

**Best Practice ID#: 135**

**Best Practice Initiative on Improving the Living Environment  
Pre-screening Report**

**A. ID Tag, Summary and Recommendation**

BP Title: <b>Indigenous Pop. Shelter</b>	Recommended for TAC as BP:
Country: <b>ARGENTINA</b>	Recommended for BP 100 List:
Date of Submission:	Recommended for Good Practice List: <b>YES</b>
Date of Review:	Not recommended:
Summary:	

The target group of this project was a conglomerate of 450,000 indigenous people from 18 different ethnic groups. This population segment has been denied access to basic needs programmes due to geographic, economic and social marginalization. The objective of the project in its first phase was to solve the population's basic needs in terms of shelter, sanitation and infrastructure, to improve environmental and health conditions and to enhance community participation. The second phase involved the provision of skills training. Ten ethnic groups have benefitted from the programme and the living conditions of 16,432 indigenous people have been improved in 106 enclaves. The management model used was geared towards meeting basic community needs and encouraging community participation in self-help activities. The programme depends on co-operation amongst national, provincial and municipal governments, as well as community organizations and family groups, as part of its decentralization strategy. Projects include, in addition to training and employment strategies, innovative technological developments for the manufacture of components for the low-income shelter market. [Original document in Spanish]

Initials, Date: **13-11-1995**

**REPORT**

**B. Compliance with Nomination Criteria**

1. *Tangible impact on improving the living environment*
- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| a/ Documented and explained:                | Yes/No |
| b/ Quantitative evidence/data:              | Yes/No |
| c/ Other substantiating evidence (explain): | Yes/No |

**Covering letter 13-9-1995 explaining policy framework**

d/ Recommendations to authors:

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2. *Partnership*
- |                                   |        |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| a/ Two or more partners involved: | Yes/No |
| Government:                       | Yes/No |
| Local authorities:                | Yes/No |
| NGOs/CBOs:                        | Yes/No |
| Academic/Research/Training:       | Yes/No |
| Media:                            | Yes/No |
| Private Sector:                   | Yes/No |
| Prof. Association:                | Yes/No |
| Other (Please specify): _____     | Yes/No |

- b/ Names of two or more actors provided: Yes/No
- c/ Addresses provided: Yes/No
- d/ Phone provided: Yes/No
- Fax provided: Yes/No
- E-Mail provided: Yes/No
- e/ Recommendations to authors regarding partnerships:

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3. *Sustainability*

- a/ Laws, by-laws, standards, codes: Yes/No
- b/ Decision-making processes: Yes/No
- c/ Resource allocation: Yes/No
- d/ Management system(s): Yes/No
- e/ Technology: Yes/No
- f/ Replicated initial area/stakeholders: Yes/No
- g/ Replicated/transferred elsewhere: Yes/No
- h/ Other (please specify): Yes/No

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i/ Recommendations to author(s):

**No indication of sustainability are given.**

**C. Compliance with Reporting Format**

- 4. Description of Before: Yes/No
  - 5. Description of After: Yes/No
  - 6. Description of Strategy: Yes/No
  - 7. Is before-to-after process clear? Yes/No
- Comments if any:

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- 7. Use of gender assessment: Yes/No
- a/ Gender issues documented/analysed: Yes/No
- b/ Gender impact analysis or assessment: Yes/No
- c/ Use of gender-sensitive language: Yes/No
- Recommendations to the author(s):

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**D. Lessons to be learned from the Best Practice**

8. Are lessons learned described? Yes/No
9. What are, in your judgement, the lessons to be learned from this case study?
1. **Strong Central Government action can drastically change living conditions of minority groups.**
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

9. In your opinion, are these lessons transferable? Yes/No  
Please circle, as appropriate:
- North-North    North-South  
South-South    South-North
- Comments?

**But only if political willingness and financial inputs at largest level.**

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**E. Category/Classification**  
(Please circle, as appropriate)

Major Category 1: Sustainable shelter and community development

- a/ **Affordable housing and services**
- b/ **Access to land and finance**
- c/ Community-based planning and participation
- d/ **Extension of safe water supply and sanitation**
- e/ Inner-city core, neighbourhood/settlement revival/rehabilitation
- f/ Safe, healthy and environmentally-sound building materials
- g/ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Major Category 2: Sustainable urban and regional development

- a/ **Job creation and poverty alleviation**
- b/ Reduction of pollution, improvement of environmental health
- c/ Improved access to public transport and communication
- d/ Improved waste collection, re-use and re-cycling
- e/ Greening of the city and effective use of public space
- f/ Improved production/consumption cycles/reduction in use of non-renewable resources
- g/ More efficient energy use and production
- h/ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Major Category 3: Sustainable, efficient, accountable and transparent settlements management

