

PROJECT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT REPORT

ARGENTINA

Basic Protection Project

Report No. 154006

FEBRUARY 4, 2021



IEG
INDEPENDENT
EVALUATION GROUP

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**Basic Protection Project
(7703-AR; 8017-AR)**

February 4, 2021

Human Development and Economic Management

Independent Evaluation Group

Abbreviations

ANSES	National Social Security Administration
AUH	Universal Child Allowance
DLI	disbursement-linked indicator
ENAPROSS	Social Security and Protection Survey
FA	Family Allowances Program
Jefes	Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogares
MTESS	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security
PPAR	Project Performance Assessment Report
SCE	Training and Employment Insurance Program

All dollar amounts are US dollars unless otherwise indicated.

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Project Data

This is a Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR) by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank Group on the Argentina Basic Protection Project, P115183. This instrument and the methodology for this evaluation are discussed in appendix C. Following standard IEG procedure, copies of the draft PPAR were shared with relevant government officials for their review and comment, and no comments were received.

Argentina Basic Protection Project (P115183)

Basic Data

Country	Argentina	World Bank financing commitment	\$930.0 million
Global Practice	Social Protection & Jobs	Actual project cost	\$930.0 million
Project name	Argentina Basic Protection	Expected project total cost	\$930.0 million
Project ID	P115183	Actual amount disbursed	\$930.0 million
Financing instrument	Specific investment loan	Environmental assessment category	C
Financing source	IBRD		

Dates

Event	Original Date	Actual Date
Approval	03/26/2009	06/09/2009
Effectiveness	06/12/2009	06/12/2009
Restructuring	n.a.	01/10/2015
Mid-Term Review	07/19/2013	07/19/2013
Closing	09/30/2011	06/30/2016

Key Staff Responsible

Management	Appraisal	Completion
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Note: IBRD = International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; n.a. = not applicable.

Summary

Project Background and Description

The project was prepared in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, in the context of increased pressure to expand coverage and accessibility of Argentina's social protection policies. The social protection system had historically been linked to the formal labor market through contributory schemes (pension benefits, unemployment insurance, family allowances, health and housing insurance coverage). Noncontributory programs—for children, the unemployed, and informal workers—were limited.

The project aimed at strengthening and expanding Argentina's social protection system by supporting expansion of coverage and improving the design of two income transfer programs for the unemployed and families with children. Project objectives were “to increase the effectiveness of [two] income transfer programs for the unemployed and families with children by improving selected design features and the transparency and accountability of the Family Allowances Program [FA] and the [Training and Employment Insurance Program (Seguro de Capacitación y Empleo; SCE)], and by transferring beneficiaries from other, less effective schemes and programs, to [FA] and [SCE]” (World Bank 2009a, 10; World Bank 2009b, 7).

The project included three components: (i) financing for Training and Employment Insurance; (ii) financing for FA; and (iii) technical assistance for the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MTESS) and the National Social Security Administration (ANSES) to improve the targeting, implementation, and monitoring of these programs. The project was approved in 2009 through a \$450 million specific investment loan, and it received additional financing of \$480 million in 2011. Its design included disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) to incentivize results.

Results

The project contributed to strengthening and expanding Argentina's social protection system mainly by supporting expansion of FA's coverage. Project funds supported the implementation of the Universal Child Allowance (Asignación Universal por Hijo; AUH), undoubtedly the most important social policy initiative in Argentina over the past decade. Through the AUH, low-income informal workers and unemployed persons with children, including those not economically active, were integrated into the social protection system and provided with a monthly payment per child subject to compliance with health and education conditionalities. By project end, in 2016, almost 3.9 million additional children were receiving the AUH allowance. Together,

contributory and noncontributory family allowance benefits provide coverage to 87.4 percent of children in Argentina (Cetrángolo et al. 2017).

The World Bank's long-standing engagement with Argentina, its flexibility, and its willingness to take risks were key in its response to the government's request for support. The World Bank had been providing operational and analytical support to Argentina's social sector since the 1990s. This long-standing technical-level engagement fostered trust between the World Bank and the MTESS over the years. In addition, the World Bank's analytical work in its review of income support programs informed social protection policy and laid out options for a long-term social protection strategy (World Bank 2009c). Finally, the World Bank offered Argentina flexibility in financing to cover recurring costs and showed an openness to taking risks by supporting FA before the specific parameters of program extension were fully decided.

The expansion of FA supported by the project protects the most vulnerable. In Argentina, households with children are more likely to live in chronic poverty and more vulnerable to falling into poverty than households without children. The evidence reviewed for this Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR) suggests that AUH is well targeted—that is, focused on the poorest deciles of the income distribution. In its first year of implementation, AUH contributed to a 30 percent increase in the average income of households belonging to the lowest percentiles of the income distribution (Maurizio and Monsalvo 2017). The AUH had a significant impact on the reduction of poverty and income inequality (Gasparini and Cruces 2010; Rofman and Oliveri 2011). Thanks to its design, the AUH serves as an effective countercyclical response to income shocks. When workers move from formal to informal employment, families are automatically transferred from the contributory to the noncontributory system.

Furthermore, the evidence reviewed for this PPAR suggests that the AUH contributed to important long-term human capital outcomes, especially on education. Given the large scale of the program, significant impacts could be expected on labor market, health, and education outcomes. Table C.1 in appendix C summarizes all available evidence reviewed for this PPAR. Marchionni and Edo (2017) found positive impacts on education attendance among young males, education continuity among young women, and primary school graduation rates. In addition, Jiménez and Jiménez (2016) found reductions in dropout rates among teenagers. Although some literature points to increased use of preventive health services thanks to the AUH conditionalities (Pautassi, Straschnoy, and Arcidiácono 2013, the evidence is inconclusive.

The available evidence on AUH's impacts on labor markets is inconclusive. Some studies found no negative impacts of the AUH on labor market participation or employment rates (see, for instance, Bustos and Villafañe [2011]; Mario, Rosa, and

García [2013]; Maurizio and Monsalvo [2017]; Maurizio and Vázquez [2014]); heterogeneity in impacts exists, and some studies found negative impacts for certain groups of secondary earners, mostly women (Garganta, Gasparini, and Marchionni 2017; Maurizio and Monsalvo 2017). Similarly, although Maurizio and Perrot (2011) found that the AUH does not incentivize informality, Garganta and Gasparini (2015) found a statistically significant and economically large disincentive to formalization.

Although women represent over 90 percent of AUH beneficiaries, there is no evidence of the program's impacts on women's empowerment. Rather, by establishing a preference for women recipients by law, the AUH may be reinforcing women's role as caregivers who are also responsible for compliance with school and health conditionalities. Available evidence suggests that the AUH discourages participation in the labor market among married women (Garganta, Gasparini, and Marchionni 2017) and that it has positive impacts on fertility for couples with younger children and for certain groups of women (Garganta et al. 2016).

An important outcome to which the project contributed was increased transparency and accountability, thanks to the full implementation of the unified payment system for family allowances and the publication of two social protection surveys. Beneficiaries now receive their monthly benefit directly through a bank account or cash payment, reducing the possibility of fraud or errors. The project supported the design and collection of two household surveys, thus filling an important information gap on social protection. Given the limited access to data during the project implementation period, this was one of the project's greatest achievements. Although the mere existence of data does not guarantee their use in policy making, data availability and transparency are essential elements that increase the effectiveness of social protection policies.

Design and Preparation

Project objectives were relevant to the Argentine context. At the time of project preparation, there was a vibrant policy discussion on how to expand the social protection system to better support the most vulnerable. Working toward that objective was important given the low coverage of programs, high levels of informality, and increasing fiscal constraints and uncertainty associated with the potential impacts of the 2008 global financial crisis.

The World Bank took a reasonable risk and focused on a strategic, long-term objective through the support of FA. At appraisal, allowances were available only to formal salaried workers, reaching people who are living in poverty and vulnerable to a very limited extent. Yet there was broad political agreement on the importance of expanding noncontributory transfers to cover vulnerable families with children. Indeed, there were

six proposals in Congress for a noncontributory per-child income transfer that would replace existing programs.

Despite the relevance of the project objectives to the Argentine context, the statement of the objectives was not clear. “Effectiveness” was not explicitly defined in project documents. This PPAR understands it as encompassing increased transparency and accountability, incorporation of beneficiaries from other programs, and “selected design features.” Expanding the coverage of FA and SCE was part of the effectiveness objective, despite not being explicitly stated as such.

As a result of this lack of clarity, the statement of objectives was not fully aligned with project financing, components, and associated metrics. The objectives could have been framed more effectively by mentioning increased coverage of the supported programs, given that most of the project’s funds were planned to finance this. Many indicators for the original and additional financing loans measured the expansion of coverage, reflecting that since inception, the expansion in FA coverage was required for any additional financing (World Bank 2009a, 7). An expansion of SCE was also clearly expected, given the transfer of beneficiaries from Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogares and the opening of the program to other potential beneficiaries (World Bank 2009a, 60). Moreover, the description of project objectives in the additional financing explicitly states that the loan would help finance the costs associated with the scale-up of both programs (World Bank 2011, 4–5); yet no changes were made to the project development objectives.

The DLIs for the original loan were also not clearly aligned with project funding or the statement of objectives. There were four DLIs, three connected to SCE and one to FA, despite the skewing of the project financing in the opposite direction (\$365 million for FA versus \$80 million for SCE). In addition, only half of the DLIs measured effectiveness (percentage of SCE beneficiaries receiving employment and training services; percentage of FA payments made through the Single System for Family Allocations). The other two DLIs tracked coverage or outreach of SCE (number of beneficiaries; number of employment offices authorized to deliver employment and training services).

The DLIs in the original loan were not designed to provide stretch targets. Little change was expected in the number of beneficiaries receiving SCE services (23.4 percent at baseline versus 24 percent and 26 percent for the first and second disbursements, respectively). Similarly, little effort was probably needed to comply with the DLI on the number of SCE beneficiaries registered, given that this was expected to increase almost automatically through the continued transfer of beneficiaries from Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogares. The remaining DLI for SCE was limited to the number of agreements signed with employment offices (not their actual provision of services). There was no DLI

associated with the technical assistance component, which would require considerable effort and time to implement. And the implementation of the Single System for Family Allocations, the only DLI related to FA, was also receiving support from other projects. As a result, 98.8 percent of the loan proceeds (all funds allocated to components 1 and 2 of the original loan, equivalent to \$444.76 million) were fully disbursed within six months of project effectiveness. This disbursement was much faster than expected at the time of project preparation, further calling into question the ambitiousness of the DLIs and their targets.

Implementation and Supervision

Most stakeholders interviewed by the Independent Evaluation Group referred to this project as a budget support operation. Given the disbursement pattern and the type of expenses covered, this is not surprising. The project funded mostly recurrent costs associated with FA and SCE transfers; implementation activities and procurement were associated only with technical assistance activities (less than 2 percent of loan proceeds). As indicated just above, almost 99 percent of the original loan proceeds (all funds allocated to components 1 and 2, equivalent to \$444.76 million) were fully disbursed within six months after project effectiveness. Additional financing funds for components 1 and 2 were expected to be fully disbursed 18 months after effectiveness.

ANSES's noncompliance with two disbursement indicators delayed disbursements under the additional financing loan for almost two years. ANSES did not publish reports on AUH between 2009 and 2015, except for a brief period during 2014 to comply with the additional financing disbursement conditions. The information was submitted to the World Bank, but its character was confidential. Publication started in 2016 with the change in administration but was halted again with the new administration.

