuine contact with the community was achieved and it allowed to make the necessary changes during the survey.

Various institutions that develop social projects with the poor were in charge of recruiting the groups. It was difficult to get men's participation in some sites.

The Municipality was used as a link in Moreno, Jose C. Paz, Florencio Varela, Avellaneda and Villa Atamisqui. The contact was established through Cooperativa Unión Campesinos in Los Juries and in Talavera through the school's head. Two day-care centers helped to organize meetings in La Matanza. Whereas individual studies were carried out by the team through a key informer during the visits.

It is important to mention that in Moreno, Florencio Varela, Avellaneda, Isla Talavera, and Los Juries there was a previous institutional relationship with the World Bank through Lic. Sandra

Cesilini , that allowed us to organize the field work. While in La Matanza, José C. Paz, Villa Atamisqui , the relationship was established independently from the World Bank.

The team that implemented the Poor's Survey was formed by 9 researchers, divided into 3 sub-teams, and was advised by Sandra Cesilini:

- A Mirta Mauro
Silvia Fuentes
Héctor Salamanca
- B Daniel Cichero
Blanca Irene García Prado
Mariano Salzman
- C Patricia Felio
Hernán Nazer
Norberto Vázquez

The survey was carried out from 5th March to 6th April, 1999.

Type of area	Site's name	Municipality/ district	Province	Days of visit
Rural	Los Juries	D. General Taboada	Santiago del Estero	10 to 13 March
Rural	Villa Atamisqui	D. Atamisqui	Santiago del Estero	10 to 14 March
Rural	Isla Talavera	M. Campana-Zárate	Buenos Aires	25-26 and 29-30 March
Urban	La Matanza oeste	M. La Matanza	Buenos Aires	5, 13, 19 and 26 March
Urban	Dock Sud	M. Avellaneda	Buenos Aires	7 to 20 March
Urban	Florencio Varela	M. Florencio Varela	Buenos Aires	22 March to 6 April
Urban	Barrio Sol y Verde	M. José C. Paz	Buenos Aires	17 to 20 March
Urban	Moreno	M. Moreno	Buenos Aires	22 to 25 March

2.3 Country Characteristics¹ and Selected Sites

¹ Information taken from the " Annual Statistical Report", INDEC, Buenos Aires, 1998; and

Argentina is located in the south of the American Continent. It has an area of 3,7 million square kilometers, including 964,000 km² of Continental Antarctica and the South Atlantic Islands.

It has a continental area of 3,700 km between the 22° and 55° south latitude. Its climate is varied, from sub-tropical in the north to cold in Patagonia, and mild in most of the country. Two thirds of the country is either arid, semi-arid or endures prolonged periods of drought. One third is humid, of which some 30 percent is woods and sub-tropical forest in the north-east and the rest is the pampas plains, covering 600,000 square kilometers. This latter zone forms the principal agricultural and industrial region of the country, containing close to 70 per cent of the population, 80 per cent of agricultural production by value and 85 per cent of industrial activity.

Argentina shares borders in the north with Bolivia , in the northeast with Paraguay, to the east with Brazil, Uruguay and the Atlantic Ocean, and to the west with Chile. It possesses an extensive ocean coastline, from the mouth of the River Plate to Tierra del Fuego.

The country has 36,1 million inhabitants and is divided into 23 provinces and the Federal Capital, established in the City of Buenos Aires. The official language is Spanish. On the basis of its Constitution the Argentine Nation has adopted a representative, republican and federal form of government . The National Constitution was last modified in 1994.

For several decades Argentine economy was characterized by having instability showing high inflation rates. This reached its deepest point in 1989 and 1990. The rate of prices for consumers reached 4,923.6% in 1989 and 1,343.9% 1990. Since 1991 inflation rates declined. This situation of constant instability, hyperinflation and growing isolation with the world changed. This was achieved through the implementation of new economic policies since 1989 to produce structural changes in the Argentine economy.

The monetary system was reformed through the Convertibility Law in April 1991. It was laid down that the parity of the peso to the us dollar was to be fixed at a ratio of one peso to one dollar. Each Argentine peso in circulation was to be fully backed by reserves in gold or foreign currency by the Central Bank. It also involves deregulation of markets and the opening up of the economy.

The State Reform includes fiscal equilibrium through an increase in tax collection and a strict control of budget. It has been difficult to put this into practice. The role of the State was redefined. The majority of the state-owned companies were privatized. Decentralization and changes in the state sector were part of the reform.

Following the opening-up of the economy and openness to international markets, an agreement was signed by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The deal started with the agreements and protocols in Foz de Iguazu Declaration between the Argentine and Brazilian presidents in 1985. They were joined by Paraguay and Uruguay in 1990, creating the South Common Market (MERCOSUR). This independent legal entity signed an agreement of free commerce with the

“Report on Human Development in Argentina”, National Senate, 1996.

European Union in 1995, and economic complementation accords with Chile and Bolivia in 1996.

Exports registered an average of 9,356 million dollars between 1988 and 1989, but rose to 26,217 million dollars in 1997. Various sectors were dynamic, especially food industry by-products and transport goods. On the other hand, imports rose from 4,763 million dollars between 1988 and 1989, to 30,377 million dollars in 1997. The sectors with a major impact are imports of capital goods, parts and accessories and passenger vehicles. The 1997 trade balance shows a deficit of 4,160 million dollars.

In 1997, the foreign debt reached to 110,417 million dollars of which 69% belongs to the non financial public sector and the Central Bank.

Productive restructuring generated the closing of factories and the creation of less skilled and paid jobs. Unemployment affected mostly the public sector but also the private sector.

Reform policies and a structural measure called "*La Modernización*", that is being carried out in Argentina, have an impact on popular sectors. Consumer goods and services rise. There are changes in the labor market: income reductions and dismissals. The quality of public services in health, education and security fluctuates due to cuts in budget.

Social reality is going through a new process that has increased social inequality. The extension and diversity of poverty are shown in "a) Argentine society was characterized by socially inclusive tendencies and a strong upward mobility in most of this century. In contrast, there is an important increase in the number of poor people since the mid 70's. b) It is interesting to show that together with an increase of families with incomes below the poverty line, there is a high increase of families with incomes above the poverty line but very close to it".²

Population projections rise to 36,1 millions in 1998 and will reach 37,0 millions in 2000. Its distribution is homogenous. Statistics are taken from the 1999 Population and Housing Census and the Permanent Survey of Homes (used to make projections). Both are from the Statistics and Census Institute (INDEC), Ministry of Economy.

Regarding male population, there were 96.3 men every 100 women in 1995. Life expectancy at birth was 75.7 years for females and 68.6 years for males between 1990 and 1995. There were 22.3% of homes that did not meet basic needs in 1980 and 16.5% in 1991 in the whole country. Unsatisfied Basic Needs are measured in terms of deprived indexes as follows:

- Overcrowding: homes with more than 3 people per room.
- Housing: homes in unsuitable housing for living (renting room, precarious housing or another type).
- Sanitary conditions: homes without any kind of outdoor latrine.

² Murmis, Miguel and Feldman, Silvio; "Social Heterogeneity of Poverty", in VV. AA., *Down the Hill. The New Poor: Effects of the Crisis in the Argentine Society*, UNICEF – Losada, Buenos Aires, 1992.

- School Attendance: homes with at least a school-age child that does not go to school.
- Subsistence capacity: homes with 4 or more people by occupied member and whose head had poor education.

The urbanization process is in progress and this is shown by an increase of population in urban centers of 100,000 inhabitants and those of 10,000 to 50,000. It is expected that the total urban population will represent 89.6% of the total in the year 2000.

The data collected in the Permanent Survey of Homes in October 1997, shows an activity rate of 42,3% in the main urban agglomerations. This is the result of the relation between the economically active population and the total population. The unemployment rate reached 13,7% of the economically active population that same year.

In Greater Buenos Aires or *conurbano* (19 municipalities in Buenos Aires Province that surround the Federal Capital), the survey shows that 30.8% of the employed population were in the community, social and personal services sector ; 18.9% in manufacturing industry ; 18.5% in the trade sector ; 11.5% in financial services and the renting sector. When analysis working skills, the survey shows that for the same urban agglomerate and same date, 27.9% of employed people were engaged in activities requiring technical or professional skills. This percentage is higher in women (31.9%) than in men (25.6%). The majority of men (54.7%) were involved in activities requiring manual skills. Whereas the majority of women (39.2%) were engaged in activities that required no skills.

In 1991 census, 3.7% percentage of the population aged 10 and over was illiterate. This figure varied considerably according to the population : while it reached 11% in the rural population, it was 2.7% in the urban population. In 1991, 2.0% percentage of the population aged 5 and over has never attended school.

The death and birth gross rates were 7.6 per thousand and 19.2 per thousand respectively in 1996. Children's death rate was 20.9 every 1000 born alive children in the whole country. This rate was maintained at 22.2 per thousand during the last years. Both AIDS and cholera are spreading although there is not accurate data.

Regarding housing, 25% of the total showed defective characteristics. This figure rose up to 63.3% in rural areas. 66.2% of the total population had running water supply by pipelines inside the house or in the piece of land (drinking water); 59.7% inside the house and 6.5% in the piece of land where they lived.

As regards people's participation in presidential elections, the survey shows that 82% of registered voters voted in 1995, 85.65% in 1983 and 85.3% in 1989. Voting is compulsory in Argentina.

The Survey with the Poor was carried out in 8 sites : 3 rural (37%) and 5 urban (63%). Two rural

areas are located in the Province of Santiago del Estero (northeast), which is one of the poorest in the country and accounts for 2% of the country's population. The following sites were visited in this province : Villa Atamisqui , in the district of Villa Atamisqui in the mid-west, and Los Juries, in the district of General Taboada in the mid-east. Isla Talavera, the third rural site, is located between the municipalities of Campana and Zárate. This is in the north of the Province of Buenos Aires ,in Parana's River Delta (between Paraná Guazú and Paraná Miní Rivers).

The 5 urban sites are located in Greater Buenos Aires. This area is formed by 19 municipalities that surround Buenos Aires City. It is the most important area out of the four most populated and economically active centers of the country. It accounts for 63,27% of the population of the Province of Buenos Aires and one fourth of the country's population approx..

When the last statistics were shown, Greater Buenos Aires was formed by 19 municipalities. Since 1994, some of the largest municipalities have been divided up into smaller parts. The Provincial Law 11.551, passed on 20th October 1994, divided up General Sarmiento into 3 parts : José C. Paz, Malvinas Argentinas and San Miguel. Nowadays, Greater Buenos Aires is formed by some 25 municipalities but there is no statistical information about them yet. Also, there are projects to divide up other municipalities such as La Matanza.

The visit to the municipalities was varied. A neighborhood was visited in one ; few sites and various neighborhoods in others or various neighborhoods in various sites. The chart below shows the visits to each municipality:

Municipality	Site	Neighborhood
Avellaneda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dock Sud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglo • Isla Macial
Florencio Varela	(various sites)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • El Molino • Villa Argentina • Don José • Santa Inés • Los Caracolitos • San Juan • Vatione • San Nicolás
José C. Paz (ex General Sarmiento)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sol y Verde
La Matanza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isidro Casanova • González Catán 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Pedro • Settlement José L. Cabezas • González Catán
Moreno	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moreno Sur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lomas de Casasco • Settlement Latinoamericano

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuartel Quinto • Trujul • Parque Paso del Rey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Norberto • El vertel • Mariló • Santa Paula • Paso del Rey • La Reja
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The criteria for choosing the municipalities were:

- Poverty indicators;
- Balance in geographical distribution: Avellaneda and Florencio Varela in the south, La Matanza and Moreno in the west and José C. Paz in the northwest. (See map, appendix IV)

Province of Santiago del Estero, Demographic and Social Indicators

Two districts were visited in the province of Santiago del Estero. These register indicators lower than the average in its province. Villa Atamisqui is much more poor than General Taboada.

Population, density and population with UBN. Total of the province of Santiago del Estero and two districts.

District	Population	Population in%	Population density (inhab. Km2)	Population with UBN*	Population with UBN*in%
Atamisqui	9,251	1.37	4.10	5,702	61.64
Gral. Taboada	29,400	4.37	4.90	11,650	39.63
Total province	671,988	100,00	4.93	244,988	36.46

* Population with unsatisfied basic needs.

Source: Integrated System of Assessment and Monitoring of Programs (SIEMPRO), National Secretary of Social Development, 1995.

Population aged 10 and over according to literacy. Total of the province of Santiago del Estero and two districts.

	Population aged 10 and over	%	% males	% females
Atamisqui	6,546	12.48	5.42	7.06
Gral. Taboada	21,666	13.74	6.09	7.65
Total province	499,569	8.64	4.15	4.49

Source: Integrated System of Assessment and Monitoring of Programs (SIEMPRO), National Secretary of Social Development, 1995.

Type of housing. Total of the province of Santiago del Estero and two districts.

	Total of houses	Huts or cardboard houses %
Atamisqui	1,989	42.89
Gral. Taboada	6,380	28.51
Province Sgo. del Estero	149,537	20.11

Source: Integrated System of Assessment and Monitoring of Programs (SIEMPRO), National Secretary of Social Development, 1995.

Percentage of water supply. Total of the province of Santiago del Estero and two districts.

	1	2	3	unknown
Atamisqui	5.15	32.99	54.93	6.99
Gral. Taboada	30.89	31.51	30.03	7.58
Total province	41.74	29.20	22.67	6.39

1: Pipeline inside the house.

2: Pipeline outside the house but in the piece of land.

3: Pipeline outside the piece of land.

Source: Integrated System of Assessment and Monitoring of Programs (SIEMPRO), National Secretary of Social Development, 1995.

Province of Buenos Aires, Demographic and Social Indicators

Population, density and population with UBN. Total of the province of Buenos Aires and 7 municipalities

	Population	Population in%	Population density (inhab. Km ²)	Population with UBN*	Population with UBN*in%
Avellaneda	344,991	2.74	6,272.6	45,595	13.22
F. Varela	254,997	2.02	1,237.8	81,438	31.94
Gral. Sarmiento	652,969	5.18	3,331.5	170,227	26.07
La Matanza	1,121,298	8.90	3,471.5	238,848	21.03
Moreno	287,715	2.28	1,598.4	81,836	28.44
Campana	71,464	0.56	72.8	13,346	18.7
Zárate	91,600	0.72	76.2	17,326	19.0
Total province	12,594,974	100.00	40.6	2,134,353	16.95

* Population with unsatisfied basic needs.

Source: Integrated System of Assessment and Monitoring of Programs (SIEMPRO), National Secretary of Social Development, 1995.

Total population :Greater Buenos Aires and 5 municipalities

	Population	Population in %
Avellaneda	344,991	4.32
F. Varela	254,997	3.20
Gral. Sarmiento	652,969	8.19
La Matanza	1,121,298	14.07
Moreno	287,715	3.61
Total conurbano	7,969,324	100.00

Source: Integrated System of Assessment and Monitoring of Programs (SIEMPRO), National Secretary of Social Development, 1995.

Population aged 10 and over according to literacy. Total of the province of Buenos Aires and 7 municipalities

	Population aged 10 and over	%	% males	% females
Avellaneda	290,207	1.74	0.71	1.26
F. Varela	192,290	3.52	1.53	1.98
Gral. Sarmiento	505,143	3.03	1.41	1.63
La Matanza	895,313	2.68	1.11	1.57
Moreno	217,909	3.31	1.51	1.80
Campana	59,528	2.79	1.42	1.37
Zárate	73,344	2.93	1.47	1.46
Total province	10,192,261	2.35	1.08	1.26

Source: Integrated System of Assessment and Monitoring of Programs (SIEMPRO), National Secretary of Social Development, 1995.

Education, health and standard of living indicators in 7 municipalities of the province of Buenos Aires

	Schooling rate people aged 13 to 17 (%) 1991	Children's death rate (0/00) 1988-1994	Population with high sanitary risk (%) 1991
Avellaneda	75.1	23.0	8.5
F. Varela	53.6	27.0	15.3
Gral. Sarmiento	57.6	27.4	9.8
La Matanza	60.9	22.0	6.6
Moreno	54.6	27.4	11.2
Campana	62.1	26.7	6.9

Zárate	66.5	28.9	7.1
Total %	66.3	22.0	6.2

Source: Report on Human Development in the province of Buenos Aires, 1996, Argentine Program of Human Development, Senate , Buenos Aires , 1996.