- a/ More effective and efficient admin/management & info systems
- b/ Gender equality and equity in decision-making/design and implementation
- c/ Crime reduction and prevention
- d/ Improved disaster preparedness, mitigation and re-construction
- e/ **Social integration and reduction of exclusion**
- f/ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### Key words

Please select not more than six key words from the key words list which could be used to qualify the best practice:

- |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <b>EMPLOYMENT</b>       | 4. <b>PARTNERSHIP</b> |
| 2. <b>BASIC SERVICES</b>   | 5. <b>TECHNOLOGY</b>  |
| 3. <b>LAND LEGISLATION</b> | 6. _____              |

### Scale of Intervention

1. Global/regional
2. **National**
3. **Provincial**
4. Metropolitan
5. City/Town
6. Village
7. Neighbourhood

### Ecosystem:

- Arid & semi-arid
- Tropical & Sub-tropical
- **Continental**
- Coastal zone
- Mountain/high plateau
- Riparian (river basins, water sheds)

### F. Recommendations (Optional)

If recommended/not recommended (please circle) for consideration by the TAC, why?/why not?

Central government intervention involving at wide range of actors. However no indicators of economic sustainability.

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**TITLE: HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT FOR NATIVE COMMUNITIES, NORTHWEST AND NORTHEAST (NOA and NEA) ARGENTINE REGIONS.**

Argentine Republic

*file: Argentina*

**RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS:**

**PRESIDENCY OF THE NATION**  
Secretary of Social Development  
Under-Secretary of Housing  
Housing Emergencies Programme Authority

Lic. Eduardo Amadeo  
Ing. Rogelio Camarasa

Archs. M.B. Rodulfo, J. Amaya

Av. 9 de Julio 1925, Piso 16 (CP 1332), Buenos Aires. Argentina.  
Tel/Fax: (54 1) 383 1152.

**NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

**CEPA (COMISION EPISCOPAL DE PASTORAL ABORIGEN)**

President: Monsignor Joaquín Piña.

**ENDEPA (EQUIPO NACIONAL DE PASTORAL ABORIGEN)**

Exec. Secretary: Mabel Quinteros

España 975 (CP 3600), Formosa, Argentina. Tel/Fax (54 717) 33030

**BISHOPRICS of: FORMOSA, Prov. of Formosa; IGUAZU and POSADAS, Prov. of Misiones; RECONQUISTA, Prov. of Santa Fe; PRESIDENTE ROQUE SAENZ PEÑA and ARCHBISHOPRIC of RESISTENCIA, Prov. of Chaco; (NEA REGION).**

**BISHOPRICS of: ORAN, Prov. of Salta, and JUJUY, Prov. of Juju. (NOA REGION)**

**PROFESSIONALS RESPONSIBLE:**

Ing. C. Tomás de Bournissen; Arch. D. Monti; Ing. F. Aguilar.

25 de Mayo 906 (CP 3700), Roque Saenz Peña, Chaco. Argentina Tel/Fax (54 732) 21405.  
Rivadavia 340, Las Lomitas, Formosa. Argentina. Tel/Fax (54 715) 2037.

**KEY DATES:**

**Summer 1992:** Outbreak of cholera in northern region of the country. **May 1992:** Central Government's economic support to self-managing project of the aboriginal community of B° NA LA in Roque Saenz Peña, Province of Chaco, accomplished with assistance of ENDEPA. **In April 1993,** 53 housing units were completed through mutual help. Regional leading citizens and official institutions were startled by the achievement. **July 1992:** Resolution SVYCA 520/92 formulates the "Housing and Environmental Improvement Programme 'Juan Perón'". **August 1992:** Resolution SVYCA 821/92 approves the funding; seven agreements are signed with the Bishoprics of NOA and NEA Regions with participation of ENDEPA. **September 1993:** Resolution MSAS 536/93 includes the Agreements in the National Social Scheme and the first advance payment of resources is effected.

More than 19,000 natives are beneficiaries of this project, pertaining to nine ethnic groups settled in more than 100 locations of the six provinces. The planning comprises the implementation of 605 housing solutions, 63 community centres and 74 basic infrastructures, with a total investment of US\$ 6.8 millions during 4 years.