Interviews conducted for this PPAR stressed the importance of the World Bank team's proactivity and reaction in addressing technical assistance implementation issues. This was evident in the formation of an advisory group to support MTESS staff in the design of the Social Security and Protection Survey (ENAPROSS) surveys and in the reaction of the team when the firm hired to carry out ENAPROSS I showed little capacity to do so. Interviewees confirmed the team's proactivity, dedication, and ability to address issues and arrive at workable solutions. Staff in MTESS appreciated the methodological and technical guidance provided by the World Bank team; the lessons learned were internalized, and when it was time to conduct ENAPROSS II they were put to use in working with the provincial statistics directorates. Interviewees confirmed that these agencies were responsive and well prepared, resulting in timely and accurate compliance. The experience with ENAPROSS I also prompted the decision to scale back the scope of the second survey while keeping it comparable with the previous one.

The misalignment between the implementation period required by the technical assistance component and the implementation periods for the other components was responsible for substantial delays. There were no disbursement conditions for component 3. The expected fast disbursement for both the original loan and the additional financing contrasts with the amount of time needed to implement the technical assistance, given procurement and technical requirements. Indeed, the original loan was restructured twice and its closing date extended by three years (from September 2011 to September 2014) to allow for delays in technical assistance implementation. During the additional financing, technical assistance activities were canceled because of delays, and the project was extended for an additional two years.

The complexity of implementing technical assistance activities was underestimated. Procurement risks were considered substantial at appraisal because of the implementing agency's lack of experience and the expected short implementation period of the original loan (World Bank 2009a, 20, annex 8). Mitigation measures focused on strengthening the procurement processes but did not address the substance of what ended up causing implementation delays: the difficulties in carrying out a nationally representative survey in a very short time frame and with no support from the National Statistical Office. The importance of a reliable and updated sampling framework, and the time and capacity needed to develop one, were underestimated, and the capacity outside the statistical offices to work at national level was overestimated.

The government's appetite for and openness to data sharing were overestimated. This was evident when ANSES failed to share and disclose the AUH data required by the DLIs. This result was not surprising, given the limited reliability of official data during most of the project implementation period. Still, including these DLIs was important for achieving the transparency goal embedded in project objectives. Both the World Bank team and staff in the MTESS must be congratulated for their commitment to the social protection surveys, a huge undertaking in light of the country context.

Detailed results and Independent Evaluation Group project ratings are discussed in appendix A. The evaluation methodology and evidence sources are described in appendix C.

Lessons

This assessment offers the following lessons:

- The choice of indicators is critical for incentives to be effective, especially when a short implementation time is expected; but the definition of some of the DLIs and the information used to determine their targets were not discussed in detail at appraisal. The expansion of FA was not included as a DLI. The fast pace of

disbursement of the original loan (six months) and the low targets set for some of the DLIs call into question the ambitiousness of the DLIs and the project's contribution to their achievement. Furthermore, the agencies responsible for implementing the actions needed to comply with the DLIs were not the ones receiving the disbursed funds, reducing their incentives to comply. When the interests of the Ministry of Finance (which received the funds) and ANSES (which had to comply) were not aligned, as happened during the additional financing, implementation delays occurred and results were compromised.

- This PPAR had to clarify the understanding of “effectiveness,” as it was not made explicit in project documents. This lack of definition calls into question the adequacy of the indicators included in project documents and ultimately of the efficacy assessment of project objectives.
- Institutional strengthening of the MTESS statistics area was an important additional aspect of the World Bank's support, given the peculiar context in which this project was implemented. Yet the project did not have a formal way to capture this aspect in its monitoring framework. Neither were there DLIs associated with the institutional strengthening, despite its importance for achieving project objectives.

Oscar Calvo-Gonzalez
Director, Human Development and Economic Management Department
Independent Evaluation Group

1. Background, Context, and Design

Background and Context

1.1 The project was prepared in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis in the context of increased pressure to expand coverage and accessibility of social protection policies in Argentina. In 2008 Argentina had high levels of poverty (approximately 20 percent, with significantly higher rates in poorer regions) and income inequality (Gini coefficient of 0.48–0.50). The experience with past crises in Argentina highlighted the importance of having a social protection system that could react quickly to protect the most vulnerable from potential income shocks. Thus, the government requested World Bank support to (i) enhance the effectiveness of social protection policies; and (ii) create the conditions for expanding their coverage if necessary (World Bank 2009a, 4).

1.2 The social protection system in Argentina had historically been linked to the formal labor market through contributory schemes (pension benefits, unemployment insurance, family allowances, and health and housing insurance coverage). Noncontributory programs for children, the unemployed, and informal workers were limited. At the time of project preparation, few national programs provided income support to low-income and unemployed workers and families with children. Three programs had the largest number of beneficiaries: Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogares (Jefes),¹ Familias por la Inclusion Social,² and the Training and Employment Insurance Program (Seguro de Capacitación y Empleo; SCE). By the end of 2008, SCE had reached 80,000 beneficiaries, Jefes 751,000, and Familias por la Inclusion Social close to 630,000. The total number of beneficiaries in these three programs at time of appraisal was close to 1.5 million, with a combined spending in 2008 of approximately 0.3 percent of gross domestic product (World Bank 2009a, 43, 44).

Project Objectives, Design, and Financing

1.3 The project aimed at strengthening and expanding Argentina's social protection system by supporting expansion of coverage and improving the design of two income transfer programs for the unemployed and families with children. Project objectives as stated in the Project Appraisal Document and in the loan agreement were identical: "to increase the effectiveness of [two] income transfer programs for the unemployed and families with children by improving selected design features and the transparency and accountability of the Family Allowances Program [FA] and the [Training and Employment Insurance Program (SCE as per its Spanish acronym)], and by transferring beneficiaries from other, less effective schemes and programs, to the [FA] and the [SCE]"

(World Bank 2009a, 10; World Bank 2009b, 7). Effectiveness is understood as encompassing increased transparency and accountability, incorporation of beneficiaries from other programs, and “selected design features.” Expanded coverage of both programs is part of the effectiveness objective, given the reference to “the transfer of beneficiaries from other programs to FA and SCE” and given that the project results framework includes the phrase “by expanding the number of participants” (World Bank 2009a, 53). Thus, this Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR) recognizes that expansion of coverage was indeed part of the project development objective, despite not being explicitly described as such.

1.4 SCE is a training and employment program led by the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MTESS); created in 2006, it aims at increasing the employability of unemployed and informal sector workers through temporary cash support, training, and job placement services. Its target population includes unemployed workers not qualifying for unemployment insurance and unemployed beneficiaries of Jefes. Low-skilled workers receive a monthly benefit (equal to Arg\$225), training, and counseling for up to two years. Participants can also choose to finish primary or secondary school, or work in a community project. Approximately 130,000 individuals migrated from Jefes to SCE.

1.5 At time of project appraisal, FA targeted only low- and middle-income formal salaried workers. In 2008, nearly 5 million children (out of 13 million) were covered by this system. This program provides a monthly cash transfer to formal salaried workers with family dependents, covering approximately 30 percent of the households in Argentina. The program covers monthly transfers for various types of persons (for example, children, children with disabilities) and events (for example marriage, adoption), and pays once a year for children’s school attendance. Benefits vary by income level and by the number of dependents each salaried worker declares. Benefits are paid to salaried workers earning less than Arg\$4,800 (approximately \$1,370 in 2008) per month and reach 85 percent of the formal labor force. FA was expanded in 2009 (after the project was approved) with the creation of the Universal Child Allowance (Asignación Universal por Hijo; AUH) to cover informal and unemployed workers with children.³ Simulation exercises conducted by the World Bank showed that if SCE were to be provided to all unemployed workers and FA extended to all children of families in the lowest two quintiles of the income distribution the programs could provide the building blocks of an effective safety net (World Bank 2009a, 24).

1.6 Project objectives were to be achieved by (i) improving selected design features and the transparency and accountability of FA and SCE; (ii) transferring beneficiaries from other, less effective, schemes and programs to FA and SCE and expanding the number of participants in FA and SCE; and (iii) enhancing government’s capacity to

monitor the targeting and implementation of social protection programs. MTESS would improve the availability of services by increasing the number of municipal-level employment offices that offer SCE. Beneficiaries were to be transferred from emergency programs (Jefes) to SCE and, with additional financing funds, to AUH. Transparency, accountability and, ultimately, effectiveness were all expected to increase through improvements to the quality of the databases used to determine program eligibility, wider availability of data, dissemination of monitoring reports, and use of a direct payment system for issuing the FA benefits. Table 1.1 presents a simplified project theory of change based on the project’s results framework and information available on project documents.

Table 1.1. Simplified Theory of Change

Project			
Component	Intermediate Outcomes	PDO/Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Financing for SCE	Increased availability of training and employment services	1. Increased effectiveness of Argentina’s income transfer programs for the unemployed	Strengthened and expanded social protection system
Financing for FA	Increased coverage of SCE; reduced coverage of emergency programs		
	Increased coverage of FA (with additional financing) Increased efficiency in the delivery of FA (through SUAF)	2. Increased effectiveness of Argentina’s income transfer programs for families with children	
Technical assistance	Increased availability of information to monitor social protection programs		

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: FA = Family Allowances Program; PDO = project development objective; SCE = Training and Employment Insurance Program; SUAF = Unified Family Allowance Payment System.

1.7 The project included three components:

1. Financing for Training and Employment Insurance (appraisal estimate \$80 million, additional financing \$75 million, actual \$172.4 million). The project supported the expansion of coverage to reach 160,000 unemployed workers, mostly former beneficiaries of other emergency programs. Project funds covered the monetary benefits (monthly payments, travel allowances, and other incentives).

2. Financing for FA (appraisal estimate \$365 million, additional financing \$375.1 million, actual \$739 million). The project supported the expansion of coverage for child allowances (including through the AUH) to reach 450,000 additional children. The grants financed child benefits, paid through the Single System for Family Allocations by direct transfers to beneficiaries' bank accounts.
3. Technical assistance (appraisal estimate \$5 million, additional financing \$28.7 million, actual \$16.3 million). The project supported capacity building within the MTESS to improve the targeting, implementation, and monitoring of these programs. Capacity building for the National Social Security Administration (ANSES) was added during additional financing but later canceled.

1.8 The project was supported through a \$450 million specific investment loan and received additional financing of \$480 million in 2011. Its design included disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) to incentivize achievement of results. DLIs had two target levels under the original loan and four under the additional financing (table A.1 in appendix A shows the full list of DLIs, with baselines and targets). Twenty percent of the original and additional financing was authorized as retroactive financing. The project was restructured four times because of delays in implementation associated with technical assistance activities and, during the additional financing, because of failure to comply with the DLIs required to authorize disbursements.

2. What Worked, What Didn't Work, and Why?

Results

2.1 This section highlights the most noteworthy project results, drawing on the overall assessment of project efficacy. It is not an exhaustive discussion of all the results achieved by the project; rather, it focuses on the most important contributions to the intended outcome of supporting the Argentine government's efforts to strengthen and expand its social protection system. Appendix A has a detailed discussion of all project achievements.