Type of housing. Total of the province of Buenos Aires and 7 municipalities

	Total of houses	Huts or cardboard houses %
Avellaneda	184,470	5.33
F. Varela	61,941	15.98
Gral. Sarmiento	162,625	12.81
La Matanza	296,035	10.16
Moreno	72,078	12.67
Campana	19,394	6.87
Zárate	24,680	7.87
Total province	3,535,635	6.87

Source: Integrated System of Assessment and Monitoring of Programs (SIEMPRO), National Secretary of Social Development, 1995.

Percentage of water supply %. Total of the province of Buenos Aires and 7 municipalities

	1	2	3	unknown
Avellaneda	90.97	5.45	1.41	2.16
F. Varela	48.62	39.87	8.87	2.64
Gral. Sarmiento	58.13	34.08	5.10	2.69
La Matanza	68.54	25.93	3.11	2.42
Moreno	52.50	39.82	5.18	2.50
Campana	74.33	18.73	4.89	2.05
Zárate	79.17	16.43	2.71	1.69
Total provincia	76.65	18.39	2.87	2.09

1: Pipeline inside the house.

2: Pipeline outside the house but in the piece of land.

3: Pipeline outside the piece of land.

Source: Integrated System of Assessment and Monitoring of Programs (SIEMPRO), National Secretary of Social Development, 1995.

Housing indicators in 7 municipalities of the province of Buenos Aires

Municipality	Population in precarious homes (%)1991	Homes overcrowded per room (%) 1991	Homes with no public system of water supply (%)1991
Avellaneda	12.7	3.5	0.8
F. Varela	53.2	13.0	86.7
Gral. Sarmiento	43.6	9.7	90.5

La Matanza	33.8	7.4	49.1
Moreno	-	-	-
Campana	28.2	7.7	19.6
Zárate	25.4	7.7	12.2
Total %	23.8	5.6	40.2

Source: Report on Human Development in the province of Buenos Aires, 1996, Argentine Program of Human Development, Senate , Buenos Aires , 1996.

Unemployment was mentioned throughout the survey. According to statistics, unemployment went down in Greater Buenos Aires in the last years, being 22.6% in May 1995 and 15.6% in October 1997.

Although the 5 urban sites show signs of poverty, they are at the same level or below the average in the province. The following scale could be established : Avellaneda first and La Matanza second, are the least poor. This is due to some areas with good standard of living. This two sites are close to the Federal Capital and show high levels of productivity. Moreno and General Sarmiento are third and fourth respectively, and last Florencio Varela, the poorest. This last three urban sites are farther away from the Federal Capital.

Table 2.1: Number of Discussion Groups at the Study Sites

Site	Poor				Other (specify)				Total
	Men	women	youth	Subtotal				subtotal	
Rural sites									
Isla Talavera	8	15	31	54					54
Los Juries	46	17	19	82					82
Villa Atamisqui	13	31	60	104		9		9	113
Rural subtotal	67	63	110	240	-	-9	-	9-	249

Urban sites									
La Matanza	15	44	11	70	5	7		12	82
José C. Paz	12	48	15	75		2	5	7	82
Avellana da	15	37	25	77					77
Florencio Varela	4	84	12	100					100
Moreno	19	92	13	124					124
Urban urban	65	305	76	446	5	9	5	19	465
TOTAL	132	368	186	686	5	18	5	28	714

Table 2.2: Number of individual and institutional case studies at the study sites

Site	Poor				Other (Specify)				Total
	men	women	youth	Subtotal				subtotal	
Rural sites									
Isla Talevera	2	1	1	4		3		3	7
Los Juríes	3	2	1	6	1			1	7
Villa Atamisqui	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	7
Rural subtotal	6	4	3	13	3	4	1	8	21
Urban sites									
La Matanza	3	2		5	1	1		2	7
José C. Paz	1	3	1	5		2		2	7
Avellana da	3	1	3	7					7
Florencio Varela	3	2	1	6	1			1	7
Moreno	-	9	2	11	-	1	-	1	12
Urban subtotal	10	17	7	35	2	4	-	6	40
TOTAL	16	21	10	47	4	8	1	14	61

3.1. Perceptions of Poverty: Well-being Definitions and Trends

3.1.1. Rural Area

Classifying Criteria for Identifying Social Groups

Well-being is identified mainly with having work, money and education by the poor. Infrastructure and access to services are also taken into account.

The groups of farmers state that in order to be well, they need to have enough hectares, to be owners, to own tools, dams and wire fences and to have access to credit.

In another site, men associated well-being with money and consumption but women with work and education.

- **Occupational Category:** unemployed, unskilled jobs, seasonal jobs, owners of lands or businesses, the ones who work in the municipality (they have a salary and do not work), government job creation program. **Working Conditions:** Living by hunting and fishing, badly-paid jobs.
- **Way of Purchasing:** cash, on credit. Those who pay cash are valued customers.
- **Isolation due to Distance:** communities faraway from centers that supply social services. There are two categories: those that are near a road but far from the center and others that are both far from the center and the roads to it. "... they go to Santiago to buy ..." the ones that live on the shore...". Isolated.
- **Ownership of Land and Businesses:** owners of large pieces of land, owners of big businesses : "supermarkets", "sell of cattle", "the ones who organize folk music festivals", "public transport to neighboring districts". People with a few hectares(but not owners). Having wire fence or a fence made of tree branches. Having tools, pick-ups, farm tractors. Access to credit.
- **Community Infrastructure:** lack of roads or roads in bad condition; lack of water (ordinary dams) and drinking water; lack of electricity; lack of natural gas; lack of pay phones; lack of public transport, animals are their means of transport; lack of stores.
- **Type of Housing:** wood, cardboard, metal sheet, oil metal barrel, sun-dried clay brick, straw, brick houses, 'hen-house" (housing projects) , huts ; with no electricity (candles and lamps).
- **Social Services:** education and health. Lack of institutions. Lack of professionals, ambulances, medicines.
- **Environmental Conditions:** floods in one group; but in general, dangerous animals that

may cause diseases.

Perception of Well-Being/Poverty : Proportion and Criterion Trends.

Improved: some social services and community organization that stopped the owners who used to come with the police to get their production and tools, and take them to prison.

Worsened: the price of crops (e.g. : cotton), cattle and animal skins from hunting. Closing of job positions. Decline in money value.

Conclusion: "WE ARE WORSE TODAY"

The proportional trend shows an increase in the most poor categories and a decrease in the ones with better standard of living. Sometimes it remains the same, there is no improvement. The 1989 hyperinflation brought about undesirable changes in the price of farming products.

Main Issues

Security

Security is not mentioned except to differentiate them from the rest. In addition, there are no differences with respect to security at home. Their perception of security is influenced by the news received from big urban centers."... there was not a robbery report here, last year..." or "nothing happens here". "(In the city)... they have everything but they are worse because of crimes and drugs ; we sleep with the door open on the island".

The feeling of insecurity is identified with being jobless or not being owners of land or property. This situation brings about risks because they do not have resources to live or they may be moved out of their homes.

At the end of 1998, there were confrontations between farmhands and owners of land with bulldozers that wanted to move them out with the help of the police. This problem triggered off a quick and effective organization between them and other institutions.

A conflict that was mentioned in one site, was the retreat of German priests 15 years ago. These priests helped to strengthen the production and service structure; "they brought money to do things".

Sanitary insecurity is also highly perceived. A low standard of living creates insecurity. There is no social mobility because there are no opportunities; or these are rare compared with the urban centers and the past.

Insecurity is caused by the river : floods, in another site. There was a big flood a year and a half ago that destroyed everything they had. A government program is building up wooden huts but it has not met their needs yet. "Some people from Talavera did not walk on solid ground for 8 months".

Opportunity

Generally speaking, opportunities have decreased. They are related to help received outside their community (e.g.: German priests) . Job opportunities have changed drastically; only

seasonal work, 3 or 4 months. In other provinces, this was longer and there were other job opportunities as well. It is also related to opportunities to study “get a degree” and to get a job.

The most vulnerable groups are those who had to emigrate due to labor problems. “The farmhands that used to work on large farms emigrated to the shore”, a stretch of land with precarious housing and no services. At that critical moment, only the big retail businessmen obtained benefit selling on credit to the people.

The groups who enjoy benefits are identified with those being close to power. “Those who are engaged in politics or close to the politician in power”.

There is no optimism, “we are sons of poor people, people are born poor and die poor in the country”.

In another site, they mentioned opportunities in the organization, in the gathering of people. They also mentioned the acquisition of land or expansion of it through credits accessible to them.

In another site, they found opportunities in government job programs. These were isolated communities that used to live by hunting and fishing; but they are afraid that the program will come to an end and they do not foresee other opportunities in the area. They say that they cannot go back to hunting and fishing due to price problems. “Before, the capybara and otter skins were worth money, now they are worth nothing”.

Exclusion

Exclusion is mainly perceived in relation to work. Women are the first to be excluded because they do not have access to seasonal work. In addition, seasonal work performed by men is out of the welfare system and social services. “Swallow workers” or “those who live on the shore” are excluded, “badly-seen, lazy and they do not want to work.”

They also feel socially excluded because there is no equality of opportunities. People in the city have money, health, education, credits; “the people in the country are last on the list”. Health is essential; they live in areas of high risk of endemic diseases, surrounded by dangerous animals that bite.

One group says that they are treated differently at the public hospital in town because they are peasants. In another site, one group is more excluded than another because of isolation. Since they live near weekend houses, they can get casual work.

Cohesion

There is a strong feeling of belonging, even if economic conditions are deteriorating. In some cases, they have their own institutions to defend their interests.

In one site, there are no significant differences among groups in relation to religion, ethnicity or language, only with regard to party political matters. There was only one crisis “the santiagueño”, in the last years. This political crisis was due to a delay (fiscal crisis) in the payment of salaries of the provincial public sector.

In one site, they were moved out of their homes. This strengthened solidarity not only to support each other in conflicts, but also to improve opportunities. In another site, the crisis developed a program called “For a better life” carried out by the school with the government support. Social and community life depends on what the school generates.

3.1.2. Urban Area

Classifying Criteria for Identifying Social Groups

Well-being is identified mainly, both by men and women, with the satisfaction of basic needs: work, income, daily food, education for their children and medicines for the sick; having basic services; proper housing, and with security: “living with no sudden alarm”.

Other groups add: not having floods, and having ambulances and medical assistance.

- **Community Infrastructure:** lack of paved roads (dirt roads in bad conditions that become impassable when it rains), lack of drinking water and difficulties in getting water (individual hand pump, individual pumping engine, community water wells, community tanks, running water), lack of street lighting, lack of natural gas, lack of pay phones, lack or shortage of public transport, lack of small stores. Sometimes these services exist but they do not work or their quality is not good. Garbage collection. Urban structure: with planning or without planning.
- **Type of Housing:** wood, cardboard, metal sheet, brick houses; with no access to water(they have to carry water with pales), with access to water; with or without flooring. Rooms in a house.
- **Social Services:** the criterion depends on whether they have or not certain institutions such as various levels in education (Kindergarten, Primary, and Secondary “*Polimodal*”); various levels in health care, childcare and food for their children (day-care centers and soup kitchens). Police protection. Municipal services for the community.
- **Isolation due to Distance:** communities faraway from stores and centers that supply various services. They are near a road but far from the center, “the ones in the back streets”.
- **Sanitary-Environmental Conditions:** floods, muddy roads when it rains. Garbage lots, places where garbage is piled up. Cleaning of streets.
- **Occupational category:** unemployed, casual work, seasonal jobs, employed by government job creation plan, stable jobs. **Working Conditions:** precarious jobs, “backbreaking work”, unskilled jobs, badly-paid jobs, “they collect objects that people throw away in streets and then they sell them”.
- **Land Ownership Conditions:** owners or occupants of pieces of land, private property or state property.
- **Social and Living Conditions:** alcoholism, drug addiction, criminality “full of thieves”, “wicked people”, lack of security, quantity and quality of police protection “police assistance

depends on the place where you live". Demographic growth, overcrowding. Diseases: malnutrition, skin diseases.

Types of Neighborhoods: neighborhood, slum, settlement and shanty town. Shanty towns are the ones in worst conditions.

Issues such as insecurity, criminality, family and community violence , drug addiction and alcoholism cause concern in all the categories. The difference lies in the degree of help and protection that the more privileged enjoy. Lack of work affects more than one category, this also differentiates them from the privileged.

Criterion Trends and Proportional Rating

Improved Relatively: community infrastructure and access to social services. But the increase is not equal for everybody. New neighborhoods are being incorporated but they are not satisfying their needs yet, they are outside the system.

Worsened: money value and mainly lack of work and insecurity.

The poorest categories are going to increase in relation to the poor ones, and those that are better are not going to suffer changes. There is a pessimistic perception of the future, since they do not see the possibility of upward mobility because they are poor. If they are lucky they will stay in the same place. There is a great probability to get worse. There are no expectations to improve.

If there are changes in categories, they refer to a deterioration of living conditions. There were only neighborhoods and shanty towns in the past. Now, there are neighborhoods with lower proportions. Another category arises "a type of settlement" and there are also shanty towns that increase or do not change proportionately. There are exceptional changes, for example, an Indian community that emigrated and settled down in one of the municipalities.

Main Issues

Security

Insecurity is constant and daily. The issue of lack of security comes up everywhere, with no distinction of age or sex. There are two sides to this issue. On the one hand, it is related to physical violence, criminality. On the other hand, violence is related to helplessness, lack of support and welfare. There is no work or food and this provokes a social crisis deepened by "gangs of robbers and murderers", "drug addicts". In some sites , there is tension between the neighbors "It is incredible that we , neighbors, steal each other. One day they break into your house and steal everything you have. The next day they pass by and greet you as if nothing had happened". This situation gets worse because they do not steal for survival but there is a moral crisis. There is a need to hurt, bother people, killing for killing's sake and sometimes for fun. It is

surprising how young criminals and drug addicts are “they are younger every day”.

There are no great differences between secure homes and insecure ones. They are all going through a process of growing insecurity, where human life has lost its value.

There is more insecurity in : homes with women as family heads and inside the homes with children and women as victims of family violence that extends to the community level. Also, in the slums, because they do not have material resources to face insecurity nor support from the government or institutions. These they do not trust, especially the police

“The police does nothing”. The groups mentioned two aspects. On the one hand, the feeling of insecurity makes rich people pay security private services or even the police to give them a better service(bribe “*coima*”). On the other hand, robbers are protected by the police, they are not chased they go out of jail easily, etc. Criminals have to pay the police to work. Usually, lack of security is not only related to criminals but also to the police.” Not only they do not protect us , but they also chase us and treat us badly. But not to robbers.”

One of the problems that people face is: the 1989 socio-economic crisis known as “hyperinflation”. This type of crisis was not repeated in the last years.

Other problems are : frequent floods and lack of work.

Some groups identified productive activities that obstruct the sewage system.

People who are integrated with social networks from social programs, receive more help to face those problems. Some of them only enjoy the benefits; others are direct participants who have more possibilities. For example, they take training courses frequently and have a close relationship with authorities or the people in charge of programs. Generally, they show a positive and active attitude in the face of adversity. They produce concrete facts from themselves and their community that ease their painful situation.

Opportunities

They think it is almost impossible to reduce poverty. They do not see social or economic opportunities. Their standard of living, both material and moral, has deteriorated and is falling every day. On the one hand they pointed out the need to create jobs. On the other, they do not believe such a thing will happen: “factories close down” and “generally companies close down”.

One of the visited sites used to be an important economic center. There used to be important companies: soap-making companies, shipbuilding companies, cold storage plants, and a railway terminal where freight trains from the Mesopotamia used to stop. The new companies that set up, do not give them work and obstruct the sewage system. “They cause problems”.

Men pointed out that women have more job opportunities as housemaids today. Not only they get jobs, but they also earn more than men. Some women have become the main source of income because they are involved in various types of activities in the neighborhood: soup kitchen, day-care center, community closet (they distribute second hand clothes), distribution of materials for housing, milk, community orchard, distribution of food, distribution of medicines; these are mainly related to government programs or they have its support. There are also religious organizations. They rarely mentioned NGOs.

The program Pro-orchard is not very successful mainly due to problems in the neighborhood. They destroy the orchards or they do not take care of them. A neighbor from Jose C. Paz that had a family orchard but abandoned it “...because everybody used to ask me...so it is not enough...it is not fair...”

Education is seen as fundamental in order to get work and to be somebody in life.

Exception: a group of youngsters, mainly boys, who think it is a difficult situation but are optimistic; if one studies, makes an effort, etc.

