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LATIN AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN  
AND YOUTH IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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SUMMARY

prepared by the Government of Argentine

Introduction

Argentina's rate of population growth is low: 17 per thousand, which, in conjunction with the low average birth rate: 24 per thousand, leads to a gradual ageing of the population; only 30 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age.

The Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo, an agency directly under the President of the Republic, was created in 1961; though it has since undergone several changes in structure, it remains essentially responsible for the country's harmonious social and economic growth, and, as such, defines long term objectives, prepares short, medium and long term programmes and special projects.

Education

Pre-primary level. In 1964 there were 2,092 kindergartens (public and private) with a total attendance of 109,359 children, and pre-primary departments were created in 67 schools to take care of 7,016 pre-schoolers more.

/Primary level.



Primary level. The educational development plan's goals at this level are: complete primary education available to all the school age population (6 to 12 years), and 95 per cent enrollment, the balance including handicapped children.

The 1952-1962 decade has seen an increase of enrollments (87.2 per cent of the school age population in 1962), increased staff and classrooms. There is, however, a high ratio of failures which favours drop-outs. Approximately only 48 per cent complete this level of education. There are, however, regional differences which favour the Federal Capital, the Buenos Aires, Córdoba, La Pampa, Mendoza and Santa Fe provinces, and Tierra del Fuego, whereas other areas show ratios far below the average.

Middle level. Here the goal is to raise registrations from the present 30 per cent of the 13 to 18 years age group to 40 per cent of that sector. A restructuration of this level of education is aimed at.

At present middle level education comprises not only the Bachillerato stream (leading to higher education), a commercial or business stream and a normal or teacher's training stream, but also includes technical industrial and agricultural education and professional training, which actually is little more than the teaching of handicrafts.

It is necessary to intensify technical industrial and agricultural education in order to meet the country's growing need for skilled workers. Technical education proper is under the Consejo Nacional de Educación Técnica (CONET). Here middle level technicians are trained, and also agricultural training and homemaking education are imparted. This level is available to youngsters aged 13 to 18 years of age.

Higher education. It is estimated that an increase of enrollments from the present 10 per cent of the 19 to 24 years age group to 11 per cent of that sector would adequately satisfy the country's needs. Restructuration of education at this level is also necessary in order to satisfy the country's requirements for graduates in the "strategic" professions. Vocational guidance is available at the universities.

Adult education. There is a national plan for adult education known as the Plan Nacional Intensivo de Alfabetización y Educación de Adultos, which seeks particularly to raise the education level of adults in rural areas, with particular regard to the needs of modern technology. This year an accelerated training course for adults has begun, addressed to the speedy satisfaction of the country's need for skilled workers.

There are special facilities for physically and mentally handicapped children, and there are also special facilities for training teachers for such establishments.

All private educational establishments must comply with state requirements as to academic standards, etc.

Considerable importance is attributed to parascholastic activities, sports, camps, school clubs, scouts associations, physical education, etc.

Expenditure in education is approximately 10 per cent of total Government expenditure, which is equivalent to about 1.5 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product.

### Health

Early infancy mortality (up to one month) is approximately 23 to 24 per thousand, on the average for the country as a whole, though figures vary from area to area.

In the 1 to 4 years age group the mortality rate is 3.5 per thousand, the most important causes of death being influenza and pneumonia, congenital malformations and gastrointestinal complaints. In the 5 to 9 years age group mortality drops to less than 1 per thousand and drops even further in the 10 to 15 years age group.

The highest priority in the field of public health is given to the 0 to 5 years age group; these activities are entrusted to the "Dirección de Maternidad e Infancia" of the Ministerio de Asistencia Social y Salud Pública where mother and infant care are provided, and children up to 6 years of age receive health care also. Powdered milk is distributed through the 306 centres maintained by this agency; these centres work in close connection with hospitals and clinics.

Public health funds are not only provided out of the federal budget, but are also provided out of provincial and municipal budgets.

By national law all newborn infants are inoculated with B.C.G. vaccine as a protection against tuberculosis; school children are also checked for this disease.

Whilst water supplies normally come under the aegis of "Obras Sanitarias de la Nación", an independent fiscal agency, the Ministry of Public Health has organized a drinking water programme (with IDB and provincial co-operation) for small communities.

There are many programmes for the inoculation of children against communicable diseases.

### Protection and social welfare

It is difficult to be specific as to social conditions and programmes due to the federal government system which prevails in Argentina. There is, however, a marked degree of uniformity in policy and action in these fields.

The Consejo Nacional de Asistencia Social has established contacts with public and private agencies acting in this field and prepared programmes for action. This agency has specialized departments dealing with individual cases, community development, homes for children, special schools for handicapped children, etc.

Various programmes such as Nurseries (Creches), Youth Associations or Clubs and Mothers' Clubs deserve mention.

There are establishments for the care of deserted children, children of broken homes, children who have been removed from home surroundings, etc. Special attention is paid to children and young people who exhibit anti-social behaviour and there are special establishments for their care, treatment and rehabilitation.

The Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA), created, among other purposes, with a view to improving social conditions of rural life, is active in the field of social welfare, paying particular attention to the family regarded as a basic unit.

The many Rural Home Clubs and 4-A Clubs carry out valuable work in this field.

#### Legislation

Argentina has special and up-to-date legislation on the care and protection of minors, mother and child protection, juvenile delinquency, etc., but it is not always respected.