2.2 The project contributed to strengthening the social protection system in Argentina mainly by expanding coverage of the FA, which has proven effective in providing income support to the most vulnerable. Project funds supported the implementation of the AUH, undoubtedly the most important social policy initiative in Argentina during the past decade. Through the AUH, low-income informal workers and unemployed persons with children, including those not economically active, were integrated into the social protection system and received a monthly payment per child

subject to compliance with health and education conditionalities. By project end, in 2016, almost 3.9 million additional children were receiving the AUH allowance. Together, contributory and noncontributory family allowance benefits provide coverage to 87.4 percent of children in Argentina (Cetrángolo et al. 2017).

2.3 The World Bank’s long-standing engagement with Argentina, its knowledge of social protection programs, and its flexibility and willingness to take risks were key to its swift response to the government’s request for support. The World Bank had been providing operational and analytical support to Argentina’s social sector since the 1990s, including its most important workfare programs (Trabajar and Jefes). The World Bank has also supported the institutional strengthening of ANSES since the late 1990s. This long engagement fostered trust between the World Bank and the MTESS over the years. In addition, the World Bank’s analytical work examined income support programs in Argentina and laid out options for a long-term social protection strategy (World Bank 2009c). Finally, the World Bank offered Argentina flexibility in financing to cover recurring costs and showed an openness to taking risks by supporting FA even when it was not clear the program would be expanded.

2.4 The expansion of FA supported by the project provides effective assistance to the most vulnerable. The evidence reviewed for this PPAR suggests that AUH is well targeted—that is, it focuses on the poorest deciles of the income distribution: the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution receives over 80 percent of the expenditures, and approximately 50 percent of the beneficiaries belong to the first three deciles (Cetrángolo et al. 2017). In its first year of implementation, the AUH contributed to a 30 percent increase in the average income of households belonging to the lowest percentiles of the income distribution (Maurizio and Monsalvo 2017). The AUH had a significant impact on the reduction of poverty and income inequality (Gasparini and Cruces 2010; Rofman and Oliveri 2011).

2.5 Thanks to its design, the AUH serves as an effective countercyclical response to income shocks. In Argentina, households with children are more likely to live in chronic poverty and more vulnerable to falling into poverty than households without children. When workers move from formal to informal employment, families are automatically transferred from the contributory to the noncontributory system. Because discretionary and automatic inflation-adjustment formulas are used, the real value of the AUH benefit per child has remained relatively constant over time, representing 14 percent of the minimum wage (see table C.3 in appendix C).

2.6 Furthermore, the evidence reviewed for this PPAR suggests that the AUH contributed to important long-term human capital outcomes, especially on education. Given the large scale of the program, significant impacts could be expected on labor

market, health, and education outcomes. Marchionni and Edo (2017) found positive impacts on education attendance among young males, on education continuity among young females, and on primary school graduation rates. In addition, Jiménez and Jiménez (2016) found reductions in dropout rates among teenagers. Although some literature points to increased use of preventive health services thanks to the AUH conditionalities (Pautassi, Straschnoy, and Arcidiácono, 2013, the evidence is inconclusive. The differential impact of AUH benefits on education and health may have to do with high baseline levels in access to preventive health services (such as over 95 percent vaccination coverage). Indeed, the literature review conducted for this PPAR found no significant impacts on education attendance or education continuity among the youngest children, both of which also had very high baseline levels (almost 99 percent net enrollment rates in primary education, with no significant differences by gender).

2.7 The available evidence on AUH's impacts on labor markets is inconclusive. Some studies found no negative impacts of the AUH on labor market participation or employment rates (see, for instance, Bustos and Villafañe [2011]; Mario, Rosa, and García [2013]; Maurizio and Monsalvo [2017]; Maurizio and Vázquez [2014]); but heterogeneity in impacts exists, and some studies found negative impacts for certain groups of secondary earners, mostly women (Garganta, Gasparini, and Marchionni 2017; Maurizio and Monsalvo 2017). Similarly, although Maurizio and Perrot (2011) found that the AUH does not incentivize informality, Garganta and Gasparini (2015) found a statistically significant and economically large disincentive to formalization. Given that household surveys do not ask about AUH payments, researchers have used several techniques to identify AUH beneficiaries through the value of specific components of nonlabor income. As a result, there is some divergence on the impacts found.

2.8 Although women represent over 90 percent of AUH beneficiaries, there is no evidence of the program's impacts on women empowerment. Rather, by establishing preference for women recipients by law,⁴ the AUH may be reinforcing women's role as caregivers, responsible for compliance with school and health conditionalities. Available evidence suggests that receiving the AUH discourages participation in the labor market for married women (Garganta, Gasparini, and Marchionni 2017) and that it has positive impacts on fertility for couples with younger children and for certain groups of women (Garganta et al. 2016). See table C.1 in appendix C for a summary of all available evidence.

2.9 Last but not least, an important outcome to which the project contributed was increased transparency and accountability—a result of full implementation of the unified payment system for family allowances and the publication of two social

protection surveys. FA beneficiaries now receive their monthly benefit directly through a bank account or cash payment, reducing the possibility of fraud or errors. The project supported the design and collection of two household surveys, thus filling an important information gap on social protection. Given the limited access to data during the project implementation period, this was one of the project's greatest achievements. Although the mere existence of data does not guarantee their use in policy making, data availability and transparency are essential elements to increase the effectiveness of social protection policies.

Design and Preparation

2.10 The World Bank sought the opportunity to support Argentina in moving toward a comprehensive strategy for social protection. Most social protection programs at the time of project preparation were linked to formal employment through contributory pensions or family allowances. Noncontributory programs focused on emergency income support, were limited in scale, and were restricted to former beneficiaries of Jefes, which had been closed to new entrants since 2003. At the time of project preparation, there were many discussions about how the social protection system could be expanded to support the most vulnerable (for a summary, see Repetto, Díaz Langou, and Marazzi [2009]). Working toward that objective was important given the low coverage of programs, the high levels of informality, and the increasing fiscal constraints and uncertainty associated with the potential impacts of the 2008 global financial crisis.

2.11 The World Bank took some risk in supporting the expansion of FA. At project appraisal, family allowances were limited to formally employed workers, and there was an ongoing debate on how to provide similar benefits to informal and unemployed workers. The World Bank had studied options to increase the effectiveness of the social protection system, and when the government requested support to “create the conditions for expansion,” it was ready to help. Supporting SCE was clearly justified, as it offered time-bound and conditional unemployment assistance to all workers, regardless of the formality of their previous occupation—important given the country's negative macro prospects; but supporting FA at appraisal was less obvious. FA benefits were available only to formal salaried workers, reaching poor and vulnerable people to a very limited extent. Yet there was broad political agreement on the importance of noncontributory transfers for vulnerable families with children. Indeed, there were six proposals in Congress for a noncontributory per-child income transfer that would replace the existing programs.⁵ To reduce reputational risks if the expected expansion of FA did not materialize, the team focused on institutional strengthening and supported changes in the FA payment system that would in any case increase transparency and accountability and make the program more effective. It also made clear in appraisal

documents that any future support would be conditional on the expected expansion of coverage to the most vulnerable and the unemployed.

2.12 Despite the relevance of the project objectives to the Argentine context, the statement of objectives was not clear. Project Appraisal Documents did not clarify what “effectiveness” meant. As mentioned earlier, the stated objective was “to increase the effectiveness of [two] income transfer programs for the unemployed and families with children by (i) improving selected design features and the transparency and accountability of [FA] and [SCE]; and (ii) by transferring beneficiaries from other, less effective schemes and programs, to [FA] and [SCE]” (World Bank 2009a, 10; World Bank 2009b, 7). The results framework adds a third: “(iii) by expanding the number of participants” (World Bank 2009a, 53). This PPAR recognizes expansion of coverage as part of the effectiveness objective, even though it is not explicitly stated as such.

2.13 As a result of this lack of clarity, the statement of objectives was not fully aligned with project financing, components, and associated metrics. The objectives could have been framed more effectively by mentioning increased coverage of the supported programs, given that most of the project’s funds were planned to finance this. Indeed, the monitoring and evaluation framework explicitly says “by expanding the number of participants.” Many indicators for the original loan and additional financing loan measured the expansion of coverage, reflecting that since inception, the expansion in FA coverage was required for any additional financing (World Bank 2009a, 7). An expansion of SCE was also clearly expected, given the transfer of beneficiaries from Jefes and the opening of the program to other potential beneficiaries (World Bank 2009a, 60). Moreover, the description of project objectives in the additional financing explicitly states that the loan would help finance the costs associated with the scale-up of both programs (World Bank 2011, 4–5); yet no changes were made to the project development objectives.

2.14 The DLIs for the original loan were also not clearly aligned with project funding or the statement of objectives. There were four DLIs, three connected to SCE and one to FA, despite the skewing of the project financing in the opposite direction (\$365 million for FA versus \$80 million for SCE). In addition, only half of the DLIs measured effectiveness (percentage of SCE beneficiaries receiving employment and training services; percentage of FA payments made through the Single System for Family Allocations). The other two DLIs tracked coverage or outreach of SCE (number of beneficiaries; number of employment offices authorized to deliver employment and training services).

2.15 The DLIs in the original loan were not designed to provide stretch targets. The expansion of FA was not included as a DLI. Little change was expected in the number of

beneficiaries receiving SCE services (23.4 percent at baseline versus 24 percent and 26 percent for the first and second disbursement respectively). Similarly, little effort was probably needed to comply with the DLI on the number of SCE beneficiaries registered, given that this was expected to increase almost automatically through the continued transfer of beneficiaries from Jefes (table C.2 in appendix C shows the evolution of new entrants to SCE by year, with a clear increase in 2010 and 2011). The remaining DLI for SCE was limited to the number of agreements signed with employment offices (not the actual provision of services). There was no DLI associated with the implementation of the technical assistance component, which would require considerable effort and time to implement. And the implementation of the Single System for Family Allocations, the only DLI related to FA, was also receiving support from other projects (see the Relevance of the Design section in appendix A). As a result, 98.8 percent of the loan proceeds (all funds allocated to components 1 and 2 of the original loan, equivalent to \$444.76 million) were fully disbursed within six months of project effectiveness. This disbursement was much faster than expected at the time of project preparation, further calling into question the ambitiousness of the DLIs and their targets. In November 2009, only three months after project effectiveness, the team was already discussing additional financing; see the Implementation Status and Results Report, Sequence 4 (World Bank 2010).

2.16 The design of the DLIs in the additional financing loan improved slightly. DLIs included minimum time lapses between disbursements and ceilings for cumulative disbursements to pace the level of disbursements and allow for technical assistance implementation. The DLI associated with SCE beneficiaries receiving employment services was corrected to adjust for seasonal variations, and its targets were made more ambitious (from 26 percent to 32 percent). In addition, two DLI were added, both relevant to achieving project objectives: one associated with improved registration of FA beneficiaries or reasons for ineligibility, and another one requiring the availability and publication of AUH data. Table A.1 in appendix A shows the full list of DLIs, with baselines and targets.