Social Exclusion

Exclusion is mainly perceived in the labor market; also in community decisions and the social networks' participation. This affects mainly men who not only lose economically but also morally. They feel they have lost power and they cannot set limits to their children. They feel embarrassed when their wives go out to work. Some of them get depressed.

A factor of social discrimination is to be identified with a poor social group" it is better not to say where one lives in order to get a job", "people from the shanty town are not wanted" One group said that the biggest company in the area does not hire workers from the neighborhood because they are *villeros* (people who live in shanty towns).

Some groups feel they are a forgotten community, that is not taken into account. Neither the municipality nor the company repairs broken or deteriorated things. "We were forgotten in the past; now the situation is worse". "We are not even on their maps".

There is economic displacement of the population, internal migration and families that go back and forth looking for a place where to settle down. They are jobless or their incomes decrease. They cannot pay the rent, food, etc. They look for cheaper places: get hold of a piece of land and build a cardboard house (settlement) or settle down with a relative and join a soup kitchen.

Violence, even the physical one, gets worse in the community in relation with thefts, muggings and rapes. These situations may end up in murder. There are marginal groups(unemployed, drug addicts, people with no opportunities, displaced, etc.) that take to crime.

Social Cohesion

The feeling of belonging to the neighborhood is low. There is lack of solidarity among neighbors. They feel they are not included in the community life they live in or are surrounded by. Even though there are examples of solidarity: neighbors get engaged in activities in common, now people are more worried about themselves due to their critical situation. "People were more united in the past", "we kill each other now" or "do not get involved".

The population that migrates causes tension because the prevalent idea is that they will take their job positions since immigrants are willing to work for less money. They are considered hard-working and peaceful. Those immigrants mentioned were: Bolivians, Paraguayans and Brazilians. This situation does not directly generate physical violence."...they work like slaves all day long..."

A religious group ,the *ubandistas*, was mentioned in two sites. They perform rituals *macumba* where they sacrifice animals and they worship the Devil. People are afraid of them and feel distrust.

In another site, a settlement, the union among the neighbors was highlighted and the help from a close neighborhood. This is a special situation. It is the most precarious settlement, it has nothing and it has been there for 2 years. People face many difficulties but are motivated by the illusion of having a house and their own property. They have a strong feeling of optimism and belonging to the community. They feel accompanied by their closest neighborhood where their relatives are. These had a similar story. "They understand us because they faced the same problems".

3.2. Poverty: Causes and Consequences

LACK OF WORK was the only indicator perceived as cause and consequence of poverty by all the groups regardless of sex, age or place of residence.

A detailed description of the perceptions is given below, classified into rural and urban areas.

3.2.1. Rural Area

Regarding self-perceptions, they were allowed to make free associations of synonyms and definitions of poverty in order to analyze causes and consequences later. The results in rural areas are:

Inadequate standard of living. Difficult situation

The **CAUSES PERCEIVED** may be grouped into the following categories :

Government Institutions: They were mentioned in various ways, including both corruption and responsibilities within government levels.

Dimension of Values: It is more visible than in urban areas where it was related to consequences. In rural areas, it is related to causes: dependency, conformity, laziness and lost of values. **Community Links:** the community as a group and the organization may be considered under this label.

Problems Related to Production: The price of products and the lack of resources and loans were mentioned.

Lack of Work: It is different from urban areas. There is no investment in the creation of jobs in the government sector. But there is investment to help the productive sector.

Education and Professional Education: It is difficult to go out and break this generational repetition of poverty. It is also difficult to access due to public transport and distance. It is related to the consequences of living in rural areas rather than poverty in itself.

Infrastructure and Services: It is related to lack of public transport and health care.

CONSEQUENCES can be classified into:

Health: consequences related to this category are mentioned in various ways. As a result, there is a detailed description of diseases related to poverty (*vinchuca* * insect carrier of Chagas' disease, aids, malnutrition, common diseases, death due to urgencies, lack of medicines, etc.) Some consequences are difficult to define within this category, for example pregnancy as a consequence of poverty is not only related to health.

Infrastructure: it is the most visible consequence of poverty for the rural population (lack of water, transport and proper housing). It can also be related to other categories such as health and education where consequences result in the lack of centers/services.

Lack of Basic Needs: from food to clothing and footwear.

Education: lack of education is not seen as a cause nor as the **main** consequence of poverty. Whereas illiteracy and lack of education are perceived as an effect of poverty.

Access to Land: the lack of a piece of land or the means to acquire it as well as tools. This category of poverty is closely related to rural areas.

Violence /Criminality / Addictions: it is mentioned in various ways. It is an important consequence but it is not confined to family violence as in urban areas. Violence in all its aspects, although it is mentioned, is perceived as a phenomenon of urban poverty not rural.

3.2.2. Urban Area

Regarding self-perceptions, they were allowed to make free associations of synonyms and definitions of poverty in order to analyze causes and consequences later. The following terminology is used in urban areas:

Humble people – Chaotic situation – More poverty– Living in worse conditions-Critical situation- Lack of dignity-Malaria (argot for misery) – Complex life.
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The **CAUSES** perceived by various groups, men as well as women, adults as well as youngsters, may be grouped into the following categories

Government Institutions: They were mentioned in various ways including corruption, mismanagement of funds and responsibilities within governmental levels.

Lack of Work: It is also mentioned in various ways, and it varies according to the impact on the analyzed area. It is related not only to privatization but also to modernization and the lack of

investment to create jobs. There were also several barriers to get a job (age, appearance, education) that are included in other categories.

Education and Professional Education: It is also mentioned in various ways. It is difficult to go out and break this generational repetition of poverty.

Immigration: It is related to both foreign immigration (neighboring countries) and internal immigration (provinces of the country). Immigrants may take their job positions.

Housing and Infrastructure: It is not considered an important problem as regards the cause of poverty in urban areas. On the contrary, it is seen as a consequence.

Others: There is a large variety ranging from solidarity, discrimination, frustration, a large number of children, to difficulties to manage resources. Also depression and even death.

CONSEQUENCES

Consequences are related to the impact of poverty on the daily life of the studied groups. It is difficult to establish a sequence cause/consequence between every cause and consequence mentioned. Therefore, consequences have been analyzed and classified independently.

Family Violence: It is mentioned in various ways. It is the main consequence of poverty. It ranges from a change of roles of men and women to the abandonment of children. It can be related to the category Depression/Frustration that includes consequences such as unwillingness, anger and impotence. Both categories could easily be associated.

Health: There are severe consequences of poverty on health such as a deteriorated health service, malnutrition, lack of medicines, number of services available per neighborhood and disease both physical and psychological(depression, distress).

Addictions: alcoholism and drug addiction. These may be included in health.

Insecurity/Violence: These consequences are difficult to classify because the poor perceive themselves as recipients of both institutional and social violence.

4. Priorities of the Poor

The problems and priorities experienced by the various groups reviewed do not evidence major differences, they are practically the same, with slight nuances. Thus they can be grouped in the following categories according to the area:

4.1. Rural Area

Problems in rural areas are more heterogeneous, being directly associated with the place of belonging. Some of the common problems are:

Lack of Water: It is the key problem of the three rural areas surveyed. They do not have drinking water for daily use, they have water from an underground water sheet, a well or a river depending on the area, to which they must add (when they can afford it) some bleach drops to prevent vomits and diarrhea, particularly in children. This lack of water also prevents them from raising cattle and growing crops, either for their internal consumption or for selling the products. In some areas, they raise animals and grow crops, but with the sacrifice implied in carrying the water to supply the production needs.

It should be noted that in Villa Atamisqui they relate the water problem to unemployment and it has even become a social and family problem, which can be summarized by expressions such as "...without water, there is no cattle and there is no wool". "Now there is nothing we can do, just going out to work, the younger ones go out and leave us their children".

Communication Problems: These are related on the one hand to distance, both internal, from one farm to the other, and external, separating them from the nearest town, with the aggravating factor that they do not have either their own or public transportation, and all are dirt roads which become impassable when it rains. On the other hand, they do not have radios -which in the countryside fulfill a community role, acting as a message receiving and transmitting agent to neighbors- and there are no telephones to resort to in case of an emergency. In times of heavy rain, they become isolated from the rest of the community due to long distances, the roads, the lack of radio and telephone.

Health: Lack of Health Station, specialist doctors, medicines, ambulances, the scourge of the *vinchuca* (a cone-nose bug, vector of the Chagas' disease living in clay and straw houses) and hygiene as a cause of health problems are mentioned only by the communities in Santiago del Estero -Los Jurías and Villa Atamisqui-; there appearing to be greater lack of protection in the area of general health services and health prevention.

Housing: No brick houses, clay and straw huts, no wood cabins. These are problems affecting the community of Los Jurías, in Santiago del Estero, the community of Isla Talavera, in Buenos Aires. In Villa Atamisqui, they also have poor housing, but it was not pointed out as a priority problem.

The rest of the problems mentioned are specific to each community, not because they do not share many of them, since they arise in the treatment of Well-being and Causes and Consequences of Poverty, but because when it comes to prioritizing, it is the distinctive problems of each community that appear.

Other problems in **Los Juríes** can be grouped in two categories:

Access to Land: Both men and women believe the problem of land to be of utmost importance; not owning the land where they, their children and even their parents were born. This makes them feel uncertain due to the legal instability in which they live.

Problems Related to Production: The cattle are worth nothing, there is no pricing for cotton (meaning prices are low), expensive material for leatherwork, lack of tools for working on the field. A devaluation of the agricultural and livestock production is perceived and there is inaccessibility to certain tools and materials for working on the farmland.

Other problems prioritized by the communities in **Villa Atamisqui** can be classified as:

Unemployment: It is the priority problem both for men and women. The little work they have is unstable, temporary, and most of the time far from their homes, since men have to travel to other provinces to perform agricultural jobs and women work as cleaning personnel in other towns, leaving their children with their grandmothers, which breaks up the family group. But some of these women must stay in their homes due to the absence of work opportunities.

Social Care: No-one helps us, *PRANI* Box (National Government Food Program) just for children from 2 to 6 years old, mentioned by the group of women, and social benefits for the elderly, mentioned by men. It is women who feel mainly the need for social care to supply their families' basic needs.

In **Isla Talavera:**

Lack of Electricity: Mentioned both by young and adult women. They have to use candles or gas lamps, which prevents adult women from knitting or sewing, the only paid activity they have, and young ones from studying or helping their mothers to knit or sew.

Lack of Economic Resources: The group of young women mentioned as their priority problems that "money is not enough to support the family", "there's not enough money at home and we must go out to work", this leads them to "work at home sewing, knitting or cleaning campsites". The lack of resources at home forces the young women currently studying at High School to insert themselves into the labor market at a very early age.

Other Problems of the Young Women's Group: Associated, on the one hand, with the age problem and, on the other, with the reality they must live; they mention "quarrels with their parents due to lack of understanding", "we never take a break, we study and work at weekends"

These problems **tend** to be of a similar nature in urban communities and can be summarized as follows:

10 years ago: men and women: “We used to be better off”

The problems related to unemployment, the access to land and those associated with production were less significant than at present; the following phrases summarize this perception:

- ✓ “Men used to have more work”.
- ✓ “No-one used to claim for the land, they now come and want to expel us”
- ✓ “Cotton and cattle used to be worth more, and there used to be credit”
- ✓ Otter leather used to be worth more and we could exchange it for goods”

As regards the problems related to infrastructure and services in general, they perceive that they have remained the same throughout the period under review.

Future

Los Jurías: The same, if there is no help.

Villa Atamisqui: Uncertainty

Isla Talavera: Some infrastructure problems will be solved

Solving the Problems

With relation to who is responsible for solving the problems of the community, most of the groups attribute it to the Government.

Only in one group of women in Los Jurías the joint Government-Community undertaking was brought up to solve some problems related to housing and the Health Station “if the Government gives us the material, the community can contribute with labor.”

The problems raised are perceived as mainly structural and it is believed they are not solved due to the lack of political will to solve them.

4.2 Urban Area

Unemployment: It is the priority problem in the various groups of poor people (men and women) and appears as the main Poverty indicator from the perceptions of Well-being and Causes and Consequences. In some groups it appears under the closed factory and unemployment criterion, but always in the first or second place.

Infrastructure and Housing: The lack of drinking and running water, the lack of street lighting or electricity in the homes, the lack of a sewage system, the lack or shortage of public transportation, the lack of pay phones, paved roads and proper housing are the problems daily faced by the different communities and the most mentioned ones, generally appearing at the top of the ranking. The environmental health conditions could be included in this category, having arisen in Avellaneda as a daily problem; garbage (“here everything is garbage”, “the Municipality collects it when it feels like it”), and when it rains, there are floods. These poor infrastructure problems were perceived both by the men and the women of the various communities.

Insecurity/Law Enforcement: Related both to common crime and that generated by the Police themselves. The image of the Police is negative because it is believed that they do not do their job “they come and take you just because,” “...we are arrested and those who steal are not.” “Violence is very strong, one is scared of leaving one’s home at any time.” “They hurt you or kill you for any reason.” Insecurity, like community infrastructure, was mentioned by all groups, men and women of different ages.

Health: The lack of first-aid centers (mentioned in Florencio Varela, La Matanza and Moreno), the lack of a hospital (mentioned in Florencio Varela), the scourge of AIDS (La Matanza) are problems perceived only by some communities, the children and the elderly being the most vulnerable segment due to the lack of nearby and equipped health systems. In José C. Paz, the issue of malnutrition was brought up, because there is no money to feed the children, discrimination by disease, and juvenile pregnancies (young men: “a trick to get the guy they like.”) The problems connected with health were mentioned mainly by the women, who continue fulfilling the role of helping the family, thus being those who suffer the most the health care deficiency in the community.

Among the **social problems**, addictions were the most mentioned: drug addiction (F. Varela, La Matanza and José C. Paz) and alcoholism (also in La Matanza). As it can be noticed, La Matanza (the largest and most populated district) appears to be the community with the highest risks and the most vulnerable to problems of health and addictions. It is worth pointing out that the problem of alcoholism was mentioned exclusively by the women and with relation to the adult and young male who, because of the lack of opportunities, resorts to drinking. Drugs were mentioned by several female groups and a male group in José C. Paz, referring to youngsters and children, also as a result of the lack of opportunities for becoming inserted in the labor or educational market, in the case of the children, due to the dissolution of the family. The impact of poverty on family dissolution, violence, abandonment.

Education: The lack of Kindergartens (Avellaneda, F.Varela, Moreno), Day-Care Centers (F. Varela and Moreno), High Schools (Avellaneda and La Matanza) and Primary Schools (F. Varela) reflects the priority problems of these communities, since in view of the absence of such institutions in the area, they must travel, which they cannot afford, thus leading to their exclusion from formal education. The problems associated with education related mainly to women and, in particular, to a young male group in Avellaneda.

Social Care: No soup kitchens, no soup kitchens for the elderly, no food, no help to those in need, no social programs, problems mentioned by women as needing resolution in order to alleviate starvation in the family.

Other Problems: These range from lack of community organization, lack of participation, no neighbors' association, to bureaucracy and politics considered to be dirty.

The **Tendency** of these problems may be summarized as:

10 years ago: men and women: "We used to be better off"

The problems connected with unemployment, insecurity and addictions used to be less important than at present; this view may be summarized by the following phrases:

- ✓ "In the past, almost all men used to work."
- ✓ "Whoever did not work, it was because he did not want to; everyone had a stable job."
- ✓ "Now everyone has odd jobs (temporary jobs) and for little money to make matters worse."
- ✓ "The neighborhood used to be much quieter, they didn't use to steal so much."
- ✓ "Now you can't leave your house alone because they will take everything, they break in and you are left without the little you have."
- ✓ "Now you can't go out, because not only do they mug you but also they kill you."
- ✓ "Drugs have come to stay, they will never get rid of them."
- ✓ "You live with them (drugs), you see the kids sniffing glue in the plastic bag at the corner of your house."

As regards the problems of infrastructure and services in general, they feel that they have persisted throughout the period under review.

Future

Men and women: "I don't think this will improve, it'll get worse."

The pessimistic view of the future relates to work opportunities; employment is perceived as the key and the solution to the other problems of the community. The replacement of men with machines anticipates an uncertain future. This is summarized by the following phrases:

- ✓ "The problem is that there is nothing without work".
- ✓ "It's crystal clear: little and badly paid work, that's the trend."
- ✓ "I think that if there is an increasing number of machines, sooner or later fewer people will be needed".

The youngsters were more optimistic, they lay their hopes of overcoming their poverty condition on education.

