

Federation's Philanthropic Investment in Argentina

JDC

Immediately after the outbreak of the pandemic, JDC partnered with the key local Jewish welfare organizations (AMIA – the Buenos Aires Kehillah, Tzedaka Foundation and Chabad Foundation) to develop a temporary emergency program to cover food, medicine, utilities, and rental payments to alleviate the situation of needy families.

This program, addressing needs of the “new poor,” has provided relief to hundreds of families who had never been in a situation of vulnerability. In most cases, it was the first time in their lives that they needed to ask for help.

To avoid the stigma of being identified as 'welfare cases,' JDC has expanded our outreach through the Jewish day school network. For many families, this is their first point of connection to the community and offers a safe space for them to connect to other sources of aid.

As of today, more than 1,300 families are receiving support through the different channels.

In parallel, JDC has continued working with the structural poor in 14 smaller Jewish communities in the provinces outside Buenos Aires, bringing relief to close to 300 families. In these provinces, JDC has three programs that provide direct assistance to Jewish people who need help with food, medicine, and assistance with rent/utilities. Two of these programs, Mezonot (food assistance) and Baby Help (assistance for new families), have been combined into one program called Ajraiut (Responsibility.) JDC continues to run the Bait program for housing support. Further, as a result of the recession and pandemic, a new JDC program in the provinces will be providing assistance with medicines. JDC continues to provide this support through local Jewish professionals who are trained social welfare professionals or volunteers. The Kidum program (detailed below) continues to work towards establishing long-term sustainability and handover of welfare support to the local organizations in the provinces.

Kidum (long-term sustainability in 14 smaller Jewish communities in the provinces outside Buenos Aires) In response to the crisis that Argentina suffered in 2001, JDC undertook an enormous rescue operation. In addition to direct assistance programs, JDC's fundamental contribution consisted of strengthening the organizational capacities for social assistance in the Buenos Aires Jewish community, where approximately 80-85% of Argentina's Jewish population resides.

In the city, this approach has allowed JDC to end direct assistance, which is now handled by local Jewish organizations (AMIA Buenos Aires Kehillah, the Tzedaka Foundation, Chabad). The same has not occurred in communities within the provinces, where JDC continues to provide funding to local communities for direct assistance programs, and this lack of capacity on the part of these communities has prevented JDC from abandoning direct assistance, since there are vulnerable people whose needs would go unmet.

JDC designed the Kidum program, which outlines the gradual termination of the direct assistance provided to the 14 communities currently receiving assistance in Argentina's interior. The program involves continuing to provide the assistance while working at the local level with some of these communities to strengthen their capacities and thus facilitate the gradual withdrawal of JDC from this particular type of support. This task also involves building ties between the social departments within the communities and their leaders as well as organizing activities that aim to get beneficiaries involved in the social life of local communities.

In 2018, the program began in two communities, Rosario and Santa Fe. This intervention was a pilot program that serves as a model to be adapted and replicated in other communities in the provinces. Now, JDC is working with 9 communities: Bahia Blanco, Chaco, Córdoba, Mendoza, Paraná, Rosario, Salta, Santa Fe and the community of Tucumán.

At the same time, JDC's Kidum program has established a network of lay leaders throughout Argentina's provinces. Kidum's webinars and workshops help community leaders face the challenges of the pandemic, focusing assistance on ongoing emerging needs and concerns faced by the small and isolated communities. JDC encourages community leaders to enrich the strategies of the community's organizations in the face of the economic and social consequences of the pandemic. JDC works directly with welfare professionals in the community to strengthen the synergy with the rest of the community—a crucial approach for ensuring that everyone in need is properly served.

In parallel to supporting basic needs, JDC promotes self-sufficiency to the Jewish members of the community. JDC developed a pilot job market integration program called **Maavar** in partnership with AMIA - the Buenos Aires Kehilah - to help individuals with job market integration and to promote reintegration. Maavar brings together a network of 32 diverse organizations including Jewish Day Schools, JCCs, and synagogues to serve as entry points for those interested in applying for the program, underscoring the holistic impact of the pandemic on the entire Jewish community. As of today, 330 individuals have started the process and 123 have already finished the training program. Of these, 33 people found jobs after participating in the program.

JDC also developed a program called **Virtuali** in partnership with AMIA - the Buenos Aires Kehilah – for digital integration of the elderly to help them learn to use technology tools. There are more than 100 young volunteers and more than 180 elderly people participating in the program.

JDC programs also revitalize Jewish life. JDC develops tomorrow's Jewish leaders by providing practical training for professionals and volunteers. Examples include:

- **Kisharon** is a JDC program aimed at training teams of young leaders in youth groups and other community organizations in Argentina. Through an exchange of experiences, these young people are taught to hone their leadership skills to enhance their organizations and better their communities. There are more than 60 youth leaders participating.
- **Leatid** conducts training programs for directors and young communal leaders at Jewish institutions. The program organizes specialized workshops, seminars, and coaching. One

example is **Shituf**, a training and exchange program among executive directors of Latin America. Through this initiative, JDC promotes leadership, innovation and strategic vision, while fostering a professional network that enriches Jewish community life both regionally and globally. There are 19 executive directors from 6 countries participating. They lead communities, JCCs, synagogues, Jewish day schools, federations, and welfare organizations