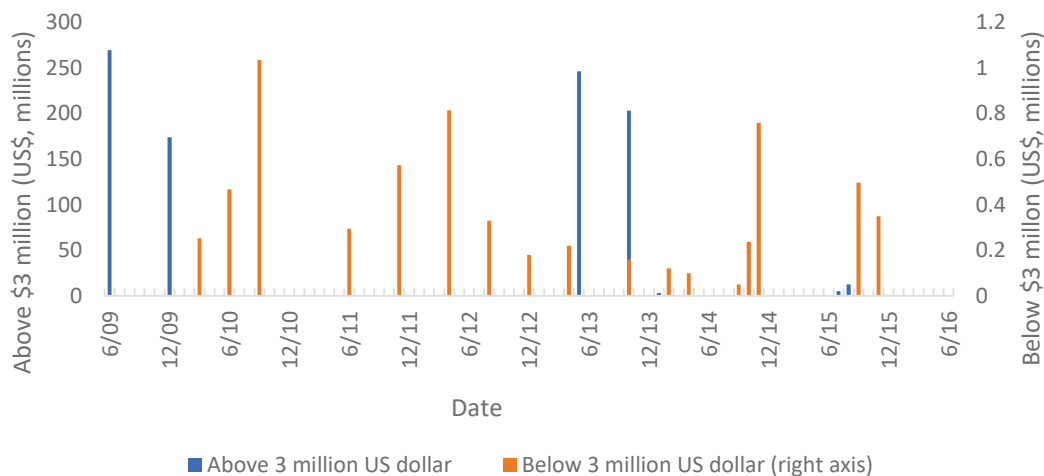
Implementation and Supervision

2.17 The project was implemented in a difficult context for Argentina. The country faced limited access to external financing due to unresolved external debt issues. The relationship with the international community was tense, which, according to interviews conducted for this evaluation, limited the space for dialogue with the World Bank. There was no International Monetary Fund Article IV consultation at any time during the project implementation period, and the International Monetary Fund censured the country for not supplying accurate economic data (see, for example, IMF 2013). No Country Partnership Strategy was discussed between fiscal years 2012 and 2015,

resulting in a three-year lending hiatus (fiscal years 2012–14) when no new lending was approved by the World Bank Board of Executive Directors. During most of that period, there were negative flows between the World Bank and Argentina,⁶ creating pressure for existing loans to disburse.

2.18 Most stakeholders interviewed by the Independent Evaluation Group referred to this project as a budget support operation. In light of the disbursement pattern and the type of expenses covered, this is not surprising (figure 2.1). The project funded mostly recurrent costs associated with FA and SCE transfers; implementation activities and procurement were associated only with technical assistance activities (less than 2 percent of loan proceeds). Nearly all (99 percent) of the original loan proceeds (all funds allocated to components 1 and 2, equivalent to \$444.76 million) were fully disbursed within six months after project effectiveness. With the additional financing, funds allocated to components 1 and 2 were expected to be fully disbursed 18 months after effectiveness.

Figure 2.1. Argentina Basic Protection Project: Disbursement Pattern



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

2.19 ANSES’s noncompliance with two disbursement indicators delayed disbursements under the additional financing loan for almost two years. ANSES did not publish reports on AUH between 2009 and 2015, except for a brief period in 2014 to comply with the additional financing disbursement conditions. The information was submitted to the World Bank, but its character was confidential. Publication started in 2016 with the change in administration but halted again with the new administration.

2.20 Interviews conducted for this PPAR stressed the importance of the World Bank team’s proactivity and experience in addressing technical assistance implementation

issues. This was evident in the formation of an advisory group to support MTESS staff in the design of the Social Security and Protection Survey (ENAPROSS) surveys and in the reaction of the team when the firm hired to carry out ENAPROSS I showed little capacity to do so. Interviewees confirmed the team's proactivity, dedication, and ability to address issues and arrive at workable solutions. Staff in MTESS appreciated the methodological and technical guidance provided by the World Bank team; the lessons learned were internalized, and when it was time to conduct ENAPROSS II, they were put to use in the work with the provincial statistics directorates. Interviewees confirmed that these agencies were responsive and well prepared, resulting in timely and accurate compliance. Lessons from the experience with ENAPROSS I also prompted the decision to scale back the scope of the second survey while keeping it comparable with the previous one.

2.21 The misalignment between the implementation period for the technical assistance component and the implementation periods for the other components was responsible for substantial delays. There were no disbursement conditions for component 3. The expected fast disbursement for both the original loan and the additional financing contrasts with the amount of time needed to implement the technical assistance, given procurement and technical requirements. Indeed, the original loan was restructured twice and its closing date extended three years (from September 2011 to September 2014) to allow for delays in technical assistance implementation. During the additional financing, technical assistance activities were canceled because of delays, and the project was extended for an additional two years.

2.22 The complexity of implementing technical assistance activities was underestimated. Procurement risks were considered substantial at appraisal because of the implementing agency's lack of experience and the expected short implementation period of the original loan (World Bank 2009a, 20, annex 8). Mitigation measures focused on strengthening the procurement processes but did not address the substance of what ended up causing implementation delays: the difficulties in carrying out a nationally representative survey in a very short time frame with no support from the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses. The importance of a reliable and updated sampling framework, and the time and capacity needed to develop one, were underestimated, and the capacity outside the statistical offices to work at national level was overestimated.

2.23 The government's appetite for and openness to data sharing were also overestimated. This was evident when ANSES failed to share and disclose the AUH data required by the DLIs. This result was not surprising, given the limited reliability of official data during most of the project implementation period. Still, including these DLIs was important for achieving the transparency goal embedded in the project objective of increased effectiveness. Both the World Bank team and staff in the MTESS

must be congratulated for their commitment to the social protection surveys, a huge undertaking given the country context.

3. Lessons

3.1 The choice of indicators is critical for incentives to be effective, especially when a short implementation time is expected. But the definition of some of the DLIs and the information used to determine their targets were not discussed in detail at appraisal. The expansion of FA was not included as a DLI. Likewise, the reasons for not including DLIs for the technical assistance component were not discussed, meaning that no attention was given to the mismatch between the time needed for the institutional strengthening and the time needed to comply with the disbursement conditions. The fast pace of disbursement of the original loan (six months) and the low targets set for some of the DLIs call into question the ambitiousness of the DLIs and the project's contribution to their achievement. Furthermore, agencies responsible for implementing the actions needed to comply with the DLIs were not the ones receiving the disbursed funds, reducing their incentives to comply. Although this arrangement is common in Program-for-Results operations, the experience with this project confirms that it could be problematic. During the additional financing, interests were not aligned between the Ministry of Finance (which received the funds) and ANSES (which had to comply), leading to implementation delays and compromised results.

3.2 This PPAR had to clarify the understanding of "effectiveness," since the meaning was not explicitly stated in project documents. This absence of a definition calls into question the adequacy of the indicators included in project completion documents and ultimately the efficacy assessment of project objectives.

3.3 Institutional strengthening of the MTESS statistics area was an important additional aspect of the World Bank support, given the peculiar context in which this project was implemented. Yet the project did not have a formal way to capture this aspect in its monitoring framework. Nor were there DLIs associated with the institutional strengthening, despite its importance to achieving project objectives. Indicators associated with this component were focused on the outputs produced (that is, the surveys and the availability of key social protection indicators), not on the use of the information obtained with these surveys or on changes in policies or programs as a result of them. Similarly, there were no indicators reflecting progress on the capacity created within the MTESS to conduct similar surveys in the future.

¹ Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogares was an emergency workfare program implemented in 2002 after Argentina suffered a severe political and economic crisis. Beneficiaries received a monthly benefit equal to Arg\$150 (\$50) in exchange for working four to six hours per day in community services and small construction and maintenance activities. Eligible people were unemployed, headed a household, and had children. The number of beneficiaries peaked in 2003 at more than 2 million. Starting in 2005, its beneficiaries were migrated to the other two programs, Familias por la Inclusion Social and the Training and Employment Insurance Program, until the program was discontinued.

² Familias por la Inclusion Social was a conditional cash transfer implemented between 2005 and 2009 to provide income support to vulnerable families. The number of beneficiaries peaked at almost 0.7 million; most were former participants of the Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogares. Beneficiaries received Arg\$200–380 per month (\$67–127) depending on the number of children they had. Benefits were conditional on children’s vaccination and schooling. An additional Arg\$60 per month (\$20) was given to beneficiaries participating in training courses, attending primary or secondary school, or participating in community projects. The program was discontinued in 2009.

³ Created through Decree 1602/09 (Incorporación del Sistema no Contributivo de Asignación Universal por Hijo para la Protección Social), which modified the Law of Family Allowances (Law No. 24714) to add a noncontributory subsystem, the Universal Child Allowance targets families of unemployed workers without unemployment insurance and informal workers with children under 18. Domestic employees, monotributistas (individuals that pay taxes under a simplified regime), and beneficiaries of other compatible work programs with incomes below the minimum wage are also eligible. Children should be Argentines or have at least three years’ residence in Argentina. All qualifying children in the National Social Security Administration databases are automatically enrolled, and eligibility is determined monthly. The allowance is paid to the mother (or, in her absence, to the other parent or guardian) for up to five children. Eighty percent of the transfer is paid monthly, and the remaining 20 percent is withheld to encourage compliance with health and education conditionalities. To receive the withheld portion of the transfer, the parent or guardian must show proof that children ages 5 to 18 years have regular school attendance, a complete or ongoing vaccination schedule in place, and regular health check ups, and that children under five years of age are enrolled in the Sumar program.

⁴ National Social Security Administration Resolution 393/09, article 10, notes that when children’s custody is shared by two parents, the mother is given preference over the father to receive the transfer.

⁵ Proposals were broadly in agreement on the type of benefits to be offered and on the importance of requiring conditionalities. They diverged on how to determine eligibility, how to distribute transfers, what the source of funding would be, and what agency would be in charge of implementation (Repetto, Díaz Langou, and Marazzi 2009).

⁶ Negative outflows are available at US SEC (2019).

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Appendix A. Project Ratings

Argentina Basic Protection Project

Indicator	ICR	ICR Review	PPAR
Outcome	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory
Risk to development outcome	Low or negligible	Low or negligible	Low or negligible
Bank performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Borrower performance	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory

Note: The Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) is a self-evaluation by the responsible Global Practice. The ICR Review is an intermediate Independent Evaluation Group product that seeks to independently validate the findings of the ICR. PPAR = Project Performance Assessment Report.

1. Relevance of the Objectives and Design

Relevance of the Objectives: Substantial

The project objectives were highly relevant to the Argentine context. At the time of project appraisal, it was reasonable to expect that the 2008 financial crisis could hit Argentina's most vulnerable. Existing social protection programs were limited in their coverage, and several proposals were being discussed in Congress aiming at guaranteeing a noncontributory universal basic income for families and children.¹ Thus, supporting a more efficient social protection system, less focused on emergency programs and able to expand if needed, was high on the government agenda and undeniably relevant.

Project objectives were consistent with the World Bank's strategy at appraisal and closing. Objectives were aligned with the social inclusion pillar of the Country Partnership Strategy for 2010–12 that was being discussed at the time of project appraisal. The Country Partnership Strategy emphasized the World Bank's support as a preventive response to the deteriorating economic and social environment (World Bank 2009, 24), and aimed to improve the employability of the most vulnerable, with the final goal of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of Argentina's social protection policy (World Bank 2009, 28). Objectives remained relevant to the World Bank's Country Partnership Strategy at closing and aimed to expand social inclusion in an efficient and sustainable manner, while supporting Argentina in mitigating the risks to vulnerable groups of economic downturns and external shocks (World Bank 2015, 1).

Yet, an important shortcoming had to do with the lack of clear definition of the statement of project objectives. "Effectiveness" was not explicitly defined in the Project Appraisal Documents (see the Design and Preparation section in chapter 2).