Solving the Problems

With relation to who is responsible for solving the problems of the community, most of the groups attribute it to the Government. The most common answer was: "If the Government doesn't solve this, who is going to solve it?", referring to their own Government, unemployment, health, services, the Police, prices.

In most of the groups, the Government-Community partnership arose as the way to solve some problems related to addictions, health, malnutrition, housing, family violence, filthiness, empty plots of land, discrimination, thefts, fights, rapes, places for the children, fear, lack of culture, family planning.

Also, although in connection with few problems, they decided that the community itself was able to address them -family problems, abandonment and negligence, suicide, relationship problems with their neighbors, lack of solidarity.

The problems raised are perceived as mainly structural, which can only be solved through external support (Government) by implementing social and economic policies that will help to overcome this Poverty situation.

5. Institutional Analysis

5.1 Rural Area

The Most Important Institutions in People's Lives

Both men and women have a similar perception of the most (and least) valued institutions. However, this similarity somewhat disappears among the various sites giving way to the different local realities, without disregarding though certain common features. These are basically four:

- A. The existence of a core institution, as a project coordinator, to the inside and outside of the community, which will facilitate the relationships that would go beyond its specific mission.
- B. The "remoteness" of the Government.
- C. The importance of institutions related to communications: mail, telephones, TV, local FM radios.
- D. A negative perception of private companies.

A. In rural areas of both the Province of Santiago del Estero and the Province of Buenos Aires, primary and high school were viewed exclusively as the most important institutions. The reason for such a perception of educational institutions may vary from their value as an enabler of certain social mobility ("it gives you a degree") to the value of having made the core of community life their own. Such is the case of the School in Isla Talavera.

"The school offers you work. We used to hunt and fish, and now we do carpentry and masonry work at school. "Women also work at school and our children study." "It is the Headmistress who makes decisions." "The school helps everyone, gives scholarships, gives supplies, and helped a lot during the floods." "It has a car, a motorbike, and a van."

In the case of Los Juríes, the core institution is the Cooperativa Unión Campesina (a Farmers' Cooperative), ranked 2nd in this site. The Cooperative is the most influential and prestigious institution in the community. Through its coordinating role, it receives information from the national and provincial Programs, which is referred to the Neighbors' Committee for its overall discussion. Additionally, it channels technical assistance from national agencies of agricultural technology.

"The Cooperative centralizes different Government programs and, through it, we can benefit from them." "Through it, loans from abroad are arranged, and they are distributed to the people who need them, to its members." "Through it, we also receive information from other institutions," and "it solves people's problems. For example, we had crops on this plot of land and we did not have the means to build a fence around it; through the Cooperative, we got a loan to clear the land, build the fence and close the plots."

B. The “remoteness” of the Government means that some Government institutions are viewed as absent or –at least- ineffective. Primary schools, hospitals and high schools (the most valued ones) are –except for the school in Atamisqui- part of the Government presence, but these not only receive education demands. Normally, these institutions work amidst countless difficulties, aggravated by the lack of resources, which worsens the people’s perception and appreciation of the Government, which is (or should be) their support.

The worst opinions relate to politics. In the Buenos Aires case (Isla Talavera), this appreciation is softened thanks to the municipal presence in times of natural catastrophes (floods), but in the two cases in Santiago del Estero, and both for men and women, the role of the Municipality is relative: “they talk a lot, but they do nothing,” or “they don’t give a damn about building roads,” “they promise much and deliver nothing.”

Moreover, the Police show another unvalued face of the Government. Although in rural areas the crisis in terms of the people’s physical security does not reach the levels of suburban areas, the Police offer common expressions. In one case, “because they do nothing and that’s why they don’t cause themselves to be seen,” but in another, they appear with firm features of connivance with the economic power:

“What’s their use? None. The police station is there without staff.” “There’s nobody.” If we need to file a report, we have to go to Los Juríes...” “The La Simona case is a clear example, which is a land-related problem. The firm (company who owns the land) filed several reports with the Police against the people, the farming community, and the Police take the report filed by the company. But La Simona’s people go to file a report against the company and the Police do not take it. They tell you: the boss is not in, come back at 6, come back tomorrow. You go there and they don’t have any paper, we don’t have this, we don’t have that, they make up thousands of excuses and they do not take your report. That’s why we regard the Police as far from the community, because their purpose is to do justice, but they don’t. So having or not the Police is the same for us.”

C. The institutions related to communications are particularly significant. Two of them in particular: local radios which substitute the almost total absence of telephones through their “messages to the villager”, and the provincial highway administration, responsible for road upkeep. The latter is assessed similarly to other Government agencies: “they do not exist”, “they do nothing”. Radios are valued, although in some occasions they are said to have political interests and exclude the debate of ideas.

D. Private companies are viewed negatively by the people. In the case of agricultural companies “because no-one knows the owners” (Atamisqui) or because there are problems of land ownership (Los Juríes). Supply companies are not viewed positively either. In Atamisqui, for example, although the supermarket offers credit (since the job offer is highly seasonal), it is accused of being a loan shark. Likewise, the manufacturing companies close to Isla Talavera do not escape these comments: “Toyota with its robots and machines leave many people unemployed,” or “Farplac’s business is forestry, they are landholders.”

Among these common axes comprising the most valued institutions (primary and high schools) and the least valued (Police, municipality, political parties), there is a heterogeneous variety of situations, conditioned by local factors.

In the institutional arena, the institutions that stand out are:

1. *Cooperatives*. In Atamisqui considered to be inefficient to manage the main problem of the community (the lack of water), whereas in Los Juríes, it is –as we have already said- the coordinating organization per se.
2. *The Catholic Church*. In Atamisqui valued as holding a long tradition of involvement in social problems and as the creator of the physical infrastructure for the community. In Isla Talavera it is valued for “being credible”. But in Los Juríes it ranks 7th, for taking care only of “baptisms and Sunday mass.”
3. *Institutions of Agricultural Technical Assistance*. Highly valued in Atamisqui because of their training role among the farming community; the Escuelas de la Familia Agrícola (Agricultural Family Schools) were ranked among the top ones. On the contrary, the Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA; National Agricultural Technology Institute) appeared as highly influenced through its relationship with the Cooperative.

Criteria for Rating Institutions

In general, the perception of the institutions is based upon the **help** they receive in connection with shelter, food, health, support in cases of natural catastrophes or any other type of aid.

They consider themselves **excluded**, they feel detached from governmental institutional instances and admit that they do not give much protection.

Another criterion recognized is **usefulness / effectiveness**. It has been applied with emphasis on companies: “they are useful if they offer employment,” and on any institution not fulfilling their minimum expected mission: a dam which does not supply energy (Talavera); a corrupt neighbors’ association (Talavera); the Police acting against the farming community (Los Juríes); a municipality which appropriates funds (Los Juríes):

“There was once a charity event organized by the town to repair the roads; a festival was held, funds were collected and finally neither the roads were fixed nor did we see the money we had contributed.”

It is also important to point out that those institutions valued in terms of usefulness (such as radios) are also valued negatively in some cases, because of their **partiality** and **exclusion** of ideas, associated with their relationship with various local political parties or leaders.

However, the case in Los Juríes constitutes an exception in terms of institutional development. Around the Cooperativa Unión Campesina, a network of Community Centers and Neighbors’ Committees has been started, offering a strong opportunity for participation and representation by plots. Furthermore, it has served as a channel for coordinating the execution of national and international funding programs, which has strengthened consensus around it. Thus, the main

programs executed were FOPAR^(*), PFDJ^(**), Pro-orchard and Plan Surco.

Control over and Influence on Institutions

Overall –except in the case of Los Jurías- there are very few deliberative institutions enabling some control over their performance. On the Government side, local Town Councils were not even mentioned. Semipublic organizations (such as the Atamisqui Drinking Water Cooperative) are viewed as **foreign** bodies who “provide a lousy service.” Community institutions such as soccer clubs and almost all neighbors’ associations, except (once again) the Cooperativa Campesina in Los Jurías, are strongly linked with party politics action and are therefore not much appreciated.

The remaining organizations are strongly structured internally (Municipal and Provincial Government, national programs, institutes, church) and regardless of their positive or negative perception by the community, they interact with the poor population basically based on their own objectives and along the lines of their own rules. Thus, the capacity of the people to influence institutional life is scarce, and much less is their management control ability.

5.2. Urban Area

The Most Important Institutions in People’s Lives

Overall, the ranking of institutions by the people was based upon how necessary they are for solving immediate problems, and how physically close they are.

Thus, there is a group of five institutions that behave consistently throughout different urban sites, namely:

A. *Kindergartens / Day-Care Centers*. These institutions are critical in that they enable women to get a job. The problem that usually arises is that the acceptance of the children has to do with proximity and admission criteria: some of them only accept children with working mothers.

B. *Life Plan (“Manzaneras”)*. The Life Plan is a provincial Government initiative for social intervention executed through “referent” neighbors for the supply of food to mothers and children. The “manzaneras” are highly respected women and their organizational effort usually

(*) Fondo Participativo (Participating Fund) is a program of the National Social Development Office aimed at funding construction, technical assistance and training projects in provinces of the Argentine NE and NW.

(**) Programa de Fortalecimiento del Desarrollo Juvenil (Juvenile Development Reinforcement Program) funds and aids juvenile projects of community impact through NGOs. It is included in the National Social Development Office.

goes beyond the mere delivery of food. Everywhere they work, they have been ranked at the top.

C. *Primary School*. Except for one male group in Moreno, primary schools were ranked in all the sites among the top four. The factors of this assessment are not so much related to teaching quality but to the fact that “it is a safe place, they take good care of children” and particularly the possibility of “having access to free meals at school”.

D. *First-Aid Centers*: Also ranked among the four top places (except for a male group in Moreno), these primary care facilities have the people’s unconditional approval. They are usually well taken care of there, even if they have poor medicine supply or they cannot serve the entire demand of the community, but they respond to the immediate needs without any prior requirement.

E. *The Church*. Except for a female group in La Matanza and a male group in Moreno, people have a good opinion of the (Catholic) Church, although in several cases the opinion is limited to the fact that they offer “a place for baptisms” and “celebrate Mass”.

Based on the above, it could be stated that there are two types of support networks to face the crisis. On the one hand, there are those led by the Government –at their various levels- in view of the perception that poverty affects a significant part of the population. For example: Life Plan (provincial), Plan Trabajar (national), Pro-orchard (INTA, national), ASOMA (soup kitchen for the elderly), PRANI Box (National Government Food Program), although with different levels of acceptance. On the other hand, there are informal relationships and institutional creations that are born thanks the neighbors’ initiative. For example, soup kitchens, which start by providing a meal and then end up offering alternatives to solve other needs such as clothes, construction materials, school coaching, training courses, etc. Normally, the offering of these new alternatives is supported at least by one institution with a strong foundation (municipality, churches, etc.)

“The soup kitchen in Puente Roca (Moreno) was built by a group of women. An elderly man, who is a mason, taught them to mix the materials and how to lay bricks. Now the place does not only offer free meals but also serves as a ballroom for holding birthday parties, wakes, distributing food, and performing recreational activities. People feel that it is this type of place that has influence, what is more, they feel they belong in there and that it is a place where they can get together.”

Furthermore, at the other end of the ranking there are institutions like:

A. *The Municipality*. Except in the case of the groups in Avellaneda (strongly linked with the work of the municipality), in no other site did the municipality rank higher than fifth, regardless of the gender interviewed. Some aspects of the negative perception people have of the institution are significant:

“It is non-existent. The Municipality is the place to pay your taxes. They do not give you any results. They must get involved in the areas they rule, they must look at the small part of

Argentina under their scope and fulfill their role, and they don't do it (concerning La Matanza's municipal performance, the most populated municipality in the province.)

The opinion about municipal performance usually reaches other government levels: provincial and national.

The Government does not fulfill its role in any sense, either health, or education, or they may do so, but they cannot coordinate efforts. They do not know how to distribute their resources evenly. Sometimes, the only purpose children to go school is to eat, and parents see schools as a center for food not for study."

B. The Police are ranked the lowest. Not only are they reproached for not delivering any results in the fight against crime amidst the personal insecurity crisis affecting all the sites surveyed in Greater Buenos Aires, but also they are criticized for mistreatment, unfair arrests to check the individual's criminal record and, in more serious situations, cases of "easy trigger."

"At the police station, battered or ill-treated women are treated as if it was their fault, as if it was them who provoked their husbands. That is why many women do not go to the Police. When you file a report, they don't pay any attention to it. They always arrest the innocent ones, and they do nothing to those doing drugs at the corner. The issue is that the Police are not interested in the people, but in doing business..." (Moreno, Province of Buenos Aires)

There is a set of institutions –ranked at an intermediate level- whose value depends rather on local factors. Among these institutions there are: the neighbors' associations, the sports clubs of the neighborhood, the hospital and the telephone.

This leads us to a discussion of some common views about the various urban sites surveyed:

1. Just like the rural areas showed the existence of a coordinating institution per se (the primary school and its headmistress in Talavera, the Cooperativa Campesina in Los Jurés and, to a lesser extent, the municipality and the Church in Atamisqui), in the urban sites, the institution that is the closest to this role is the "manzaneras", through its various ways of local involvement: either through churches, municipalities and/or neighbors' associations. Even if the Life Plan is a provincial plan, the "manzaneras" have a positive perception because people trust them and know they are not paid by the Government.

2. The "remoteness" of the Government is a phenomenon that can be proved from two sides: absence or poor presence in sensitive areas such as health / education / personal security; and, on the contrary, aggressive presence through the different actions of the Police, which do not lead to the improvement of security in the community. The exception is a female group in Moreno, who ranked the provincial Government as the key institution.

3. Absence of support NGOs as key institutions for the social development of communities.

4. People's positive perception of some institutions (first-aid centers, schools, kindergartens /

day-care centers) goes beyond the minimum resources these should have to be truly effective.

Criteria for Rating Institutions

Generally speaking, the main criteria for a positive rating of the urban sites surveyed revolve around five ideas: **providing help, being free of charge, being near** (in physical terms), **being trustworthy and supportive.**

The negative criteria are related to the ideas of: **not doing, not listening, being bureaucratic, not co-operating.**

Control over and Influence on Institutions

There are not many instances of direct involvement of the neighbors consulted. Some of the old neighbors' associations and clubs nearby are found to be very close to party politics and/or affected by corruptive behavior, but in those cases where their institutional life was recovered, there has been interesting progress in terms of membership size and neighbor involvement, such as in some neighborhoods of Varela.

The dissolution or simply the inaction of a large number of social and athletic clubs, minority associations, and neighbors' associations, which were at their highest development peak in the past decades, is also worth pointing out. This place seems to have been occupied by community facilities, created by the neighbors themselves, mainly used as soup kitchens, but which quickly evolve towards meeting other demands.

6. Gender Relations

6.1. Rural Area

The situation of women changed both at home and in the community, where women became widely recognized.

At home, there is a trend whereby household chores are shared between men and women. Men feel that they have currently lost decision-making power. At present, decisions are discussed and consulted before they are made.

In one site, there were contrary opinions of men and women regarding who was the driver of change. Men help at home, since there is little work outside or they bring in less money. Women believe that, since they now work and contribute money to the household, they participate and share more.

In one site, women said that they were more careful of having smaller families and of giving birth to their first child at older ages, instead of the usual age of 15.

In a community where there is strong communal organization, the women's role became more active after they joined the committees, they give training courses, they are elected delegates. Men, unlike in the past, are actively involved in communal organization, and given the current economic crisis, they have become more deeply involved as a mechanism to overcome the crisis and strengthen cohesion in the community.

In one site, with a different reality, it is also believed that women have more influence on community work and that men help just because of personal relationships and not due to community involvement -"fixing a friend's or a pal's house." However, the value of men as the decision-maker in institutional and political issues is still maintained.

In another site, there is no participation in the community because there are no organizations; it is only at the school that there are several activities conducted through governmental programs.

Violence

In general, they do not perceive violent situations in their homes; very few involving women or punishing the children, which used to exist in the past.

In one site, they believe it is women that take on the role of physically punishing the children, since their fathers leave their homes for a whole season at harvest time. But it is men who batter in the couple, particularly when they are drunk. "Drunkards have a tendency to batter."

In one site, the issue of rape was touched upon lightly. It is known it happens, it is common in some families in the countryside.

The community continues to be quiet, there are some scattered conflicts among the neighbors, which do not result in major quarrels. It was mentioned in one site that the reason is generally women. Some violent situations are related with some powerful characters such as the landholders who sometimes threaten them in a violent way. Community violence is associated

with cities, urban areas, “we come from the island, we have less problems, we are poor but happy.”