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**ACTIONS:**

- \* **Ownership regularization:** Surveys, property deeds' clearing and registry.
- \* **Housing:** Building, rehabilitation or improvement of housing units and their equipment.
- \* **Infrastructure:** Provision or improvement of services, fittings and equipments for sanitary, communications and production infra-structure.
- \* **Equipment:** Provision or improvement of services, premises and equipments of communal, sanitary and educational nature.
- \* **Technical assistance:** In the formulation, execution and assessment of projects; social work regarding communal organization and training.
- \* **Complementary actions:** They include skills guidance, organizing and managing abilities, productive undertakings with handling of natural resources and provision of basic machinery and tools.

**RESULTS**

The high institutional status of the promoting body together with the vulnerable conditions of the benefitting communities gave place to quarterly payments for each initial sub-project. Independently from the Working Scheme, this measure includes the entire funding of the planned works, either in one or several sites. The confidence expressed by the Government in the involved actors probity, enhances the reliability of the communal effort.

The completed and on-going sub-projects benefit 18,432 natives of 9 ethnic groups (4% of total aboriginal population), settled in 133 locations which include 664 housing solutions, 141 infrastructures (safe water supply and roads linking neighbouring settlements) and 45 community equipment centres with meeting places and services provision (health, clothing, working gear's keeping, training). The Government's financial contribution amounts to US\$ 3.4 millions (53% of total expenditure).

Each allocation includes social community promotion, technical training and skills' recovery, activities which take place together with the interchange between teachers, technicians, instructors pertaining to the same ethnic groups and beneficiaries. Training and strengthening actions are aimed towards building, management and organizing tasks, within the productive and communal process. As a result of these initiatives, micro-undertakings are generated and/or reactivated: brick kilns, carpentry workshops, sand pits exploitation, etc.

These on-going undertakings have received contributions from local authorities, indigenous institutions, religious congregations, non-governmental organizations, Caritas Argentina, CEPA, et al.

Housing and environmental improvements generate new needs and possibilities in the community: seating, bedding and keeping furniture, security locks for doors and windows, rain water vessels, all of which stimulate further communal activities. This also benefits the self-assessment of the fulfilled tasks: choosing the site, experience achievement, housing as shelter and the organization of the community. The latter, which is being assessed in a participating way, enables the re-enforcement of activities on a productive basis, essential for the development sustainability.

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## SCENARIO

Very few of the different ethnic groups that populated the Argentine territory during prehispanic times have managed to survive up to present day. Most recent official figures record an approximate population of 450,000 gathered in more than 520 communities, accounting for ethnic groups distributed in two well defined regions: North Argentina, including the provinces of Chaco, Formosa, Santa Fe, Misiones, Jujuy, Salta y Tucumán, and South Argentina, with the provinces of Buenos Aires, La Pampa, Río Negro, Chubut, Neuquén, Santa Cruz y Tierra del Fuego.

Generally speaking, these ethnic groups, despite of being the original inhabitants of the territory, nowadays are not the owners of the land they inhabit, a fact that has caused their displacement towards border and marginal areas, both in productive and geographical terms. Their dependency conditions, their scant access to goods and basic health and educational services, is added to the trend towards a loss of cultural identity and the destruction of their ecosystem.

A situation of health emergency and the outbreak of cholera in 1992 underlined their vulnerability facing risk factors (accounting for nearly the total of cholera cases in the whole country). This situation attests before government bodies and civic institutions their extreme privation concerning lack of housing, safe water and sanitation, and the regularity of endemic diseases such as *chagas*, diarrhoea, tuberculosis and typhoid. This privation and socio-economic marginality are conditions which they endure within the fabric of the national society. These features of marginality are enhanced by the indigenous groups' isolation plus their shortage of infrastructure as regards communications and accessibility, added to the obstacles facing the development of their own technologies.

The persistence of these factors, compounded by a lack of recognition of the situation shown in the "practice" of official policies, was cause and consequence of the progressive impoverishment and degradation prevalent among great part of the native communities.

## STRATEGIES

This practice is an outcome of an innovating national strategy that recognizes the demands of the aboriginal population in circumstances of extreme privation, and which responds to their unsatisfied basic needs. It has as fulcrum the recovery and development of proper habitat conditions in their communities, in a first stage of the strengthening process.

The results "in deeds" mark the road to be followed by the application of the various provinces' legislations which, in most jurisdictions, contemplate only "in words" the right to benefit from adequate housing.

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The encouragement of their integral development takes place by means of the implementation of undertakings with multiple objectives, aimed to consolidating sound improvements in the quality of life and in the self-management ability of the communities, aimed also to securing the "respect for cultural patterns" and for the "singularity" that stems from them and from their "felt needs". The communal decisions regarding the choice, design, technology, usage and ownership of the works to be executed are linked to a commitment bonded with the irrevocable deliverance of the cultural roots -worn or faltering- belonging to the various native groups in the Argentine Republic.