Relevance of the Design: Modest

The project's implicit theory of change was clear. Increased effectiveness of employment programs was to be achieved by supporting the expansion of the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MTESS) employment services and accelerating the transition of beneficiaries from Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogares (Jefes) to the Training and Employment Insurance Program (Seguro de Capacitación y Empleo; SCE). Increased effectiveness of programs for families with children was to be achieved by implementing a direct payment system for transferring family allowances and, with additional financing funds, expanding the Family Allowances Program (FA) to cover informal workers. Institutional strengthening of MTESS and the National Social Security Administration (ANSES) with additional financing would enable improved monitoring. All together would lead to a strengthened and expanded social protection system (see table 1.1 in chapter 1).

Despite a clear theory of change, two important shortcomings in the design are noted: (i) the statement of objectives was not fully aligned with project financing, components, and associated metrics; and (ii) at design, the FA benefits were not targeted to the needs of the most vulnerable. The latter changed with additional financing, when the allowances were expanded to include informal and unemployed workers (see the Design and Preparation section in chapter 2).

For a project that conditioned disbursement on the achievement of certain indicators, there was very little detail in project documents about the choice of disbursement indicators and their targets, even though the choice of indicators is critical for incentives to be effective. The expansion of FA was not included as a disbursement-linked indicator (DLI), despite this expansion being critical to achieve project objectives. Furthermore, there were no discussions on the credibility of DLI targets in a loan that, according to projections, was expected to disburse in 12–18 months. Neither were there discussions on how the (likely) much longer implementation period for the labor-intensive technical assistance component was built into these disbursement projections (see the Design and Preparation section in chapter 2). Table A.1 below shows the disbursement conditions for the original loan and additional financing.

The design failed to refer to other relevant projects also aiming at reductions of fraud and errors in the ANSES system of family allowances payments. A structural adjustment loan approved in 2001 (P073591) included the initial implementation of the Single System for Family Allocations (SUAF; designed in that same year) among its disbursement conditions. This condition was not fulfilled and was waived to disburse funds on the basis of plans to complete implementation by 2005, with monitoring by the World Bank (World Bank, n.d., 21). SUAF implementation was also supported through a

technical assistance loan to ANSES (P092836), effective between 2006 and 2012. The Implementation Completion and Results Report refers to 100 percent improvement in SUAF and the ANSES ADP (individual registry) database at the time of technical assistance closing (World Bank 2016). Yet neither progress nor lessons from this technical assistance were discussed in project documents.

Table A.1. Disbursement Conditions: Original Loan and Additional Financing

Condition	Original Loan Effectiveness: June 12, 2009				Additional Financing Effectiveness: November 26, 2011			
	Baseline (date)	First disburs.	Second disburs.	Baseline (date)	First disburs.	Second disburs.	Third disburs.	Fourth disburs.
Disbursement will be authorized not before...	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Effectiveness	6 months after effectiveness	12 months after effectiveness	18 months after effectiveness
Cumulative disbursements for components 1 and 2 will not exceed... (\$, millions)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	\$135.0	\$247.5	\$360.1	n.a.
a. Average of the monthly percentage of beneficiaries of SCE receiving employment and training services of the total number of beneficiaries of SCE, during the 12 months preceding the date in which the disbursement indicator is measured (percent)	23 (May 2008)	24	26	26 (Sept. 2010)	26	27	30	32
b. Beneficiaries registered in SCE (no.)	78,500 (May 2008)	82,000	100,000	121,000 (Oct. 2010)	131,000	141,000	151,000	161,000
c. Employment offices authorized for delivery of employment and training services through agreements signed between the borrower, through the Ministry of Labor, and the respective municipality or province (no.)	181 (Nov. 2008)	200	230	296 (Oct. 2010)	300	310	330	350

Condition	Original Loan Effectiveness: June 12, 2009				Additional Financing Effectiveness: November 26, 2011			
	Baseline (date)	First disburs.	Second disburs.	Baseline (date)	First disburs.	Second disburs.	Third disburs.	Fourth disburs.
d. Average of the monthly percentage of payments made through SUAF of the total payments made under the AF program to salaried workers in the private sector during the 12 months preceding the date in which the disbursement indicator is measured (percent)	58.7 (Nov. 2008)	62.8	67.4	82.2 (July 2010)	90.0	95.0	98.0	98.0
e. Four-monthly statistical reports on AUH prepared and published through ANSES's website (no.)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0 (Sept. 2010)	1	2	4	5
f. Children under 18 who have been registered at ANSES's ADP database and are receiving a family allowance benefit from ANSES or are excluded because of reasons indicated in the legislation (thousands; no.)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	9,700 (Aug. 2010)	9,866	9,950	10,101	10,157

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: ADP = individual registry; AF = additional financing; ANSES = National Social Security Administration; AUH = Universal Child Allowance; disburs. = disbursement; n.a. = not applicable; SCE = Training and Employment Insurance Program; SUAF = Single System for Family Allocations.

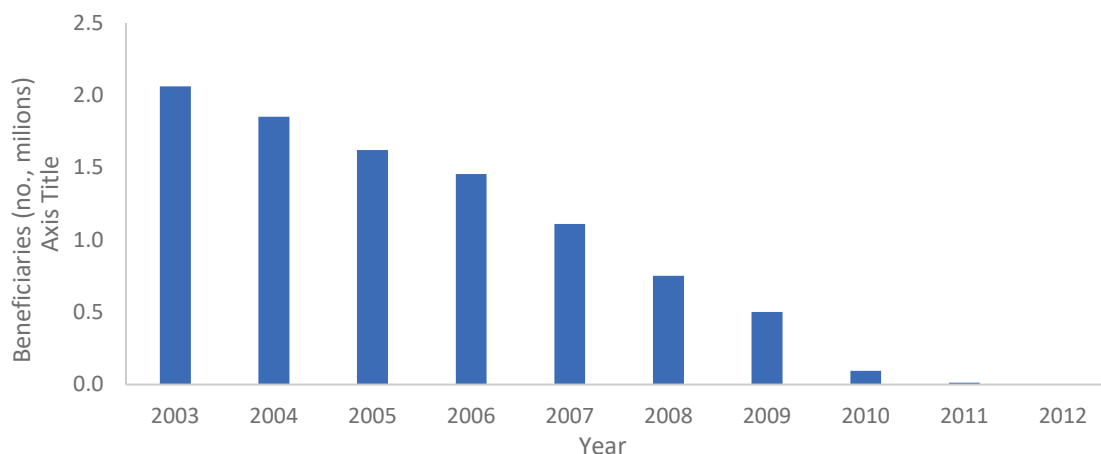
2. Efficacy: Modest

Objective 1: To Increase the Effectiveness of the Borrower’s Income Transfer Programs for the Unemployed

For this objective, efficacy is rated **modest**. This rating is supported by (i) the transferring of Jefes beneficiaries to other programs; (ii) the expanded network of employment offices that offered training and job search support; (iii) the increased number of SCE beneficiaries that exited into formal employment (despite issues with the indicator); and (iv) the lower-than-expected expansion of the number of SCE beneficiaries. The Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) could not find (and the project did not include) indicators or studies assessing the quality of the training received by SCE participants, its degree of completion, or any associated change in participants’ skill set or employability options (such as job interviews or job offers). Table A.2 shows corresponding indicators with baselines and targets.

The project contributed to transfer of beneficiaries from Jefes, an emergency program that the government had been phasing out since 2005. The economy had recovered from the 2001 crisis that motivated Jefes’s creation, and most of its beneficiaries had found a job; Jefes was closed to new entrants in 2003 and its benefits were low. Starting in 2005, Jefes beneficiaries were migrated to Familias por la Inclusion Social (Familias) and SCE. At the time of project preparation, Jefes beneficiaries numbered 500,000 (compared with a peak of 2 million in 2002–03). Jefes was discontinued in 2012 (figure A.1).

Figure A.1. Beneficiaries of Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogares in Argentina, 2002–12



Source: Bantar, Brown, and Neffa 2015.

According to project records, the number of SCE participants exiting into formal employment increased as a proportion of the total number of SCE beneficiaries—from

10.7 percent in 2008 to 14.3 percent in 2015. Moreover, the additional financing mentions that “almost 20 percent of all workers that have participated in SCE found a job in the formal labor market” (World Bank 2011, 2). IEG could not find information to confirm either claim in the document review conducted for this Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR). In the absence of other relevant and complementary indicators, such as the ones mentioned in the previous paragraph, this information is insufficient to assess efficacy and presents important attribution problems.

An expanded network of employment offices distributed throughout the national territory likely contributed to increase effectiveness thanks to greater outreach. The employment offices expanded to all 24 provinces, referring SCE beneficiaries to training and education services and providing active support in job searches. Adherence to SCE picked up in 2010, when one-third of the people served by employment offices were added to SCE (table C.2 in appendix C). As a result of this expansion, the number of services (education, training, skills development, and labor intermediation) also expanded, from roughly 39,300 services being provided in 2008 to almost 107,000 in 2015 (World Bank 2016, annex 2).

Yet, the growth in the number of SCE beneficiaries was only about half of that anticipated, and SCE performance seems to be lower than the average performance of MTESS training. SCE incorporated 70,000 former Jefes beneficiaries during 2009. Although it is not possible to know how many former Jefes beneficiaries were transferred to SCE, IEG found the number of SCE beneficiaries added per year during the project implementation period, which showed a clear increase in 2010 and 2011 (table C.2 in appendix C). An International Labour Organization study focusing on the impact on employability of MTESS professional training activities indicated that the probability of finding formal employment increases by 30 percent with respect to peers who did not receive such training (Castillo, Ohaco, and Schleser 2014).

Administrative data show that the SCE was one among many programs for the unemployed and that its relative importance changed dramatically during project implementation. The lower-than-expected number of SCE beneficiaries could have to do with many factors: improvements in the economy, preferences of participants, lack of willingness to comply with conditions, lack of information, or even the existence of other programs preferred by beneficiaries, including the Universal Child Allowance (Asignación Universal por Hijo; AUH). However, IEG found that the importance of SCE relative to other MTESS training and employment programs decreased during project implementation, calling into question the relevance of the project’s continuous support to SCE (figure A.2). Moreover, although 34 percent of the total number of people served by employment offices were added to SCE in 2010, the percentage was half that in 2011 (17 percent) and much lower in the remaining years (table C.2 in appendix C).

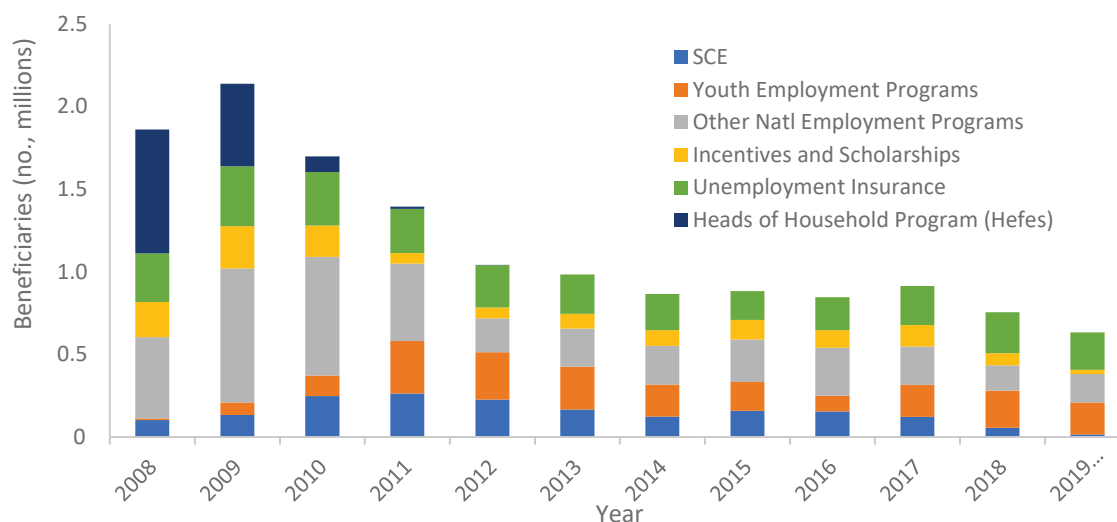
Table A.2. Selected Indicators Supporting Achievement of Objective 1

Indicator	Original Target	Revised Target	Project End
SCE beneficiaries (baseline 78,500; no.)	200,000	165,000	106,462
Proportion of SCE participants involved in training, education, or employment-support activities (baseline 23.5 percent; percent)	30	35	38
Participants exiting the SCE into formal employment (baseline 8,400; no.)	9,000	11,000	15,208
Municipal employment offices providing SCE services (baseline 181; no.)	350	370	408

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: SCE = Training and Employment Insurance Program.