6.2. Urban Area

Household **chores** have changed over the past few years. Men did not use to do anything at home, now they do. “Women used to be slaves to their homes.” The main reason given is the access of women to the labor market. There is a difference between the perception of men and women; while men have firmly stated that they now do some household chores, women say they co-operate, they do something, but that they need to ask them to. “Now men help more, but this does not represent a significant contribution to household chores”, “men are more concerned about their own matters.”

A new task of women is to ask for and sometimes demand their husbands’ help. “Now I insist that he should take care of the children and, if I insist a lot, I manage to get something.” In another group, the extra work of supporting husbands when they are unemployed was mentioned.

Regarding the activities in the community, the opinion was that, in the past, women were not very much involved; the reason given is that there was no need to. Some groups pointed out that they just went to church and taught catechism. In general, community activities are perceived as collective self-managed undertakings, whose aim is dictated by the possibility of improving collective conditions of living.

Women help at the soup kitchens, clean the schools, distribute clothes and food (manzaneras), make claims for bus lines, health matters, security, lighting.

Men participate more in the neighbors’ association or community center, in construction work.

The main **decisions** of women inside the family relate to everything that concerns the children, friends, schools, where to take the children when they are sick, when to scold them. They also decide on what to eat, they manage the household’s money -matters which used to be decided upon entirely by men or were less shared. Men have confirmed these changes, they believe that they used to make decisions without previously consulting their wives and that things have changed because the importance of women in the household’s economic balance has changed. Men argue that it is still them that decide when buying construction materials for the house and punishing their children.

Some groups claimed that now decisions at home are made by women, and other groups spoke about mutual agreement.

In terms of the community, the difference lies in that it is women that take the initiative, they demand, claim, go to the municipality, “we go back and forth”, “we walk the neighborhood”. They are acquainted with the needs, opportunities, they help and strive to get the means, they keep relationships, amongst themselves and with the authorities; it is a way of ensuring survival, it is sometimes even a replacement of compensated work. Whereas the main decision made by men relates to the way in which a task should be done. Men used to participate more in the community, they now are not seen in meetings either at school or church or in connection with

the programs. A woman said: "some of them are involved in politics, but you can't take the others out of the club or the neighbors' association, where they do nothing."

Men's participation in the community is identified only with politics or power areas where final decisions are made, "final decisions are in men's hands", "at the highest levels of power there's always a man."

Uncommon comments by group

Change in sexuality, "nowadays love means pleasure unlike in the past, when it was an obligation."

Women have said in connection with men doing household chores "...they look crestfallen, I think that they feel humiliated because they are doing women's chores."

A female group maintained that men batter women and children because they cannot stand the differences "they always want to be right."

A male group performs many communal activities, either productive ones: sewers, lighting, painting trees, etc., or recreational ones: games for the children, raffles, soccer games, etc. Whereas another male group does not perform community activities of any type, the only activities they carry out are the compensated ones, although they admitted that they feel embarrassed about doing community activities because they are full of women.

There has been an increase of women as heads of household, women who run the household on their own.

Respect in the past was linked to fear.

Violence

They believe that home violence has not changed, there may be as much now as in the past, the difference being that in the past, they did not admit physical violence, much less psychological violence against women or their children, it was hidden. Nowadays this is discussed, there are places where one can go to seek help. Both men and women believe that there used to be more respect in the family than nowadays, and men particularly stressed the loss of respect from children towards their fathers. This situation is caused by the lack of money and makes many men decide to abandon the family. When they do not have a job, they become aggressive, and they tend to drink and batter.

Physical violence of women to men was not mentioned much, "now they defend themselves". But mention was made to psychological violence of pressure, devaluation and infidelity. Women did mention physical violence on them, and that inflicted by them and men on their children, although it is mainly men that batter.

However, there did not use to be widespread violence in the community, there was solidarity among neighbors; nowadays it is present every day. "...nowadays they break into your house, under the effects of drugs, and the next day they pass by and greet you as if nothing had happened," "there did not use to be thefts inside the neighborhood, neighbors did not use to steal, now codes have changed."

There are permanent thefts and muggings, as well as verbal aggression, even among neighbors. Some situations may result in death. This was related to unemployment and the

increase in drug use. As regards women, there has been an increase in lack of respect and number of rapes.

The lack of police protection and unemployment were highlighted as ways of violence.

Drug addiction is the key to violence in the community; parents feel overwhelmed by this problem and they cannot cope with it. They pointed out that this problem is reaching the children, since they take drugs from early ages, 9 years of age and less.

“Riding a bicycle used to be a pleasure and now I don’t let my children go out, because nowadays most people don’t take their bikes out, because not only do they steal your bike but also they point a gun or a knife at you.”

“Don’t wear anything new, not even a pair of tennis shoes, you must wear inexpensive clothes, otherwise they will steal what you’re wearing.”

Uncommon comments

It used to be thought that the way to educate children was by hitting them.

The negative influence of television in connection with violence matters.

A group mentioned the new phenomenon of women abandoning the home, it used to be men that did it.

Pregnant teenagers.

Nowadays women participate more and they feel they share roles with men on an equal basis. Nowadays they talk about things that used to be forbidden, they now know things could not be known in the past. They participate more, they are listened to more, they are taken into account. Nowadays, women feel they are protagonists. Making a more significant economic contribution and sometimes the only one in the household has changed their situation, it places them in a power position that they did not use to be in and which, in many occasions, they do not know how to handle –a situation in which sometimes men feel diminished. House cleaning by the hour pays much better than their husbands’ jobs.

Today there is much more sharing of life between women and men, regardless of economic contribution and their employment situation. There is more female participation at the neighborhood level.

There are women in the same community who are better off than others, i.e. those related to community work networks, who are generally neighborhood leaders, advisors, and who have free access to resources and courses.

7. Findings and Conclusions

Well-being is generally perceived in relation to satisfying needs mainly associated with work, income, access to water, daily food, proper housing, education for the children, and access to health care. Both in rural and urban areas, the idea of isolation and the difficulties to access the various services is present when defining well-being. Health in urban areas holds a direct relationship with the notion of endemic diseases, whereas in urban areas it relates to food problems.

In urban areas there is the additional problem of security -being able to live without fear. Crime is an everyday issue, aggravated by the relation with drugs and drinking, and the absence of police protection. An emphasized phenomenon was demographic growth, in some areas described as a population explosion. In these areas there is a view of urban structure from which a typology arises: neighborhood, housing project, slum, settlement, and emergency shanty town or shanty town.

In rural areas, a criterion was added to the perception of well-being for category differentiation purposes: buying cash or on credit; in the areas with farming inhabitants they mentioned, unlike other groups, having enough land, owning the land, having tools and dams, fences and access to credit.

The idea of work is not exactly the same for men as for women. For men, work is associated with income, i.e. money. Whereas for women, it is related to resources. Women were always the first ones to point out the need for education, men immediately supported the idea.

The criteria for delimiting wellbeing/poverty common to rural and urban areas were:

1. **Occupational Category.** Scale ranging from unemployed, temporary job, odd jobs to stable job, making a distinction between Government worker (municipal or provincial) who generally does nothing and Government Plan jobs. **Working Conditions:** From unqualified to qualified, from well to badly paid, without any tools or resources.
2. **Type of Housing:** Construction material, in rural areas elements from nature such as clay and straw are added; water access. In urban areas the type of floor was taken into account: dirt or cement, and in rural areas the type of lighting: electrical, candle or gas lamp.
3. **Community Infrastructure:** Drinking water and water access, transportation, telephone, street lighting, natural gas, presence of stores. In rural areas they added: lack of roads and roads in bad shape, and animal traction. In urban areas: lack of paved roads, garbage collection.
4. **Isolation due to Distance:** To the service supply centers.
5. **Access to Social Services:** Education and health. Lack of institutions, human resources and materials. In urban areas they added weak police protection and community

maintenance municipal services. They are also different in that in rural areas they speak about the different service levels both in terms of health and education, for example: in education, they mentioned from day-care centers to tertiary education, and in some cases even university.

6. **Land Ownership Conditions:** This basically means owning the property or not. The difference in rural areas lies in that they refer to the work land where the house is implicitly included as well as the owners of the companies in their regions. In urban areas they just talk of the house.
7. **Sanitary-Environmental Conditions:** Floods are common either due to lack of infrastructure or poor drainage maintenance, mainly blaming the companies. In rural areas, they added the presence of animals dangerous to health, and in urban areas they mentioned garbage dumps and street cleaning.

Criterion Trends and Category Proportion

“Today we are worse, we have no work, we can’t feed our family” is the phrase that has been heard throughout the survey, with the addition of “we are robbed and killed just because” in urban areas. Living conditions have deteriorated on a daily basis; they unanimously mentioned the 1989 hyperinflation as a turning point where the deterioration of the value of money started to be felt, “it is worth nothing nowadays,” of products and the closing of job sources; and in some places they said that the historical beginning of this process was the 1976 coup.

In the urban areas it is perceived that there has been an increase in social services in general, particularly in health and education, but since there has been such a large demographic growth, the needs of new inhabitants were not met, thus overloading the existing structure.

The poorest categories increase in proportion, indicating a social drop, and the categories representing good standards of living decrease. Some groups maintained that the proportion did not or will not suffer any changes, it will remain the same, there have been no improvements, but they added that absolute numbers had an upward trend, thus there are more poor people. The future is perceived with pessimism or uncertainty. There are no expectations to improve.

Main Issues

Security has two senses. One is physical-psycho security; crime is not present in rural areas, which differentiates them from cities where “they have everything but are in a worse situation because there’s crime and drugs, but not here.” “Here we live with our doors open.”

In urban areas this situation is overwhelming and even leads to a social and moral crisis where human life has lost its value. The age of criminals is striking, since they are increasingly

younger. Insecurity is closely related to drug addition and the bad service provided by the Police. There is no trust in them, on the contrary, they support criminals, work jointly or benefit from this situation of uneasiness since they receive money from affluent segments to get differential treatment. In some areas, it was remarked that the Police mistreat people: “they request your identification papers with bad manners, they push you, they sometimes hit you.”

Another sense of security, perceived both in urban and rural areas, is related to the economic and social crisis we are living which greatly deteriorates living conditions. Unemployment, no commitment from governments and politicians, not owning the land or the house, not being able to feed the family cause a feeling of abandonment, lack of guarantees, coverage and/or opportunities. It is a feeling of permanent **risk** due to not having resources to live and the possibility of being evicted.

In urban areas, the **most insecure** homes are those whose heads are women, and inside the home the most vulnerable groups are children and women as victims of family and social violence. In rural areas, these differences are not perceived.

Several locations have constant problems of sanitation and floods, and conflicts with landowners, who claim or impose conditions perceived as exaggerated. Some specific situations of **crisis** pointed out in some locations were: the distress caused by the departure of a group of foreign priests who provided the community with resources, the demonstration with tractors because of the eviction, and the political and tax crisis in one province.

The deterioration of living conditions encouraged the development of **social support networks** through government programs, particularly run by municipalities, also the Church, or even some **alliances** among various community organizations, though to a lesser extent.

The government programs mentioned are: El Trabajar, Barrios Bonaerenses, both for employment purposes; ASOMA, Life Plan, Apoyo for soup kitchens, Pro-orchard, PRANI Box providing food supplies. The Catholic Church is organized under Cáritas, the priests of each church provide as much help as they can.

The people who manage to enter these networks are more protected, some only as beneficiaries, others as direct participants who manage to have greater resources to face critical situations due to their training and connections, since they hold a direct relationship with authorities and people responsible for running the programs.

Social cohesion in rural areas is perceived differently from urban areas. In the former, there is a strong feeling of belonging whereas in the latter this feeling is weak, and they have emphasized the lack of solidarity among neighbors –a situation that has changed unfavorably over the past few years, “people used to be more united, now we are killing each other,” now the “don’t get involved” phrase is heard. Only in some urban groups (La Matanza settlement, Moreno soup kitchen) and in one rural group (Los Juríes Cooperative) was neighbor unity valued –“we need to be united.”

Opportunities decreased, the deterioration of the material and moral quality of life is viewed in

permanent drop. They used to perceive social mobility, not now, the situation has changed dramatically. In rural areas, they feel that there are greater opportunities in cities, they do not feel they share equal opportunities; by contrast, migrants are considered more vulnerable groups and receive differential treatment when they move to the city. In cities, people mentioned the need to generate jobs, but at the same time, they do not believe that something like it may happen –most factories are closing. And in one location, they maintained that new factories coming in do not employ them and create more problems. In urban areas, there is also migration from one place to the other in search for opportunities; the exclusion here is not so much related to migration but to being from a shanty town, which in a way is associated with the migrant, it is generally the first place they settle. Another type of migrant is the foreigner; these groups create tension, the underlying idea is that they have come to take work from people.

There is a serious deterioration of employment conditions, indicating that both urban and rural jobs are not highly respected –they are temporary, badly- paid, without workers' compensation coverage or social services. There is no optimism. The future is uncertain and pessimistic. Hope has been laid in God; the possibility of a change in the economy has also been mentioned, although in a vague and imprecise manner, maybe more related to a lucky strike. In the country you are born poor and you die poor. The few opportunities lie in community organization, the aid programs, which are temporary though, and in rural areas the possibility of credit. Education is considered important to improve the quality of living, but it is not enough.

Other factors associated with poverty and its **exclusion** are isolation due to distance and diseases, which appeared more strongly in rural sites. In urban sites, there is work-related exclusion affecting men more than women, they feel devalued in the community and the family, they lose authority in front of their wives and children, and many times they become depressed and resort to drinking. Although not in all urban sites, a religious group, the *ubandistas*, was mentioned with fear and distrust, they have scaring rites and kill animals.

The only sectors that benefit from this situation are retail businessmen and those close to incumbent politicians. In urban areas, it was mentioned that nowadays women have greater opportunities for finding jobs as cleaning ladies, not only getting the job itself but also making more money than men and, in some cases, becoming the main source of income. On the contrary, in rural areas women are more excluded in terms of job opportunities.

Causes and Consequences of Poverty

Unemployment as such or in connection with the privatization policy or modernization and technological progress represented the most recurring indicator of the Causes and Consequences of Poverty, both in rural and urban areas, both among men and women, as well as among youngsters and adults.

The word poverty, took on different meanings when it came to reflecting the reality of these communities: chaotic situation, critical situation, no dignity, malaria (argot for misery), complex life, living in worse conditions, more poverty, humble people, poor quality of living, hard situation.

In rural areas, the causes of poverty are attributed to Government Institutions because of the policies applied, which do not “help” or “support” those in greatest need, making them responsible for the plight of the poor. There are also value-related aspects such as economic dependence, conformism, loss of values, no awareness. Other causes are related to the rural activity itself, the agricultural and livestock production, given the price drop in the market and the absence of access to loans to reactivate the sector. Education is also viewed as another cause, given the impossibility of putting an end to the intergenerational stream of poverty, and long distances and lack of means of transportation hindering the access to educational institutions. Finally, infrastructure and community service deficiency mainly related to the lack of transportation and health care.

The consequences are associated with health, evidenced through various diseases, some specific to the area like the Chagas’ disease (transmitted by the *vinchuca*, an insect living in clay and straw houses) and other more widespread diseases such as malnutrition and AIDS. There is also the lack of medicines and ambulances, in some cases resulting in deaths due to unattended emergencies. The phenomenon of pregnancies at early ages was associated with this poor health service. Infrastructure appears as another consequence (no water, transportation, proper housing) and lack of basic supplies such as food, footwear, clothing. Access to land (not being landowners) and not having the resources for working on the field (tools, seeds) are other consequences of poverty evident in rural communities.

In urban areas, some causes of poverty coincide with those of rural communities, such as Government Institutions, including the phenomenon of corruption and fund mismanagement all the way to accountability by government levels, and education particularly associated with the impossibility of access or improvement in order to come across better opportunities. A cause mentioned which is unique to cities is immigration (from bordering countries and the Interior), associated with the occupation of the few jobs available. Housing and infrastructure were mentioned as possible causes, but they are mainly viewed as a consequence of poverty. Other causal definitions relate to the deterioration of solidarity, discrimination, frustration, excess of children, and the difficulties for managing resources.