This attribute of integrity presumes taking action over the problematic scenario tackling the problem from several co-ordinated fronts: housing; infrastructure; communal, sanitary and educational equipment; health, employment and job training. It also presupposes acting over participating procedures which ought to involve, in a crystalline rapport, the central Government, the intermediate promoting bodies together with the communal organizations, and essentially, "all and every one" of the community and government actors in a simultaneous action over territorial and regional scales. This would ensure the spreading of information among other communities and improve credibility as to the prospects of overcoming and satisfying their basic needs.

When a community identifies one or more of their basic needs, this practice suggests that the same community should participate with the design, planning, organization, management, execution and other parallel activities, for instance, the production of goods and basic machines. The adoption of unanimous systems of organization would be: to define the leading roles and responsibilities of each family in the collective or individual work, and to establish the production methods and handling of material and economic resources or of any other means available during the building-up process. It is convenient to count with the help of technical assistance and the necessary following-up in order to invigorate their own skills and capabilities.

The model for national management is based on strategies of regionalization and decentralization as regards the stages of elaboration, execution and administration of the projects within the non-governmental intermediate bodies: Bishoprics and ENDEPA and, through these, within the communities. The national Government would retain for itself a facilitating and promoting role referred to particular cases, as well as the following-up and evaluation functions.

Each of the undertakings covered by this Project is a result of the participating process, implying shared decisions taken by all the actors involved, with a common funding in which the national financial contribution complements the usage of local resources, labour inputs, co-ordination and other issues proposed by the Community.

The communities participate, take a leading role and assume the responsibilities concerning the decisions package related with all the stages in the Project. The elaboration and groundwork of an undertaking in a certain and localized community, as well as the co-ordination of labour and completion of initiatives take place with support of bilingual exchange meetings between the Community, delegates of the promoting body and others with ethnic relevance.

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The participation of women, children and youngsters and the reinforcement of their individual and collective capacities are encouraged.

Bilingual workshops are run dealing with technical training and co-ordination of the building process. They are furnished with basic teaching elements, mainly graphic, related to building methods, using control charts, schedules, building materials and tools: participants learn to read and interpret building plans. Similarly, rules and standards are worked out to outline the various tasks and duties to be done with participation and communal work, including sanctions imposed by default. Members fulfilling administrative duties are appointed in charge of controls. Labour chores are rewarded with meals distribution agreed on previously with the families.

Weekly, the working group appraises and co-ordinates the jobs for the next week and monthly the community, gathered in assembly, appraises the project's development. Participation and communication are encouraged through various expressive techniques and role-playing, in order to bind together the concepts of two cultures regarding the needs and their answers or solutions.

Exchange and training meetings are held with other communities going through a more advanced stage of developing projects, with visits to the corresponding sites. The transfer of experiences invigorates self-esteem. It also increases understanding and insight about "what lies beyond" the Community and of other communities' existence and abilities, with beneficial impacts on self-exclusion behaviours.

Delegates acknowledged by the communities put into effect the practice carried out by the promoting bodies in charge of the management and general leadership of the project. These delegates are responsible for fostering social and training activities developed from integral and inter-disciplinary principles, and for organizing periodical exchanges of an evaluating and formative character, based on acquired experiences. The mutual learning accrued between these agents and the participating communities make possible an informal and formal "dissemination" process of the results, apparent in new targets of evolutive improvement. These aspirations originate from the project and give rise to the merger of other components linked with productive activities, influencing the sustainability of the initiated development.

The objective and perceptible conditions of this transformation - "change of image" achieved through tangible experiences- reassure the "acceptability" and "change of attitudes", among the aboriginal communities and the local and regional societies. These changes would also influence public institutions, causing formal recognition of the ethnic groups' role to be accomplished amid the process of national development.

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The national support to social services rounds off this strategy together with productive micro-undertakings such as: the cold storage chamber "Cooperativa Saladillo Sur" which enables its members to sell their fishing.

**SDS/Rosario University Foundation Agreement:**

**Technical and productive development of: sanitary modules and other components aimed for SPV undertakings and the urban market, with effects on: administrative development, research, enterprises profile, marketing, jobs' creation, university interchanges and involvement in the SPV and local Employment Authority training activities.**

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<sup>11</sup>Pnbi - Structural poverty measure indicator used by INDEC (Ministry of Economy)  
(Unsatisfied population basic needs)

<sup>12</sup>Pu - Urban population