Figure A.2. Beneficiaries of Employment and Training Programs in Argentina, 2008–19



Source: Independent Evaluation Group, using data from Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security.

Note: SCE = Training and Employment Insurance Program.

Objective 2: To Increase the Effectiveness of the Borrower’s Income Transfer Programs for Families with Children

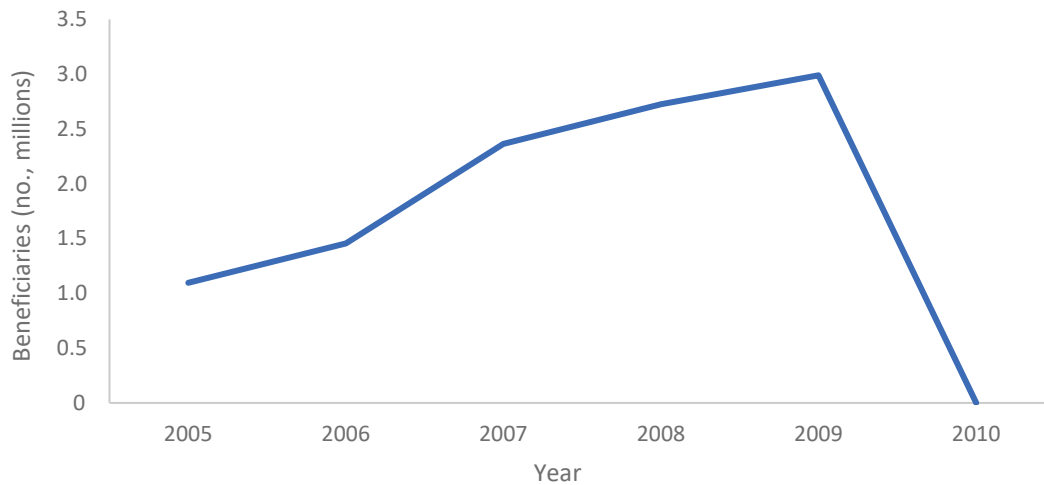
For this objective, efficacy is rated **substantial**. This rating is supported by (i) the project’s contribution to the expansion of FA through the AUH—undoubtedly, the greatest contribution of the project—and the transferring of beneficiaries from the Familias program; and (ii) the project’s support for the enhanced transparency and accountability of FA, albeit with some attribution problems. Almost 4 million beneficiaries were added to FA through the AUH. As discussed in the main text, the AUH contributed to important long-term outcomes (see the Results section in chapter 2; see also table C.1 in appendix C for additional evidence found in the literature review

conducted by IEG). The use of SUAF to directly reach FA beneficiaries and improvements in the quality and cross-checks of databases undoubtedly improved transparency and accountability, reducing risks of errors and fraud. A major contribution of the project to greater transparency and accountability was the support to the two social protection surveys in a context of very limited and unreliable data. Table A.3 shows corresponding indicators with baselines and targets.

AUH contributed to protecting informal and unemployed workers from the negative short-term impacts of shocks, an additional indication of FA's effectiveness. Periods of slow economic growth and high inflation that occurred since project closure negatively impacted labor income, particularly among informal workers. Income losses in real terms were greater for those living in the greatest poverty. The AUH, however, has been continuously adjusted for inflation. In addition, during the current coronavirus crisis, the AUH database was used so that beneficiaries automatically received extra payments and the emergency income transfer that the government issued in response to the pandemic.

Beneficiaries of Familias, the main income transfer program for families with children, were absorbed into AUH, and the program was dismantled in 2010. Although IEG could not find the exact number of Familias beneficiaries absorbed by the AUH, stakeholders interviewed and the literature reviewed for this PPAR suggest that most Familias beneficiaries were transferred. Indeed, the estimated planned coverage for Familias in 2010 was very similar to the effective coverage of the AUH in that same year (tables C.3 and C.4 in appendix C). Given that the AUH design was preferable to that of Familias—the former program has the flexibility to add beneficiaries on a monthly basis as their income situation changes—this transfer of beneficiaries contributed to increased effectiveness of income transfer programs for families with children. Figure A.3 shows the evolution of Familias beneficiaries over the program's implementation period.

Figure A.3. Beneficiaries of Familias por la Inclusion Social Program in Argentina, 2005–10



Source: Independent Evaluation Group, using data from Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Noncontributory Programs database.

Direct payments for contributory FA were fully implemented through SUAF; this system was also used for AUH payments and contributed to increased transparency and accountability. The previous compensatory payment system for FA was eliminated in 2010 by an administrative resolution. FA beneficiaries now receive their monthly benefit directly through a bank account or cash payment, reducing the possibility of fraud. At project closure, all FA benefits were paid through the direct payment system (from a baseline of 70 percent in 2008), and the reimbursement claims to ANSES were reduced to zero (from Arg\$2.4 million in 2008). The number of firms incorporated into SUAF more than doubled during project implementation, although IEG found differences between the data used as baseline for 2008 in project documents (411,894) and the ANSES data as reported by the Independent Audit Agency in Argentina (499,450 or 498,514 depending on the document, approximately 74 percent of total registered firms).¹ In April 2009, right before the project became effective, 80 percent of the firms (536,611) were registered in SUAF (Auditoría General de la Nación 2009, 28).

Yet-, it is not possible to fully attribute to the project the transparency and accountability achievements associated with the full implementation of SUAF, given that other World Bank support was available (see the Relevance of the Design section in this appendix). Information on the progress and limitations of other technical assistance supporting institutional strengthening efforts in ANSES is not sufficient to assess the ambitiousness of the DLI and key performance indicator related to SUAF. Thus, although it is plausible that the project contributed to their achievement, it is not correct to fully attribute their achievement to the project.

Similarly, although more than 2 million children and youth with complete information were added to the ANSES database, reducing the number of beneficiaries with incomplete records, it is not possible to fully assess the project's contribution to this result. Technical assistance to ANSES added during the additional financing was canceled; yet ANSES implemented many activities to improve registration. Interviews conducted for this evaluation suggest that ANSES was working on improving the cross-checks of databases and was not interested in receiving technical assistance from the World Bank in this area.

In addition, an important shortcoming in the achievement of greater transparency had to do with the inconsistent dissemination of AUH data, even though dissemination of AUH data was a DLI. According to project records, such information was made available only for a very limited time during project implementation. The publication of AUH information started in 2016 with the change in government and continued until 2019. As this PPAR was being drafted, IEG found that publication had been discontinued again with a new change in government. The latest AUH data available on the ANSES website are from June 2019.

Table A.3. Selected Indicators Measuring Achievement of Objective 2

Indicator	Original Target	Revised Target	Project End
AUH beneficiaries (baseline 0; no.)	n.a.	n.a.	4 million
Children under 18 with complete information in the ADP database (baseline 9.7 million; no.)	10.4 million	n.a.	12.3 million
Amounts claimed to ANSES for reimbursement (baseline Arg\$2.4 million; Arg\$, millions)	0.6	0.09	0
Family allowances paid through the direct payment system (baseline 57 percent; percent)	90	98	100
Firms registered in SUAF (baseline 411,894; no.)	627,389	792,197	1,193,911

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: ADP = individual registry; ANSES = National Social Security Administration; AUH = Universal Child Allowance; n.a. = not applicable; SUAF = Single System for Family Allocations.

Several outputs contributed to achievement of both objectives. The project contributed to improved availability of data for monitoring social protection programs through the following:

- Two Social Security and Protection Surveys (ENAPROSS I and II). ENAPROSS I, conducted in 2011, covered the six most populated provincial jurisdictions: the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, and the provinces of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Mendoza, Santa Fe, and Tucumán. ENAPROSS II, conducted in 2015, covered the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, and urban centers with 5,000 or more

inhabitants in the provinces of Catamarca, Chaco, Corrientes, Jujuy, and Río Negro.

- A qualitative and quantitative study of social protection in localities of 2,000 to 4,999 inhabitants of the Cuyo, Northeast, Northwest, and Patagonia regions.
- Three studies focused on (i) employment, social protection, and working conditions of rural workers (jointly financed by the National Registry of Rural Workers and the Superintendence of Work Risks, covering 10 provinces); (ii) employment and working conditions in the social economy; and (iii) formal businesses and employment practices and determinants.

3. Efficiency: Substantial

The World Bank team did not conduct a traditional economic analysis but referred to existing data and evidence to discuss the cost and expected returns of the project. At appraisal, household data were used to compare families receiving family allowances with those not receiving them along several outcomes. Simulations were used to estimate the potential impact of expanded coverage of SCE and FA. The analysis had shortcomings, however, because the differences observed between beneficiaries receiving family allowances and those not receiving them could not be attributed to FA alone; the similarities or differences between the two groups in other observable or unobservable characteristics were not discussed. At the time of the additional financing, more robust evidence was used to estimate important reductions in extreme and total poverty and changes in income distribution as a result of the expansion in FA, at a reported fiscal cost of less than 1 percent of gross domestic product (GDP; World Bank 2011, 2).

At closing, available evidence confirmed the reductions in poverty and inequality at a low fiscal cost, showing that the benefits of the FA expansion exceeded its costs. FA and AUH benefits helped reduce extreme poverty by more than half and reduced total poverty (from 18.7 percent to 15 percent) and inequality (from a Gini coefficient of 0.51 to 0.44). The fiscal cost of the AUH was reported at 1.2 percent of GDP (World Bank 2016, annex 3). The literature review on impacts of AUH that IEG conducted for this PPAR contributes to this assessment.

Shortcomings in efficiency were found with regard to the SCE. The SCE covered only half the planned number of beneficiaries, although still spending the full planned amount of resources. No economic evaluation was conducted for SCE during appraisal or at the time of the additional financing. At closing, use was made of an International Labor Organization study that reported on the effectiveness of MTESS training activities (not SCE specific) in finding formal employment.

In addition, important delays reduced implementation efficiency. Technical assistance activities required a lot more time to implement than what was originally envisaged, and ANSES's reluctance to publish agreed information on beneficiaries resulted in a two-year disbursement delay.

The above shortcomings in efficiency are outweighed by the high efficiency of FA, especially the AUH, given the impacts achieved by the program (table C.1 in appendix C summarizes the evidence reviewed by IEG). Thus efficiency is rated **substantial**.