The consequences defined for urban areas appear as unique and distinctive to large cities and constitute the aspect that makes them different from rural communities. Insecurity and violence -both institutional and social- are perceived as a consequence of poverty which has increased over the past few years –thefts, crime, police abuse, generating fear because “they are killing each other.” Another consequence connected with violence is with relation to the family either because of children abandonment or the change of roles in the home, many times generating depression and frustration. Another consequence derived from poverty and common to rural areas is health, although evidenced in various ways, from either physical diseases (tuberculosis, lung or skin diseases, AIDS, malnutrition) or psychological ones (anxiety, depression) to overall inadequate and poor health care services. Addictions such as drinking and drugs were also mentioned and constitute other consequences of poverty in big cities.

Problems and Priorities of the Poor

The problems and priorities defined coincide with the causes and consequences of poverty. In all groups the high priority aspect, regardless of gender, age or place of residence (urban/rural), was the lack of work, mentioned with different nuances: closed factories, downsizing, unemployment.

Another problem common to urban and rural communities is that related to infrastructure and housing:

- ✓ Lack of drinking and running water, their supply of water comes from community or individual wells, rivers, making it impossible in rural areas to grow crops and raise animals.
- ✓ Lack of electricity in houses, they must light them with candles or gas lamps and therefore have not street lighting.
- ✓ Lack of sewage system.
- ✓ Lack of public transportation, generating isolation (particularly in rural areas).
- ✓ Lack of paved roads, in general there are dirt roads in bad condition, which become impassable when it rains also generating isolation.
- ✓ Lack of pay phones.
- ✓ Lack of proper housing, mainly made of wood and tin in urban areas, and clay and straw in rural areas.
- ✓ Lack of radio in rural communities, a means that fulfills a communication role among neighbors.

Another problem shared by rural and urban communities is health, both with relation to the absence of services and the prevalence of diseases either of endemic type, as is the case in rural areas, or AIDS, a disease particularly affecting urban communities. The lack of first aid facilities or health stations (primary health care centers) or nearby and equipped hospitals is one of the priorities of these groups.

The problems unique to urban communities are three: addictions, insecurity, and education.

Drug addiction and alcoholism appear again, like in causes and consequences of poverty, but particularly mentioned by women and associated with men and youngsters, as a consequence of the lack of job opportunities.

Insecurity and law enforcement, in connection with both common crime and that generated by the Police themselves, was one of the high priority issues mentioned by all the urban groups of poor people. They perceive an atmosphere of permanent violence within and outside their communities, resulting in a situation of fear of “even leaving your home.”

Education is another problem mentioned, due to the inexistence of close educational institutions –either kindergartens or primary and high schools- resulting in their exclusion from formal education because of the lack of economic means to pay the daily bus fare that takes them to the closest institution.

The lack of social care was another problem mentioned particularly by women of urban communities and by one of the rural communities in Santiago del Estero (Villa Atamisqui), reflected as: lack of soup kitchens, aid to those in need, social programs or social benefits

aiming at overcoming the situation of crisis undergone by these communities with no resources to get their daily supply of food.

In other rural communities (Los Juríes) problems related to the farmer's situation were prioritized, on the one hand, access to land, i.e. having the title for the land occupied for several generations and, on the other hand, the current situation of the agricultural market, low prices for cattle and cotton, and the lack of tools for working on the field.

Poor health services coupled with lack of water and precarious housing, as well as the scourge of drugs and drinking in urban areas, places both rural and urban communities in a situation of permanent risk and vulnerability.

The perception of living in a state of fear encouraged by delinquency, theft, crime and law enforcement itself reflects a situation of permanent insecurity in urban communities.

The lack of opportunities and insertion in the labor market, the deterioration of agricultural and livestock work in rural areas, and the lack of economic resources have produced, as people perceive it, decreasing social and economic mobility or at least result in the following reflection:

“TEN YEARS AGO WE WERE BETTER OFF”

A pessimistic picture is envisaged for the future:

“IT'S GOING TO GET WORSE”

“THE SAME IF THERE IS NO HELP”

The opinion about the areas of responsibility for solving problems, particularly those related to work, health, education and infrastructure, reached a consensus:

“THE STATE / THE GOVERNMENT”

The idea of the Community/State or Community/Government association was not very much taken into account only for solving some problems related to addictions and health, or housing and community infrastructure, but rather in such a way that the State/Government provides the resources and the community, labor. The groups of youngsters identified more problems in the Community/State instances and even community alone in comparison with the groups of adults. The problems left to be tackled only by the community are those linked more to private and family life, particularly psychical conditions.

Institutional Analysis

In rural sites, there is certain consistency between genders in the perception of the most (and least) valued institutions. However, this consistency disappears in some sites giving way to the different local realities, although without disregarding some common features, namely the four below:

- A. The existence of a core institution, as a project coordinator, to the inside and outside of the community, which will facilitate the relationships that would go beyond its specific mission.
- B. The “remoteness” of the Government.
- C. The importance of institutions related to communications: mail, telephones, TV, local FM radios.
- D. A negative perception of private companies.

A. In rural areas, primary and high school were viewed exclusively as the most important institutions. The reason for such a perception of educational institutions may vary from their value as an enabler of certain social mobility (“it gives you a degree”) to the value of having made the core of community life their own. In the case of Villa Atamisqui, the municipality partly fulfills this role together with the Church. In the case of Los Juríes, the core institution is the Cooperativa Unión Campesina (a Farmers’ Cooperative). The Cooperative is the most influential and prestigious institution in the community. Through its coordinating role, it receives information from the national and provincial Programs, which is referred to the Neighbors’ Committee for its overall discussion.

B. The “remoteness” of the Government means that some Government institutions are viewed as absent or –at least- ineffective. Primary schools, hospitals and high schools (the most valued ones) are –except for the school in Atamisqui- part of the Government presence, but these not only receive specific demands. Normally, these institutions work amidst countless difficulties, aggravated by the lack of resources, which worsens the people’s perception and appreciation of the Government, which is (or should be) their support.

The worst opinions relate to politics. In the Buenos Aires case (Isla Talavera), this appreciation is softened thanks to the municipal presence in times of natural catastrophes (floods), but in the two cases in Santiago del Estero, and both for men and women, the role of the Municipality is relative.

Moreover, the Police show another unvalued face of the Government. Although in rural areas the crisis in terms of the people’s physical security does not reach the levels of suburban areas, the Police offer common expressions. In one case, “because they do nothing and that’s why they don’t cause themselves to be seen,” but in another, they appear with firm features of connivance with the economic power (rural landowners).

C. The institutions related to communications are particularly significant. Two of them in particular: local radios which substitute the almost total absence of telephones through their “messages to the villager”, and the provincial highway administration, responsible for road management.

D. Private companies are viewed negatively by people. In the case of agricultural companies “because no-one knows the owners” (Atamisqui) or because there are problems of land ownership (Los Juríes).

Among these common axes comprising the most valued institutions (primary and high schools) and the least valued (Police, municipality, political parties), all belonging to the

government/public sector, there is a heterogeneous variety of situations, conditioned by local factors.

In general, the prevailing criteria in the perception of the institutions were based upon the **help** they receive for solving problems: shelter, food, health, support in cases of natural catastrophes, or any other type of aid. They consider themselves excluded, they feel detached from governmental institutional instances and admit that they do not give much protection.

Another criterion recognized is **usefulness / effectiveness**. It has been emphatically applied on companies: “they are useful if they offer employment,” and on any institution not fulfilling their minimum expected mission: a dam which does not supply energy (Talavera); a corrupt neighbors’ association (Talavera); the Police acting against the farming community (Los Juríes); a municipality which appropriates funds (Los Juríes):

Overall, with the exception of Los Juríes case, there are very few institutions of deliberative nature allowing to have their performance checked. In the Government sector, local town councils were not even mentioned. Semi-public bodies (such as the Atamisqui Drinking Water Cooperative) are viewed as **foreign** and “delivering a very bad service.” Community institutions such as soccer clubs and almost all associations are strongly linked to party politics and, therefore, devalued.

Overall, in the urban area the ranking of institutions by the people was based upon how necessary they are for **solving immediate problems**, and how **physically close** they are. Thus, there is a group of five institutions that behave consistently throughout different urban sites, namely:

- A. *Kindergartens / Day-Care Centers*. These institutions are critical in that they take care of children, they feed them, and enable women to get a job.
- B. *Life Plan (“Manzaneras”)*. The Life Plan is a provincial Government initiative for social intervention executed through “referent” neighbors for supplying food to mothers and children. The “manzaneras” are highly respected women.
- C. *Primary School*. Except for one male group in Moreno, primary schools were ranked in all the sites among the top four. The factors of this assessment are not so much related to teaching quality but to the fact that “it is a safe place, they take good care of children” and particularly the possibility of “having access to the school soup kitchen”.
- D. *First-Aid Centers*. Also ranked among the four top places (except for a male group in Moreno), these primary care facilities have the people’s unconditional approval. They are usually well taken care of there (even if they have poor medicine supply) and their immediate needs are met without any prior requirement.
- E. *The Church*. Except for a female group in La Matanza and a male group in Moreno, people have a good opinion of the (Catholic) Church, although in several cases this opinion is limited to the fact that they offer “a place for baptisms” and “celebrate Mass” rather than the

help they provide, which was mentioned in few cases. Evangelist churches were mentioned, though to a lesser extent.

Based on the above, it could be stated that there are two types of support networks to face the crisis. On the one hand, there are those led by the Government –at their various levels- in view of the perception that poverty affects a significant part of the population. For example: Life Plan (provincial), Plan Trabajar (national), although with different levels of acceptance. On the other hand, there are informal relationships and institutional creations that are born thanks the neighbors' initiative. For example, milk bowl or soup kitchens, which start by providing a meal and then end up offering alternatives to solve other needs. Normally, these alternatives are supported by an institution with a strong foundation (municipality, churches, etc.)

Furthermore, at the other end of the people's ranking there are institutions like:

A. The Municipality. Except in the case of the groups in Avellaneda (strongly linked with the work of the municipality), in no other site did the municipality rank higher than fifth, regardless of the gender interviewed. The opinion about the municipality usually reaches other government levels.

B. The Police are ranked the lowest. Not only are they reproached for not delivering any results in the fight against crime amidst the personal insecurity crisis affecting all the sites surveyed in Greater Buenos Aires, but also they are criticized for mistreatment, unfair arrests to check the individual's criminal record and, in more serious situations, cases of deaths caused by "easy trigger."

There is a set of institutions –ranked at an intermediate level- whose value depends rather on local factors. Among these institutions there are: the neighbors' associations, the sports clubs of the neighborhood, the hospital and the telephone. This leads us to a discussion of some common views about the various urban sites surveyed:

1. Just like the rural areas showed the existence of a coordinating institution per se (the primary school and its headmistress in Talavera, the Cooperativa Campesina in Los Jurés and, to a lesser extent, the municipality and the Church in Atamisqui), in the urban sites, the institution that is the closest to this role is the "manzaneras", through its various ways of local involvement: either through churches, municipalities and/or neighbors' associations. Even if the Life Plan is a provincial plan, the "manzaneras" have a positive perception because people trust them and know they are not paid by the Government.

2. The "remoteness" of the Government is a phenomenon that can be proved from two sides: absence or poor presence in sensitive areas such as health / education / personal security; and, on the contrary, aggressive presence through the different actions of the Police, which do not lead to the improvement of security. The exception is a female group in Moreno, who ranked the provincial Government as the key institution.

3. Absence of support NGOs as key institutions for the social development of communities.

4. People's positive perception of some institutions (first-aid facilities, schools, kindergartens / day-care centers) goes beyond the minimum resources these should have to be truly effective.

Generally speaking, the main criteria for a positive rating of the urban sites surveyed revolve around five ideas: **providing help, being free of charge, being near** (in physical terms), **being trustworthy and supportive**. The negative criteria are related to the ideas of: **not doing, not listening, being bureaucratic, and not co-operating**.

There are not many instances of direct involvement of the neighbors consulted. Some of the old neighbors' associations and clubs nearby are found to be very close to party politics and/or affected by corruptive behavior, but in those cases where their institutional life was recovered, there has been interesting progress in terms of membership size and neighbor involvement, such as in some neighborhoods of Varela.

The dissolution or simply the inaction of a large number of social and athletic clubs, minority associations, and neighbors' associations, which were at their highest development peak in the past decades, is also worth pointing out. This place seems to have been occupied by community facilities, created by the neighbors themselves, mainly used as soup kitchens, but which quickly evolve towards meeting other demands.

Gender Relations

The situation of women changed both at home and in the community, where women became widely recognized. At home, there is a trend whereby household chores are shared between men and women. Men feel that they have currently lost decision-making power. At present, decisions are discussed and consulted before they are made.

In one site, women said that they were more careful of having smaller families and of giving birth to their first child at ages older than the usual age of 15. In a community where there is strong communal organization, the women's role became more active after they joined the committees, they give training courses, they are elected delegates. Men, unlike in the past, are actively involved in communal organization and today, given the current economic crisis, they have become more deeply involved as a mechanism to overcome the crisis and strengthen cohesion in the community.

In another site, with a different reality, it is also believed that women have more influence on community work and that men help just because of personal relationships and not due to community involvement -"fixing a friend's or a pal's house." However, the value of men as the decision maker in institutional and political issues is still maintained. In one site, there is no participation in the community because there are no organizations; only the school where there are several activities conducted through governmental programs.

In the urban area, household **chores** have changed over the past few years. Men did not use to do anything at home, today they do. "Women used to be slaves to their homes." The main reason given is the access of women to the labor market. There is a difference between the perception of men and women; while men have firmly stated that they now do some household

chores, women say they co-operate, they do something, but that they need to ask them to. "Now men help more, but this does not represent a significant contribution to household chores", "men are more concerned about their own matters."

Regarding the activities in the community, the opinion was that, in the past, women were not very much involved; the reason given is that there was no need to. Some groups pointed out that they just went to church and taught catechism. In general, community activities are perceived as collective self-managed undertakings, whose aim is dictated by the possibility of improving collective conditions of living.

The main decisions of women inside the family relate to everything that concerns the children, friends, schools, where to take the children when they are sick, when to scold them. They also decide on what to eat, they manage the household's money -matters which used to be decided upon entirely by men or were less shared. Men have confirmed these changes, they believe that they used to make decisions without previously consulting their wives and that things have changed because the importance of women in the household's economic balance has changed. Men argue that it is still them that decide when buying construction materials for the house and punishing their children. Some groups claimed that now decisions at home are made by women, and other groups spoke about mutual agreement.

In terms of the community, the difference lies in that it is women that take the initiative, they demand, claim, go to the municipality, "we go back and forth", "we walk the neighborhood". They are acquainted with the needs, opportunities, they help and strive to get the means, they keep relationships, amongst themselves and with the authorities; it is a way of ensuring survival, it is sometimes even a replacement of compensated work. Women claim that they did not use to be listened to.

At present the main decision made by men relates to the way in which a task should be done. Men used to participate more in the community, they now are not seen in meetings either at school or church or in connection with the programs. A woman said: "some of them are involved in politics, but you can't take the others out of the club or the neighbors' association, where they do nothing."

Violence

In rural areas, in general, they do not perceive situations of violence in their homes, very few with women and children, which used to exist in the past.

In one site, they believe it is women that take on the role of physically punishing the children, since their fathers leave their homes for a whole season at harvest time. But it is men who batter in a couple, particularly when they are drunk. "Drunkards have a tendency to batter." In another site, the issue of rape was touched upon lightly. It is known it happens, it is common in some families in the countryside. The community continues to be quiet, there are some scattered conflicts among the neighbors, which do not result in major quarrels.

They believe that home violence in urban areas has not changed, there may be as much now than in the past, the difference being that in the past, they did not admit physical violence, much less psychological violence against women or their children, it was hidden. Nowadays this is discussed, there are places where one can go to seek help. Both men and women believe that there used to be more respect in the family than nowadays, and men particularly stressed the loss of respect from children towards their fathers. This situation is caused by the lack of money and makes many men decide to abandon the family. When they do not have a job, they become aggressive, and they tend to drink and batter.

A phenomenon mentioned by some female groups, which is quite serious, is that of women who are left on their own to take the role of family heads and support their family.

There did not use to be violence in the community, there was solidarity among neighbors; nowadays it is present every day. "...nowadays they break into your house, under the effects of drugs, and the next day they pass by and greet you as if nothing had happened," "there did not use to be thefts inside the neighborhood, neighbors did not use to steal, now codes have changed."

There are permanent thefts and muggings, as well as verbal aggression, even among neighbors. Some situations may result in death. This was related to the lack of work and the increase in drug use. As regards women, there has been an increase in lack of respect and number of rapes.

The lack of police protection and unemployment were highlighted as ways of violence.