- Gender and Leadership program: On the occasion of International Women's Day (March 8th, 2021) JDC developed a special conference co-organized with CLAM (Latin America Maccabi World Union) bringing together leaders from the region to share their experiences within the subject of: *women, care and community leadership in times of the pandemic.*

The Jewish Agency for Israel

Immersive Israel Experiences

- *Birthright*: Since the 2002 crash of the Argentinian currency, the peso, the country's Jewish community has struggled to cover its share (one third) of Argentinean participants' first, free trips to Israel. To ensure that young Argentinean Jews can benefit from the transformative Birthright experience, The Jewish Agency covers their share.
- *Masa Israel Journey*: Each year around 600 young Jewish adults from Argentina "live like a local" in Israel through Masa. Masa offers gap-year, study-abroad, volunteer and professional development opportunities to young adults aged 17-30. It provides funding; offers cutting-edge leadership training; and inspires a new generation of connected, committed young Jewish people.

Aliyah

- Promotion: Through a partnership with the Government of Israel called *Ofek Israeli*, The Jewish Agency is able to perform wide outreach to potential *olim* (immigrants to Israel) through large *aliyah* fairs, videoconferences with *aliyah* experts in Israel, seminars, lectures, and roundtables. The activities stimulate interest in Israel and provide frameworks for potential *olim* to ask practical questions about life in Israel.
- Preparation: *Jewish Agency Aliyah Services* are custom-tailored to each aspiring *oleh* (new immigrant). Consultants provide practical, personalized information on education, housing, health care, employment, military service. The Jewish Agency also assists with logistics and, whenever possible, job placement.

Local Jewish education

- *Cha'il Israel Education Abroad* is a joint initiative of The Jewish Agency and the Israeli Ministry of Education. Cha'il works in Jewish high schools and education centers across Argentina, providing Jewish-Zionist educational programs; professional development for teachers of Hebrew and Jewish-Zionist studies, including seminars in Israel; financial support and scholarships for growing and strengthening Israel-based curricula; and educational trips to Israel for students.
- *Jewish-Zionist Youth Movements*: Each year The Jewish Agency sends several youth movement *shlichim* (Israeli emissaries) to Argentina. They develop leadership programs for local youth, operate camping programs during school vacations, promote social activism and solidarity, and

use a variety of informal education methods to connect Jewish children and teens to the Jewish people and to Israel.

- *BAMA* (Hebrew acronym for: “The House of the Jewish Educator”) was created by The Jewish Agency with the UJA-Federation of New York in 2002, and is now a crucial resource for most of the Jewish educational institutions in Argentina. Based in Buenos Aires, BAMA plays an important role in the Jewish community of several South American countries. Its mission is to promote and enhance the quality of Jewish Zionist education in order to deepen Jewish identity, community involvement, and commitment to the State of Israel.

World ORT

ORT’s goal is to offer excellent Jewish and secular studies, to invest in Jewish communities in the diaspora, to support community members in need, and to ensure them access to education. Latin America is ORT’s third largest operational region, with the largest presence in Argentina. More than 80% of the Jewish children attending a Jewish high school in Buenos Aires are enrolled in the ORT School, making it a critical cornerstone for Jewish life in the city.

- ORT opened its first high school in Buenos Aires in 1941. Enrollment grew until it exceeded school capacity and, in 1990, a second ORT high school in Buenos Aires was opened. Both ORT schools reached full capacity (2,200 for the first school and 1,800 for the second) almost immediately.
- In 2012, a new \$5 million ORT Science and Technology Center was opened in Buenos Aires to provide more classrooms, laboratories, workshops and facilities for the city’s students and to continue to meet the growing demand. In early 2015, elementary schools were opened on the premises of each of the two high schools in order to provide children with a high quality Jewish and general education from an early age.
- Today more than 11,000 students attend ORT’s facilities in Buenos Aires and Rosario, which are comprised of two elementary schools, three high schools, two post-secondary junior colleges, a teacher training college and a team that develops joint co-operation and training programs with local institutions and businesses.
- ORT Argentina is working towards the addition of a third campus in Buenos Aires in the northern suburbs (named Tigre) to relieve the ever-increasing demand at the two existing ORT campuses. Both current campuses are over-subscribed and admissions staff turns away hundreds of students every year.
- A fundamental principle of ORT is that no child should be denied a Jewish day school education because of financial constraints. The pandemic has worsened the already strained economic situation in Argentina, making it difficult or impossible for many Jewish parents to enroll their children in the ORT schools. ORT is committed to ensuring that students who wish to attend an ORT school are able to do so; providing financial assistance to students in Argentina is a high priority.

Other Major Jewish Organizations

- *The Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations (DAIA)* is the umbrella organization of Jewish organizations and represents the Jewish community to Argentinian authorities while also taking responsibility for the community's safety.
- *The Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA)* is the Jewish Community Center of Buenos Aires, established in 1894, which provides extensive social welfare services and cultural programming.
- *The Sociedad Hebraica Argentina* is a Jewish community center and club founded in 1926 by a group of Jewish Argentine intellectuals. Their complex includes five gymnasiums and an indoor swimming pool.
- *The Zionist Federation* is the largest Zionist organization in Argentina.
- *The Latin American Jewish Congress* is an affiliate of the World Jewish Congress
- Club Náutico Hacoaj and Club Macabi are sports clubs and youth centers that play a central role in Argentinian Jewish life.