4. Outcome: Moderately Satisfactory

Relevance of the objectives to country conditions, national priorities and policies, and the World Bank's strategy in Argentina is **substantial**. Relevance of design is **modest** because of important shortcomings in the statement of objectives, the lack of explicit definition of the project's understanding of "effectiveness," and the limited information to substantiate the design of the DLIs, despite their importance in achieving project outcomes. Efficiency is substantial because the high cost-effectiveness of FA outweighs the shortcomings in SCE and in operational efficiency. Overall outcome is rated **moderately satisfactory**.

5. Risk to Development Outcome: Modest

The expansion of the AUH supported by the project continues to be high on the government's agenda despite changes in administration. The literature review and the interviews conducted for this PPAR confirmed that the AUH is considered a central measure to reduce poverty and a key part of an integrated social protection strategy for the country. Thus, even in the constrained fiscal space that Argentina is currently facing, it is reasonable to expect that the government will continue to fund it.

The sustainability of FA is guaranteed. Argentina spends approximately 2 percent of GDP in social protection programs, one of the highest percentages in the Latin American and Caribbean Region, after Chile (Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity data). The FA costs approximately 1.3 percent of GDP, and the AUH represents about half of that. Budgetary allocation to the AUH is protected in the Stand-by Arrangement that the government of Argentina has with the International Monetary Fund, and thus is not expected to impact the fund's program fiscal targets.

Sustained support to project development objectives (PDOs) is provided through another World Bank loan. In June 2016, approval was given to a \$600 million follow-up project aiming at (i) expanding coverage of FA; and (ii) improving transparency of social protection programs implemented by ANSES. The project received additional financing of \$450 million in August 2018 and \$300 million in March 2020, guaranteeing continuity.

Through the Children and Youth Protection Project, the World Bank has contributed to closing AUH gaps between entitlement and effective coverage by reducing the number of children not included in the eligibility database of ANSES.

Yet, there are some risks. The SCE has been practically discontinued—although not eliminated. Progress made on the availability of social protection data is not guaranteed. Despite several discussions to continue conducting the social protection survey ENAPROSS, the government has not decided on a final instrument, and no funds have been allocated to this. Stakeholders consulted for this evaluation agreed that this was not a priority for the last administration, given all the other priorities the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses had and given the limited capacity and resources of Information, Evaluation and Monitoring System for Social Programs. There were also no attempts to make more data on the AUH available to allow for better evaluation of its impacts through the identification of its recipients in the National Employment Survey, and some of the information that was available during the last administration has been removed from the ANSES website.

Risk to development outcome is rated **modest**.

6. Bank Performance

Quality at Entry: Moderately Satisfactory

Preparatory work and previous experience informed project design. The project builds on strong operational experience and sector knowledge in Argentina. However, the project did not discuss relevant technical assistance for ANSES.

The World Bank team identified relevant potential risks and outlined appropriate mitigation strategies. To reduce reputational risks, the team focused on areas that had strong buy-in from society, analysts, and policy makers, and made clear in appraisal documents that any future support would be conditional on the expected future expansion of coverage to people who are the most vulnerable and to unemployed workers. However, it did not include the expansion of FA as a DLI. In addition, the complexity of implementing key technical assistance activities such as carrying out national surveys was underestimated, and the government's appetite for and openness to data sharing were overestimated (see the Implementation and Supervision section in chapter 2).

Shortcomings in the design have to do with the selection of the DLIs and the statement of objectives and associated indicators. The expansion of FA was not included as a DLI in the original loan, despite its strategic importance for achieving the PDO. DLIs were not designed to incentivize results and omitted key aspects of the program needed to

achieve the PDO (see the Design and Preparation section in chapter 2). The statement of project objectives did not include the expanded coverage supported by the project. Finally, PDO indicators were limited to assessing the implicit objective of strengthening Argentina's social protection system to better respond to future negative shocks (see the Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation section in this appendix).

Quality of Supervision: Satisfactory

The World Bank provided sustained support throughout project implementation. All government officials interviewed by IEG confirmed the strong technical support provided by the World Bank team for the implementation of component 3 (see the Implementation and Supervision section in chapter 2). In addition, stakeholders in academia, think tanks, and other development institutions referred to the importance of the World Bank's role in spearheading and supporting a sound social protection survey in a context where official data were absent or questioned.

The World Bank team was firm in requesting compliance with all DLIs to authorize disbursements, even in a context of high pressure to disburse. Components 1 and 2 did not involve major supervision, as they financed grant transfers; but the associated DLIs required validation of compliance to authorize disbursements. Several stakeholders contacted by IEG referred to strong internal and external pressures to disburse during the implementation of the additional financing loan, given negative net financial flows between the World Bank and Argentina. The World Bank team nevertheless remained firm in requiring compliance with all the necessary information to authorize disbursements.

The DLIs for the additional financing loan were improved over those in the original loan, yet no changes were made to the statement of project objectives at the time of the additional financing.

Taken together, quality at entry and quality of supervision ratings lead to an overall Bank performance rating of **moderately satisfactory**.

7. Borrower Performance: Moderately Satisfactory

Government Performance

Government performance is rated **moderately satisfactory**. The borrower demonstrated strong ownership and commitment to the FA (the extension of the FA in particular) as evidenced by its budgetary allocation to the AUH and by the program's continuity despite changes in government. Interviews conducted for this PPAR noted coordination issues between the Ministry of Finance and ANSES, which resulted in extensive delays

in presenting the information required by the World Bank. Project supervision records and the Implementation Completion and Results Report highlighted difficulties in ensuring the disclosure of information required to authorize disbursements and in ensuring the quality of interim financial reports. The borrower, however, complied with all the legal covenants (World Bank 2016, 9).

Implementing Agency Performance

The National Directorate of Projects with International Credit Organizations of the Ministry of Economy and Finance coordinated the implementation of project activities with MTESS (components 1 and 3) and ANSES (component 2).

The performance of the directorate is rated **moderately satisfactory**. Shortcomings in its role coordinating with the two other implementing agencies and issues in ensuring the quality and timeliness of interim financial reports were reported throughout project implementation (World Bank 2016, 9, 19).

The performance of the MTESS is rated **satisfactory**. The strong commitment of the undersecretary of labor studies to the quality of the two social protection surveys and labor studies was remarkable, especially given the difficult context (limited availability of reliable statistical information) in the country during project implementation.

The performance of ANSES is rated **moderately satisfactory**. Although ANSES complied with the requirements associated with the FA, its compliance with the disclosure of AUH information was inconsistent, leading to substantial delays.

Together these lead to a borrower performance rating of **moderately satisfactory**.

8. Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation: Modest

Design

The original results framework included few appropriate indicators to measure the PDOs, and this did not change at the time of the additional financing. From the monitoring and evaluation framework and detailed project information in appraisal documents, effectiveness was broadly understood as increased coverage of the SCE and FA, through the transfer of beneficiaries from less efficient programs; increased transparency and accountability, through the SUAF for FA payments; and the disclosure and publication of AUH information.

Indicators measuring the effectiveness of the SCE were particularly problematic. The project did not include indicators or studies assessing the quality of the training received by SCE participants, its degree of completion, or any associated change in participants'

skill set or employability options (such as job interviews or job offers). In the absence of this information, the only outcome measure that did attempt to capture the exit of SCE participants to formal employment is insufficient and presents important attribution problems.

In addition, many intermediate outcome indicators were measured in absolute and not in relative terms, limiting evidence on effectiveness. For instance, indicators like “number of child benefits paid through SUAF,” “number of SCE participants exiting into formal employment,” “number of SUAF beneficiaries receiving transfers directly in their bank accounts,” and “number of firms registered in SUAF” all would have been more effective if measured in proportion to the total or universe.

There was no indicator to measure the institutional strengthening supported by component 3, despite its mention in the PDO and its role underpinning the improvements in effectiveness. The technical assistance supported by component 3 aimed at strengthening the capacity within the MTESS in monitoring and evaluation of social protection policies and collecting the necessary data to do so. Indicators associated with this component were focused on the outputs produced (that is, the surveys and the availability of key social protection indicators), not on the use of the information obtained through these surveys or any changes in policies or programs associated with them. Similarly, the monitoring framework did not include indicators that reflected changes in the capacity of MTESS to conduct similar surveys in the future. The additional financing added institutional strengthening activities for both MTESS and ANSES, but again did not include indicators to measure their progress or achievement.

During preparation, the World Bank had recommended including an impact evaluation, but the government declined.

A credible mechanism was included at appraisal for monitoring compliance with DLIs and verifying their achievement. External audits were to be conducted by the Independent Audit Agency in Argentina. However, little information was available at appraisal regarding the verification protocol and process; this information was added later in the operations manual.

Implementation

The monitoring data collected by the project was essentially equivalent to the requirements associated with the DLIs. According to project records, the monitoring and information system of the MTESS provided regular updates on SCE beneficiaries, including their employment history and participation in training and employment services. Access to monitoring data from ANSES was difficult, and reporting on the data was incomplete, leading to substantial disbursement delays (World Bank 2016, 8). The

additional financing refers to a survey and impact evaluation of the SCE that was never completed (World Bank 2011, 2).

Use

Available administrative data were used to track progress toward the achievement of project objectives through the DLIs, as originally envisioned in project design. One of the DLI indicators required that every four months, ANSES publish a statistical report with basic data on AUH implementation. The first report was expected to be published in March 2011, but it did not appear until two years later.

The project supported important efforts in data collection that were instrumental in decision-making at the policy level. Data from the social protection surveys (ENAPROSS I and II) were made available to the public through the MTESS website and have been widely used by researchers and policy makers.² Stakeholders interviewed for this PPAR referred to the availability of social protection survey data as one of the greatest project achievements in a context where availability of reliable information was limited.³

¹ For a comparative analysis of the proposals, see Repetto, Díaz Langou, and Marazzi (2009).

² ENAPROSS data are available at <http://www.trabajo.gob.ar/estadisticas/enapross/index.asp>.

³ The Country Partnership Framework Progress Report (World Bank 2010, Annex 6, 49) notes that “starting in January 2007, official figures diverged significantly from private estimates, especially on inflation, but later also on [gross domestic product], exports and social indicators (unemployment and poverty). In 2013, the [International Monetary Fund] issued a Declaration of Censure questioning official statistics.”

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Appendix B. Fiduciary, Environmental, and Social Aspects

Financial Management and Procurement

The World Bank's procurement guidelines were followed throughout project implementation. A financial management assessment of the arrangements for the project was carried out in accordance with Operational Policy and World Bank Policy 10.02, and arrangements were found adequate. Financial management was rated **satisfactory** or **moderately satisfactory** in supervision reports, and no significant issues were reported in procurement missions and audits. There were no qualified audit reports.

The external audit included extra measures to minimize risks of fraud. Validation of controls operating at local labor offices and cross-checks and consistency verification of beneficiary databases were conducted as part of the audits. According to financial management supervision mission records, auditors reviewed and found reliable 100 percent of the beneficiary databases listed in the withdrawal applications submitted to the World Bank for reimbursement.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

The World Bank's safeguards policies were followed from project preparation throughout implementation. The project was rated as environmental assessment category C and triggered Operational Policy 4.10. An indigenous peoples planning framework was prepared, disclosed, and updated as planned. The Implementation Completion and Results Report states that this framework was fully implemented (World Bank 2016, 9).