Drug addiction is the key to violence in the community; parents feel overwhelmed by this problem and they cannot cope with it. They pointed out that this problem is reaching the children, since they take drugs from early ages, 9 years of age and less.

Proposals for Action

There is a conviction that every action related to the social protection of the poor, is part of the actions that both the State and private organizations should formulate in favor of the most vulnerable groups in society.

Our hypothesis states that an improvement in the poor's living conditions is closely related to a higher degree of integration of the society as a whole.

Even though the most vulnerable groups such as those suffering from malnutrition, women that live alone with their children, battered wives, the unemployed, the addicts, the elderly, the migrants, etc., are identified and need a precise plan of action; one should not worsen their condition, marginalization and exclusion. Not only they lose their position in this divided society but also they are further stigmatized by the rest of society.

The best indicator of integration is social participation, mainly participation in decisions that influence the development of society, that is to say, being protagonists and stop being spectators.

Any program that tries to incorporate integration as an objective, should start from two basic ideas: 1) a model of society that is really based on participation. Participation should be supported and strengthened. Education for participation and empowerment of organizational structures. In addition, 2) participation as a mechanism for solving conflicts. This leads to a social awareness of those in need and to the identification that everyone needs in order to feel part of society.

The social policy of integration should be managed by the government in its various levels. This should propose co-ordination and co-operation among governments, private and state organisms and NGOs. Social strategies of sensitization, education and organization should complement each other. Therefore, there should be a change in the internal structure of organizations. In addition, those factors that reduce efficiency should be softened.

Generally speaking, organizations should achieve the following:

- They should identify social situations with problems in society and that it is society that has to provide an answer.

- They should understand learning as a process where everybody is involved and it helps to change both the perception and the practice of reality. This will lead to a transformation in participation.

- They should incorporate an open organizational model with a permeable and participative structure.

- They should incorporate mechanisms of communication and co-ordination between members and organizations. Public organizations should play a key role in proposing meeting points.

The following factors should be taken into account in order to improve effectiveness:

- There is a strong institutional dependency, mainly with relation to the subsidy received.

- There is not a thorough analysis of realities, mainly of those who are interested in.

- There is no co-ordination between projects and organizations. Sometimes there is competition among these.

Their scope of action is:

- To detect needs.

- To denounce publicly; to identify who are responsible and to demand concrete answers as decision-makers.

- To inform and to sensitize. To form opinion. To encourage the development of values.

- To follow, control and systematize policies and practices.

- To educate across cultures.

- To intervene personally. To carry out proposals that are put forward by society.

- To establish or strengthen social security networks, but those identified and built by the poor.

To base their action on solidarity, co-operation and tolerance, i.e. integration.

NGOs, the public administration, private organizations and associations should promote integration. Their job is to facilitate, strengthen and encourage integration. In addition, they should design and implement joint strategies.

It would be desirable to achieve a follow-up of society and meetings to build up participation in and among the organizations' various levels, from the national government to the groups involved. There should be an efficient assessment of the process.

This proposal is divided into two different points:

A: Actions for integration and

B: Strategic proposal for social work.

These two points should be developed simultaneously. Actions for integration point out the scope of social intervention, but this should be accompanied by an overall strategy, a global conception of social work that reaches every level of social activity.

A. Integration

It will be based on the analysis of various scenarios that affect those in need. In addition, it will have an ethical framework. The main objective is to integrate the poor socially in the country, under the principles of equality of rights, obligations and opportunities; and of respect for diversity in a multicultural society. This conception states that the poor are not only the objects but also the agents of integration. The idea is not to work for the poor, but to work with the poor.

The expected result is to improve living conditions through social change. This will be achieved by its members. By alleviating the suffering caused by the crisis to human beings, social violence will be controlled. This transformation not only guarantees cost reduction and good use of resources, but also a lasting result since it will be based on involvement and participation of its protagonists.

The main objectives are:

Welfare services (health and education).

Incorporation in society and the labor market.

Development of socio-cultural activities.

Welfare Services

The poor's participation in basic welfare programs of health and education should be encouraged. The access to them should be facilitated by having more flexible admission conditions. In addition, programs should be extended and followed-up. There should be agreements of co-operation among institutions, where social organizations work together with government departments in charge of welfare.

Impact: There will be a higher degree of involvement and attendance at school and health care centers. This will improve conditions in relation to personal care and prevention. This is closely related to cost reduction in health and other social factors, and integration.

Participation in Society and the Labor Market

Training should be based on studies in demand. There should be participation in labor exchanges and development of strategies according to demands, qualifications, etc.. Each group has skills for a particular job and these should be developed according to historical characteristics or special abilities.

The exploitation they suffer due to their vulnerable conditions, should be avoided and fought against. Participation in the labor market guarantees not only income but also better social services for the family. Social security is a basic need for protection. Agreements of co-operation with public and private organizations should be achieved.

Impact: There will be better working conditions and more training. Also, they will exercise their rights as workers.

Socio-Cultural Entertainment

The poor's incorporation in social and cultural activities should be encouraged, making participation real. A new social reality should be accepted by means of inter-personal relations. Their relationship with their own cultural products and those of the environment should be fostered by an understanding of values and norms. Violence will be prioritized.

Impact: Meetings promote co-operation and solidarity and thus new ways for a more sensitive and integrated society.

B. Social Work Strategy

The main objective of the social work with the poor is social integration. This group of people should be integrated "creatively" in the dynamics of the social system. The aim of social work is to improve the standard of living. And, above all, it should not be forgotten that everybody is involved in the process, i.e. the target population and the agents responsible for its implementation. The basic social work scheme is founded on 3 steps:

Arousing an awareness of reality.
Encouraging change processes.
Generating participative structures.

Arousing an Awareness of Reality

An awareness of each person's and group's reality is fostered by means of an analysis of both needs and problems, a reinforcement of identity and an acknowledgement of one's own, in order to share an analysis of a common context.

The learning process starts with an acknowledgement and systematization of the context: the social context- the environment, the demands and the objective conditions under which people

will live, work and spend their free time; the cultural context- the prevailing ideological and cultural values and the contrast across cultures; and the institutional context- the organizational framework of society, structures and various models.

Encouraging Change Processes

New strategies to improve reality will be formulated from an awareness of the group's reality. One of these strategies is educating and training for social and cultural participation and involvement in the labor market. The other is a strong socio-educational intervention.

Generating Participative Structures

Improvements in social conditions are consolidated through the organizational structures of various institutions. Therefore, it is necessary to facilitate the union and organization of people and migrant groups, with similar needs and interests. In addition, it is important to foster and strengthen co-ordination and participation in current institutional structures.

The Key Role of Education

The key role is to highlight both the **practical utility** of what they learn and the possibility of immediate application. Personal application is the possibility to re-examine their objectives, and to value the process that improves living conditions; i.e. to deal with reality successfully.

The learning process is a process of elaboration where each person **will build up its own knowledge**. Each person will be the protagonist of its learning within its community and society. Education will be incorporated as a constant phenomenon.

Social and educational actions will follow guidelines according to their objective of change processes. These are:

- **Group Work.** The group provides room for learning. The environment of the group allows people to work various circumstances in the learning process, from a double perspective- individual and collective. Working with multicultural groups involves learning one's identity and that of the others, looking for common and different elements, identifying conflicts and solving them. Identity is the starting point for communication and not a tool for confrontation. Institutions should be strengthened and social and working networks should be built up. This involves alliances and organizational abilities that will allow the fabric of a strong society with room for participation.

- **Participation.** The situation of the group, its knowledge and previous skills are the starting points for participation.

Appendices

Appendix I. Summary Results on Well-being

Table 1: Reproduces the Well-being matrices from two or three discussion groups that illustrate common patterns. Also provides one or two matrices that show variations

Rural Area: Men

Villa Atamisqui

Category	Criteria	% Homes
1- The wealthy	They have a car, a cell phone, go shopping to Santiago (capital), have cable TV, electricity. "Apart from the land, they are loaded with money."	10%
2- Farm owners	"Outsiders."	10%
3- Those working at the Municipality	"They never work." They buy in cash at the supermarket. They have electricity and cable TV.	20%
4- Those living in "hen-houses" (new housing development built by the Government.)	Small houses. They have electricity. They do not have cable TV yet.	15%
5- The outskirts (area surrounding the town)	They are unemployed. Clay houses or clay and brick houses. They live in a dusty area. They live in huts.	45%

Los Juríes

Category	Criteria	% Homes
1 With land title	They live under better conditions. With electricity, gas, wire fence, butcher's shop, grocery store, bank loans, Government loans, tractors, just one owner. La Nena.	2
2 Land title with few plots	Not everyone has electricity, they cannot have animals, ownership of plots transferred to inhabitants, well for animal consumption, animal pens.	16
3 Holders with more hectares	They share animals, animal pens, dam/watering place, wire posts, well for human consumption, they can make progress.	6
4 Holders with few	They live under worse conditions. Seasonal	

hectares	workers, they cannot produce, animal pens, they work where capitalists are, fences made of branches, community wells, they cannot have animals, they make \$7 or \$8 per day, well with salty water, they share animals.	76
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Isla Talavera

Category	Criteria	% Homes
1 Queider Family	Grocery store. They have capital. They have leisure area. They are well off. The are fine.	5
2 Weekend houses	They are rich. Better houses. Houses made of bricks. Some have a caretaker. Generating set.	25
3 Yrigoyen Channel. Islanders on the side of the road	They hunt, clear land for a living. Odd jobs. They clean weekend plots of land. They do not have a brick house. Highway. They do not own the land. Bus.	35
4 Pasaje Talavera	They live off the Government's salary. They hunt, fish, clear land for a living. They do not have electricity. No drinking water. Some do not own the land. The river is the only way to go out. No everyone has a wood cabin. More isolated.	35

Rural Area: Women

Villa Atamisqui

Category	Criteria	% Homes
1 Lodging	Having the possibility of studying, making friends, living with others.	5%
2 Police	Lazy.	5%
3 Well-to-do families Supermarket	"Turks" (Arab descendants)	10%
4 Those working in seasons	There are many. It is their only possibility of working. Women cannot work like this. They have a hut.	80%

Los Juríes

Category	Criteria	% Homes
1-Teachers	They have two cars.	26
2-Health Agent	He/she has a bicycle, helped me deliver my baby.	5
3-The Salomons	They have crops. They have TV, pick-up truck, mill, animals: goats, cows and sheep, they have everything,	5

	capitalists.	
4-Plot 4	Capitalists, landowners, they have tools, they raise pigs.	5
5-The landowners	Capitalists, they have crops, they have machinery, tools, everything, they have a cotton gin.	5
6- Us (women)	Almost everyone lives the same, the children go to school by bicycle, some by bus, 2 families (of those participating) have a TV set, they removed the SURCOS(program) from us, chapel flooded, they have a bicycle, they have to go out on foot, salary taken away, children travel on horseback or donkey, children walk to school	54

Isla Talavera

Category	Criteria	% Homes
1 Pasaje Talavera and Yrigoyen Channel Island	No electricity (candles – gas lamps). No natural gas. No running water (river water). No telephones. Houses make of tin, wood and oil barrels. Wood cabins. Some hunt and fish for a living. Employment thanks to Duhalde's plan. No means of transportation. A bus three times per day. First-aid facilities with nurse 3 times per week. We have no ambulance. No medicines. Flood problems. Grocery store 10 km away. Isolated. No shoes for the children. The children eat at school. They used to receive help when there were floods. They do not receive any food support from the Municipality or the Welfare Ministry.	1
2 City of Zárate	They have electricity, water, gas, telephone. Brick houses and apartment blocks. There are also precarious houses. They have hospitals. They have everything but they are in worse conditions because there is crime.	99

Urban Area. Common Patterns

Avellaneda, group of poor men

Category	Criteria	% Homes
1. Downtown Dock Sud	More urbanized. Buses. No security.	30%
2. Rest of Dock Sud. Other neighborhoods	More urbanized. Crowded. More transportation.	50%
3. Anglo Area	Humble people. It floods with water from containers and improper drainage. Accidents due to containers. Soup kitchen. Used to be neglected, now less. Ambulances	20%

	sometimes cannot get in. No pay phones. No transportation at night. No security. Only one first-aid center. Not health station. Companies do not employ people living in the area. Social volunteering.	
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Florencio Varela, group of poor women

Category	Criteria	% Homes
1. Downtown Varela	They have a park. They have drinking water. Cleanliness. Banks. Registry office. Train Station. Municipality. Hospital. Many bus lines. They have brick houses.	15%
2. Kilometer 26	They have train station. They have more stores. There is a park. They have a Police Station. Soup kitchen. High school. Kindergarten.	20%
3. San Jorge	They have more paved roads. In the first-aid center, there are doctors more often. They have drinking water. 2 bus lines. Gas.	15%
4. Villa Argentina and "Fondo"	Many people. No soup kitchen. It floods. Only one bus. No access to water. No drinking water. The first-aid center closes early. Highly populated. Hard for ambulance to come in (it takes time and if it is flooded, it cannot get in.) Sometimes there are no doctors. Classes at school are interrupted for lack of water. Increasing unemployment. "The neglected ones."	50%

La Matanza, group of men, not all poor

Category	Criteria	% Homes
1 East	VIP segment. Wealthy, privileged, brick houses, private and religious schools, 5 services, Italian and Spanish immigrants, first-aid centers, hypermarkets, lost purchasing power.	30
2 Intermediate	Crowded condominiums. Some services but no infrastructure, no intensive care unit, above 30% unemployment, day-care centers and soup kitchens with little government help, shanty towns, not enough schools, cardboard and wood houses.	20
3 West	Former settlements, deeds of ownership, totally indigent areas, San Pedro first-aid center, huts, hard-working people, overcrowded and inadequate schools, planned settlement, no help, personal effort, cardboard is the material for precarious houses, they go out to private schools, people's abandonment, settlement, many day-care centers, flood pestilence, rural, Mr. Campana's castle, schools fulfilling a social role, inadequate first-aid centers, no services, no	50

	neighborhood infrastructure, armed private security guards.	
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Urban Area. Variations

José C. Paz, group of men and women

Category	Criteria	% homes
1. Los Tobas	Beggars, masonry, closed community, housing plan, not highly sociable, go out to work, kind people.	10.0
2. Middle-low income	Wood cabins and houses, no primary school, less brick houses, no high school, floods, polluted water sheets.	40.0
3. Middle-income	Private schools, small entrepreneurs, retail businesspeople, paved roads, underground drainage, better standard of living, better house infrastructure, they have everything, stores everywhere, prettier houses, change in life style, there are good and bad people like everywhere else.	30.0
	Criteria shared by 1, 2, 3, 4 y 5. No electricity, no paved roads, no open roads, health care problems, no cleaning of drainage system, Jehovah's Witnesses, no railway station, they have serious problems, selective medicines, only one police station ("lack of gasoline"), drug addiction, broken pipes, no drainage, no buses, sect rites, Catholics, Evangelists, Mormons, much insecurity, clogged drain, no pavements, areas full of garbage, malnutrition, more remote	
4. Shanty town	Communal water tanks, marihuana plantations, drug dealers, fewer brick houses.	20.0

Moreno, group of women with one young man

Category	Criteria	% Homes
1 Settlement	Water from well with communal tank, more wood cabins, precarious housing, municipality gangs do not come, they do not collect garbage, garbage in the area, ambulance cannot come in, no land ownership, settled areas, communal room for several activities, recreational center, more centralized, more neighbors' unity.	33.0
	Shared criteria No police, they have a first-aid center, river full of garbage, no sewage system, bottled gas, no running water, no municipality involvement, no high school.	
2 Development	They have buses, more expensive buses, paved roads,	66.0

	water from well with individual engine, better lit streets, brick houses, more land ownership, more pay phones, less united.	
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Table 2: Proportion of households/population in the poorest category/ies according to different groups at each site (Rural sites)

	Poor groups			Other groups (specify)			Comments
	Men**	Women	Youth				
*Villa Atamisqui	45	80					
**Los Juries	76	54					
Isla Talavera	1	35					

* These are two groups averaging 19 years of age, boys more focused on having money, girls less focused on that, adding other variables such as the possibility of continuing their education, having a job.

Men define well-being mainly as owning the land and work items. Women speak of living standards, community infrastructure, services.

Table 4: Proportion of households/population in the poorest category/ies according to different groups at each site (Urban sites)

	Poor groups			Other groups (specify)			Comments
	Men	Women	Youth	Men			
Avellana da	20	10					
F. Varela		50					
***La Matanza	8	21		50			
J. C. Paz	**40	*40					
Moreno		33					

* Group of 60% women

** Group of 40% men

*** The first two groups belong to a small settlement.

Table 5: Major trends in poverty and wellbeing

Trends	Rural	Urban
Increased poverty	X	X

Minor increase in poverty		
No change		
Increased well-being		

NOTE: Mark cell which most closely presents the trends in poverty/well-being.

TABLE 7: Perceptions of the main causes of poverty– Rural and Urban

Main causes of poverty	Rural	Urban
No jobs	X	X
Unemployment	X	X
Downsizing		X
Working for unspecified salary	X	
Closing of meat-packing plants and factories		X
They privatized and laid people off		X
Companies' difficult situation		X
Factories not paying salaries		X
No trust in employees		X
Exolgan (container company)		X
Odd jobs		X
At 30 or 40, you are too old to work		X
Age as a problem (you can get a job from the age of 21 to 40)		X
Inequality of opportunities	X	
Machines replacing men		X
They invest in machines and not in people		X
No investment to open job opportunities		X
Bad investment		X
They do not invest because there are fewer people		X
Import garbage		X
Technology		X
Modernization		X
Foreign debt		X
Dependency	X	
Strong accumulation of wealth		X
Non-equitable resource sharing		X
The farmer's production is worthless	X	
No animal pricing	X	
No cotton pricing	X	
No access to credit	X	
Low salaries, low wages, improper salaries		X
Low income		X

Low pensions		X
Exploitation of minors and elderly people	X	
Mothers working because in need		X
Fathers unwilling to work for a small pay		X
Lack of work culture	X	
Lazy men		X
Here we are all lazy		X
They spend money on drinking and send their children to beg		X
Vices and gambling	X	
Lack of means		X
Lack of resources	X	X
Politics		X
The Government does nothing		X
The Government is absent		X
The Nation		X
National Government		X
Provincial Government		X
Municipality		X
No response from rulers		X
No help from Government/We do not have help from the Government	X	X
No Government support	X	
Government money is wasted		X
The Government spends on other things		X
No Government will		X
Government mismanagement		X
Because of the Government/the Government's fault	X	
Governments that do not provide solutions		X
Sector interests	X	
There is money to have parties		X
Corruption "politicians increase their own salaries"		X
Fund mismanagement		X
Government fund embezzlement		X
Easier said than done	X	
Powerful people say there is no money	X	
No solution yet		X
Aid plans		X
No social policies	X	
The law does not protect people		X
No control		X
Impossible to pay taxes and eat		X
Lack of food		X
Disease		X
Expensive rent		X

No housing		X
Conditions under which people live (no drinking water)		X
No transportation	X	
No health care	X	
No security		X
No cleanliness, no paved roads		X
Going away from the family, not known whether he will be back	X	
Many children		X
Large families		X
Money mismanagement at home		X
Individualism "don't get involved"		X
No solidarity		X
Not a united community	X	
No neighbors' unity		X
No neighborhood organization		X
No community organization / no organization	X	X
No money to send children to school		X
Not having studied formally		X
Lack of formal studies		X
Lack of education / Lack of education in the family	X	X
Illiteracy	X	
Not having completed their studies	X	
Far-away schools		X
Children not having help to study		X
Dropping out of school		X
We do not continue further education		X
They require computer skills for everything		X
They require having completed high school for everything		X
Lack of training		X
Discrimination ("people are ignorant, that's why they discriminate")	X	X
Immigration from provinces		X
Illegal and indiscriminate immigration		X
Foreigners		X
There are more people		X
Being neglected		X
Lack of awareness	X	
No interest or comfort	X	
Conformism	X	
Loss of values	X	
Restlessness in the young		X
They do not give opportunities		X
There is always a formality missing	X	
Appearances		X

NOTE: Mark cells to show main causes mentioned in urban and rural sites.

Table 8: Perceptions of the main causes of poverty. Groups of men and women and other groups of poor people

Main Causes of Poverty	Men	Women	Young Men	Young Women
No jobs	X	X	X	X
Unemployment/Many unemployed people	X	X		
Downsizing		X		
Working for unspecified salary	X	X		
Closing of meat-packing plants and factories		X		
They privatized and laid people off		X		
Companies' difficult situation		X		
Factories not paying salaries			X	X
No trust in employees			X	X
Exolgan (container company)			X	
Odd jobs	X	X		
At 30 or 40, you are too old to work	X	X		
Age as a problem (you can get a job from the age of 21 to 40)			X	X
Inequality of opportunities		X		
Machines replacing men			X	X
They invest in machines and not in people	X			
No investment to open job opportunities	X			
Bad investment		X		
They do not invest because there are fewer people	X		X	
Import garbage		X		
Technology		X		
Modernization		X		
Foreign debt	X			
Dependency		X		
Strong accumulation of wealth		X		
Non-equitable resource sharing		X		
The farmer's production is worthless	X			
No animal pricing		X		
No cotton pricing		X		
No access to credit		X		
Low salaries, low wages, improper salaries	X	X	X	
Low income	X	X		
Low pensions	X	X		
Exploitation of minors and elderly people	X			X

Mothers working because in need		X		
Fathers unwilling to work for a small pay		X		
Lack of work culture		X		
Lazy men			X	X
Here we are all lazy			X	X
They spend money on drinking and send their children to beg			X	X
Vices and gambling	X			
Lack of means	X	X		
Lack of resources	X	X		
Politics		X		
The Government does nothing			X	X
The Government is absent	X		X	
The Nation		X		
National Government			X	
Provincial Government			X	
Municipality			X	
No response from rulers		X		
No help from Government/We do not have help from the Government	X	X		
No Government support	X	X		
Government money is wasted		X		
The Government spends on other things	X		X	
No Government will	X	X		
Government mismanagement		X		
Because of the Government/the Government's fault	X			X
Governments that do not provide solutions	X	X		
Sector interests		X		
There is money to have parties	X		X	
Corruption "politicians increase their own salaries"	X			
Fund mismanagement	X			
Government fund embezzlement		X		
Easier said than done		X		
Powerful people say there is no money		X		
No solution yet	X	X		
Aid plans		X		
No social policies		X		
The law does not protect people		X		
No control	X	X		
Impossible to pay taxes and eat	X	X		
Lack of food	X	X		
Disease	X	X		
Expensive rent		X		

No housing	X	X		
Conditions under which people live (no drinking water)			X	X
No transportation		X		
No health care		X		
No security	X	X		
No cleanliness, no paved roads	X	X		
Going away from the family, not known whether he will be back	X	X		
Many children		X		
Large families	X	X		
Money mismanagement at home		X		
Individualism "don't get involved"	X			
No solidarity		X		
Not a united community		X		
No neighbors' unity	X	X		
No neighborhood organization		X		
No community organization / no organization	X	X		
No money to send children to school			X	X
Not having studied formally	X	X		
Lack of formal studies			X	X
Lack of education / Lack of education in the family	X	X		
Illiteracy		X		
Not having completed their studies				X
Far-away schools	X	X		
Children not having help to study			X	X
Dropping out of school			X	X
We do not continue further education	X	X		
They require computer skills for everything			X	X
They require having completed high school for everything			X	X
Lack of training			X	X
Discrimination ("people are ignorant, that's why they discriminate")			X	X
Immigration from provinces		X		
Illegal and indiscriminate immigration		X		
Foreigners		X		
There are more people			X	X
Being neglected	X		X	
Lack of awareness	X	X		
No interest or comfort	X	X		
Conformism		X		
Loss of values		X		
Restlessness in the young		X		

They do not give opportunities			X	X
There is always a formality missing		X		
Appearances			X	X

NOTE: Mark cells to show main causes mentioned in discussion groups.

Appendix II. Summary Results on Priorities of the Poor

Table 1: Ranking of Problems Prioritized by Poor Groups in Rural Areas

Problems	<i>Los Jurías</i>		<i>Villa Atamisqui</i>		<i>Isla Talavera</i>	
	Men	Women	Men*	Women	Women	Young Women
Land ownership / Not owning the land	1	1				
Far from school / Far-away schools	2	5b				
In an emergency, you have to go to Los Jurías	2					
No brick houses / Living in huts / No wood cabins	3	2			2	
Small wood cabins					5	
The cattle is worth nothing	4					
No cattle				4		
No cotton pricing	5					
Expensive material for leatherwork	6					
No Health Station/ Lack of specialist doctors/ Doctor once a week		3	3	4		
Lack of medicines				1		
No ambulance				3		
Small hospital			4			
No radio/telephone		4		3		
No tools for working on the field		5a				
Lack of water		6	1	1	3	3
Unemployment			2	1		
Unemployed women				2		

No-one helps us				1		
Many children				2		
PRANI box just for children between 2 and 6				5		
Social benefits for the elderly			5			
No tank truck			6			
No permanent priest			7			
Chagas insect			8			
Hygiene			9			
No passenger boat					1	
No transportation, only school bus					7	
Ruined roads, potholes					4	
No electricity					6	2
Not enough money to support the family						1
Not enough money at home and we must go out to work						4
We work at home sewing, knitting or cleaning camp-sites						5
Fights with parents because of lack of understanding						6
We never take a break, we study and work at weekends						7
Too long distances to be able to get together						8

* 43% of the group was made up of men.

Table 2: Ranking of Problems Prioritized by Poor Groups in Urban Areas

Problems	Avellaneda		F.Varela		La Matanza		Moreno		J.C.Paz	
	Young men	Young men	Wo men	Wo men	Men	Wo men	Men (1)	Wo men	Men (2)	Women (3)
Badly paid jobs	1									
Jobs / Lack of jobs		1	3	1		1	2	2	2	2
Unemployment					2					
Little running water / Lack of water / drinking water	2		1	2						
No pay phones	3									
Electricity, low voltage / No electricity	4									9
Insecurity / Lack of security	5		7	1		5b	3	3		
The Police don't take care of people / Corrupt Police	6	4							7	
Garbage		2								
No Kindergarten		3	8	4				6		
Day-Care Center			2	4			6			
No High School		5				4a				
No Primary School			4							
No sewage system		6								
Floods		7								
No first-aid centers			5		1		9			
No medicines in first-aid centers							8			
Hospital				2						
No pharmacy							8			
Access to neighborhood			6							
Transportation			9							
No neighbors' association				3						
Drugs / drug addiction				5		3			4	6
Bureaucracy				6	7					
Street lighting				7						
Lack of proper housing					3					
Lack of training courses					4					
Criminals / Thefts					5					8
You can't commit yourself to paying back a loan					6					
Lack of food						2				
AIDS						4b				
The Police are very dirty						5a				
No organization						6				

Lack of programs						7				
Alcoholism						8				7
Low income							1			
No paved roads							4		8	
Lack of services							5	7		
Loose animals							7			
Extend work plans								1		
Poverty								4	3	
No soup kitchen								5		
Soup kitchen for the elderly								6		
Pension for the elderly								6		
No help to those in need									1	
Disease-driven discrimination									5	
Juvenile pregnancies									6	
Closed factories										1
Malnutrition										3
Family problems										4
Lack of opportunities for the young										5

- (1) Moreno: 33% men
- (2) José C. Paz: 55% men
- (3) José C. Paz: 78% women

Appendix III. Summary Results on Institutional Analysis

Table 1: Ranking of Institutions according to Importance by Groups of Poor Men and Women (rural sites)

Institutions	ATAMISQUI		ISLA TALAVERA		LOS JURÍES	
	Men	Women	Men	Women (*)	Men	Women
Primary School		2 ^o	1 ^o	1 ^o		2 ^o
High School	1 ^o	3 ^o			1 ^o	3 ^o
Hospital	2 ^o	1 ^o		6 ^o	3 ^o	1 ^o
Cooperatives	5 ^o	7 ^o			2 ^o	4 ^o
Registry Office	4 ^o	5 ^o				5 ^o
Radio (1)	1 ^o	7 ^o			5 ^o	
Telephone Center	2 ^o	3 ^o			4 ^o	6 ^o
Church	3 ^o	1 ^o	3 ^o		7 ^o	7 ^o
Neigh. Assoc. (2)			12 ^o	8 ^o	6 ^o	
Post Office	1 ^o	3 ^o			8 ^o	8 ^o
Agricultural Institutes (3)	2 ^o	2 ^o			9 ^o	
Health Station		3 ^o	13 ^o	7 ^o	11 ^o	
Clubs	7 ^o		14 ^o		14 ^o	
Highway Admin (4)	6 ^o	8 ^o			15 ^o	
Police	2 ^o	3 ^o	2 ^o	5 ^o	18 ^o	
Municipality		8 ^o	4 ^o	3 ^o	16 ^o	
Pensioners (5)	4 ^o	2 ^o			10 ^o	9 ^o
Companies	4 ^o		7 ^o		13 ^o	10 ^o
Political Parties	8 ^o	6 ^o				
Other						
Lodging	1 ^o	5 ^o				
Training Institutions (6)	3 ^o					
Sports Center	3 ^o	5 ^o				
Emergency (7)			5 ^o	4 ^o		
Border Patrol (8)				2 ^o		
Coast Guards (8)			9 ^o	3 ^o		

Note. (*) Mixed group.

(1) Radios or other means of communication.

(2) It also includes Neighbors' Centers and Community Centers.

(3) Agricultural Training and Further Education Institutions (INTA, EFA, etc.).

(4) Provincial Highway Administrations or other road consortiums.

- (5) It includes Pensioners Social Security Agency (PAMI) and Pensioners' Center.
- (6) Teachers' Training Institute, Classical Dance School, etc.
- (7) Emergency Institutions: Fire Fighters, Red Cross.
- (8) Safety institutions with strong presence in case of natural catastrophes.

Appendix.

Table 2: Ranking of Institutions according to Importance by Groups of Poor Men and Women (Urban sites)

Institutions	VARELA		DOCK SUD		MATANZA		J.C. PAZ		MORENO	
	Men (*)	Wn	Men (*)	Wn	Men (*)	Wn	Men	Wn	Men (*)	Wn
First-aid center	4 ^o	1 ^o	1 ^o	1 ^o	1 ^o	3 ^o		1 ^o	5 ^o	4 ^o
Kindergarten (1)		1 ^o	2 ^o	1 ^o	2 ^o	4 ^o		5 ^o	3 ^o	3 ^o
Family						1 ^o				
Neighbors' (2)		4 ^o		1 ^o	4 ^o	7 ^o		6 ^o	2 ^o	1 ^o
Primary School	1 ^o	1 ^o	3 ^o	1 ^o		2 ^o		4 ^o	6 ^o	2 ^o
High School	3 ^o				1 ^o			3 ^o	6 ^o	
"Manzaneras" (3)	1 ^o	1 ^o		1 ^o				2 ^o		
Municipality	5 ^o		1 ^o		6 ^o	13 ^o		9 ^o	8 ^o	5 ^o
Clubs	8 ^o	5 ^o	1 ^o	2 ^o	3 ^o	7 ^o		7 ^o	4 ^o	
Fire Fighters (4)	3 ^o		1 ^o			9 ^o				
Hospital	2 ^o	3 ^o	1 ^o					8 ^o	4 ^o	7 ^o
Telephone		7 ^o	2 ^o	6 ^o				6 ^o		
Mass Media (5)						5 ^o				
Catholic Church	2 ^o	1 ^o	4 ^o	3 ^o / 4 ^o	2 ^o	6 ^o			7 ^o	1 ^o
Police	8 ^o	8 ^o	7 ^o	5 ^o	6 ^o			10 ^o	10 ^o	6 ^o
Post Office				7 ^o						
Justicialist Center (6)			4 ^o							
Cooperative			6 ^o		1 ^o	7 ^o				
Evangelist Church					5 ^o					1 ^o
Provincial Government								4 ^o		8 ^o
Pensioners' Center			6 ^o						1 ^o	
NGOs						8 ^o				
Welfare Ministry						10 ^o				
Banks						11 ^o				
National Government						12 ^o			9 ^o	
Community workers (7)		2 ^o								
Termo Joven (8)	5 ^o									
Medical Emergency	7 ^o									

Note. (*) Mixed group.

- (1) Kindergartens / Day-Care Centers.
- (2) Neighbors' Authorities and Centers / Communal soup kitchens / Neighbors' Associations, etc.
- (3) Life Plan. Nutritional Aid Program for Mothers and Children of the Province of Buenos Aires, executed through the "manzaneras".
- (4) Fire Fighters / Civil Defense / Red Cross.
- (5) Printed Press / Radio / TV.
- (6) Justicialist Party.
- (7) Community workers. Program of the National Social Development Office
- (8) Municipality-dependent program for young population.