Information on indigenous peoples benefiting from project-funded activities is limited. Project records reviewed for this Project Performance Assessment Report include detailed information on outreach activities conducted with 300 communities in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Chaco, Chubut, Formosa, Jujuy, La Pampa, Mendoza, Misiones, Neuquén, Río Negro, Salta, San Juan, Santa Fe, Santiago del Estero, and Tucumán. The additional evidence reviewed for this Project Performance Assessment Report suggests that the Universal Child Allowance has had a positive impact on indigenous communities' access to health and education, living conditions, and livelihoods (Isla and Vezza 2013; ANSES 2016). However, project records do not include information on the number of indigenous population beneficiaries of the Family Allowances Program, the AUH Universal Child Allowance, or the Training and Employment Insurance Program.

The additional financing included targeted fieldwork for specific outreach to indigenous peoples through agreements with national universities to identify and enroll potential beneficiaries of the Universal Child Allowance. This was later canceled, as the borrower did not implement the activities within the time frame required in the loan agreement. Some activities were financed with the National Social Security Administration's own resources, however.

Both government officials and World Bank specialists interviewed for this Project Performance Assessment Report highlighted the importance of having dedicated funding to ensure indigenous peoples benefit. This lesson was internalized in the design of the follow-up project through the inclusion of a dedicated component and associated resource allocation for activities benefiting indigenous communities. Information collected during the Independent Evaluation Group mission suggests that the inclusion of this dedicated funding has helped ensure regular outreach and visits, resulting in more continuous support to indigenous communities. It has also strengthened the role of community leaders in identifying potential beneficiaries and has facilitated more interinstitutional coordination at the community level.

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Appendix C. Methods and Evidence

This report is a Project Performance Assessment Report. This instrument and its methodology are described at <https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/methodology/PPAR>.

This evaluation is based largely on (i) interviews with more than 41 stakeholders in Argentina carried out during a field mission in June 2019; (ii) an extensive literature review of the evidence available on the effectiveness of programs supported by the project; and (iii) review of project documents and additional data supplied by the project coordination unit, interviewees, or other sources.

The mission included meetings with department directorates of central government, staff in the project coordination unit, World Bank staff working in Argentina during the project implementation period, staff from other international organizations working in Argentina, academia, and civil society (see appendix D for a list of all people met).

Stakeholder interviews focused on generating lessons from the program, and on specific questions in relation to (i) project design relevance and effectiveness, (ii) changes in social protection-related policies and their connection (or not) with the project, (iii) the additionality of the World Bank's role (beyond financing), and (iv) lessons from project experience. Stakeholders also volunteered information on the performance of the implementing agencies and the World Bank's supervision team, and on the institutional strengthening in the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security and the National Social Security Administration that the project contributed to. Findings have a high confidence level, as there was a very high degree of consistency (and sometimes unanimity) among stakeholders on most findings.

The evaluation benefited from the analysis of a large range of analytic studies and research. A literature review of this extensive evidence focused on identifying the long-term impacts that the project financing has contributed to through its support to the Universal Child Allowance program. Table C.1 summarizes the findings.

Table C.1. Summary of the Evidence Reviewed on the Impacts of the Universal Child Allowance

Outcomes		Evidence of impacts	Inconclusive evidence
Targeting		Positive Impacts: Cetrángolo et al. 2017 ANSES and MTEySS 2012 ANSES 2012	
Poverty alleviation ^a		Positive impacts: Cetrángolo et. al. 2017	
Labor markets impacts	Disincentives to formal labor		No significant impacts: Bustos and Villafañe 2011 Maurizio and Monsalvo 2017 Mario, Rosa, and García 2013
	Working hours		Positive impacts: Garganta and Gasparini 2015 No significant impacts: Maurizio and Monsalvo 2017
	Hourly wage	Positive impacts for secondary workers: Garganta and Gasparini 2017c	Negative impacts for households with more than one income earner: Garganta and Gasparini 2017b

Outcomes	Evidence of impacts	Inconclusive evidence
Employment and activity rate		<p>Positive impacts: Bustos and Villafañe 2011</p> <p>No significant impacts: Maurizio and Monsalvo. 2017</p> <p>Negative impacts for married women: Garganta, Gasparini, and Marchionni 2017</p>
Fertility impacts: Incentive to have a baby	<p>Positive Impacts for couples with children; two-parent households; mothers with low educational level; mother's age 26–36 years old; households with children six years old or younger: Garganta et al. 2016</p>	
Women's empowerment		<p>Inconclusive evidence: Arcidiácono, Barrenechea, and Straschnoy 2011 Micha 2018</p>
Health impacts	Use of preventive health service	<p>Negative impacts: Del Valle Magario 2014</p> <p>No significant impacts: Goldschmit 2017</p>
		Positive impacts

Outcomes		Evidence of impacts	Inconclusive evidence
	Access to discounted medicine	Positive impacts: Goldschmit 2017	Pautassi, Straschnoy and Arcidiácono 2013
Education impacts	Attendance rate	Ages 5–14	Nonsignificant impacts, no difference by gender: Marchionni and Edo 2017
		Ages 15–17	Positive impacts for boys only: Marchionni and Edo 2017
	Educational continuity	Ages 6–11	Nonsignificant impacts, no difference by gender: Marchionni and Edo 2017
		Ages 11–17	Positive impacts for girls only: Marchionni and Edo 2017
	Primary school graduation rate	Positive impacts for girls (12– 4) and boys (12–17): Marchionni and Edo 2017	
	Reduction in dropout rate	Positive impacts for teenagers (14–17) Jiménez and Jiménez 2016	

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: Positive impacts were reported on health, education, living conditions, and livelihoods for indigenous peoples (Isla and Vezza 2013; ANSES 2016).

a. Indicators used to estimate the Universal Child Allowance impact on poverty levels include the poverty gap and the percentage of the food basket covered by the allowance.

b. The labor intensity drop (as measured by working hours) is significant only for those workers belonging to households with more than one income earner, while the changes evidenced in households whose labor decisions depend on a single worker are small and not significant.

c. Significant impact occurs only for workers belonging to households with more than one income earner.

Table C.2. Training and Employment Insurance Program (SCE), 2008–19

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*
Number of EOs	262	310	345	433	505	568	612	633	638	641
People served in EOs (total)	166,927	323,366	425,682	637,523	609,364	543,631	506,660	525,217	422,470	284,764
Beneficiaries added to SCE (total)	34,274	53,183	144,777	108,572	33,346	46,566	54,776	74,681	50,053	12,904
Beneficiaries added to SCE as % of total served in EOs	21%	16%	34%	17%	5%	9%	11%	14%	12%	5%
Total Transfer amounts for SCE (Arg\$, thousands)	196,409	203,123	316,346	609,753	586,094	352,634	363,517	557,570	563,186	253,703

Source: IEG with data from MTESS

Notes: EOs= employment offices; for 2017, data available as of May

Table C.3. Universal Child Allowance (AUH) Beneficiaries and Transfer Amounts per Child, 2009–18

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total beneficiaries	3,301,048	3,478,022	3,507,779	3,298,013	3,436,740	3,550,859	3,661,264	3,932,013	3,927,108	3,960,198
Transfer amount per child (Arg\$)	min.	180	220	270	340	460	644	837	1,103	1,816
	max.	180	220	270	340	460	644	837	1,434	2,361
Transfer amount per child (US\$)	min.	48.5	57.0	66.6	74.9	84.3	79.7	93.8	75.5	90.4
	max.	48.5	57.0	66.6	74.9	84.3	79.7	93.8	98.2	117.5
Transfer amount change vs previous year		22.2	22.7	25.9	35.3	40.0	30.0	31.8	28.0	28.6
			22.2	22.7	25.9	35.3	40.0	30.0	71.3	28.0
Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)		20.92	23.70	22.31	23.95	40.28	26.58	41.12	26.01	40.70

Source: Independent Evaluation Group using data from the National Social Security Administration. Inflation data from World Development

Note: Transfers differ by zone of residence under Law No. 27.160 (2016).

Table C.4. Familias Program: Budget, Coverage and Transfer Amount, 2005–10

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Budget						
Arg\$	501,000,462	715,520,000	1,261,134,560	1,658,115,561	1,753,768,561	2,374,565,131
US\$	172,520,820	234,289,456	407,389,411	527,363,608	472,699,882	615,568,287
Percentage of GDP	0.09%	0.10%	0.14%	0.14%	0.14%	0.14%
Coverage						
Effective coverage (total no. of people)	1,095,521	1,455,318	2,363,037	2,724,189	2,989,261	n.a.
Effective coverage (% of population)	2.81%	3.69%	5.93%	6.76%	7.34%	n.a.
Effective coverage (total no. of households)	243,449	330,754	541,981	629,143	695,177	n.a.
Expected coverage (total no. of people)	1,324,499	1,848,000	2,772,960	3,031,000	2,992,800	3,232,297
Expected coverage (% of population)	3.39%	4.68%	6.95%	7.52%	7.35%	7.86%
Expected coverage (total no. of households)	294,333	420,000	636,000	700,000	696,000	751,697
Cash transfer amounts						
Minimum transfer per capita (Arg\$)	n.a.	34	42	43	47	47
Maximum transfer per family (Arg\$)	200	275	305	305	380	380
Minimum transfer per capita (US\$)	n.a.	11.2	13.6	13.7	12.5	12.1
Maximum transfer per family (US\$)	68.9	90.0	98.5	97.0	102.4	98.5

Source: Independent Evaluation Group based on data from ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) Non-contributory Programs database.

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Appendix D. List of Persons Met

Name	Title	Institution
Jesko Hentschel	Country Director	World Bank
Rafael Rofman	Practice Leader	World Bank
Marcela Salvador	Senior Social Protection Specialist	World Bank
Juan Martin Moreno	Senior Social Protection Specialist	World Bank
Maria Ana Lugo	Senior Economist	World Bank
Lourdes Rodriguez Chamussy	Senior Economist	World Bank
Isabel Tomadin	Former Safeguard Specialist	World Bank
Alejandro Solanot	Senior Financial Management Specialist	World Bank
Silvana Kostenbaum	Public Sector Specialist	World Bank
Maria Cecilia Zanetta	Consultant, ICR author	World Bank
Donors		
Mario Sanchez	Social Protection Principal Specialist	IADB local office
Claudia Vazquez	Consultant, Labor Markets Unit	IADB local office
Carolina Villanueva	Consultant, Gender Unit	IADB local office
Carolina Aulicino	Officer, Social Policies	UNICEF local office
Academia		
Roxana Maurizio	Researcher	UBA, CONICET
Martin Gonzalez Rozada	Researcher	UTDT
Hernan Ruffo	Researcher	UTDT
Guillermo Cruces	Deputy Director	CEDLAS
Maria Laura Alzua	Deputy Director	CEDLAS
Santiago Garganta	Researcher	CEDLAS
Gala Díaz Langu	Director, Social Protection	CIPPEC
Government		
Gabriel Filc	Former Director, DNPOIC	MoF
Agustin Simone	Former Director, DNPOIC	MoF
Marta Novick	Former Under Secretary	MTESS
Ana Catalano	Former Coordinator, ENAPROSS	MTESS
Paula Szenkman	Statistical Information & Studies	MTESS
Alejandra Clemente	Statistical Information & Studies	MTESS
Fabian Berho	Coordinator, Statistical Information	MTESS
Enrique Garrido	Financial Management	MTESS
Emilio Basavilvaso	Executive Director	ANSES
Federico Braun	Deputy Executive Director	ANSES
Mariana Spitaleri	Coordinator, International Cooperation	ANSES
Sergio Sanchez Gomez	Director, Cultural Promotion and Development (safeguards)	ANSES

Name	Title	Institution
Estefania Cirelli	Coordinator (safeguards)	ANSES
Soledad Cubas	National Director	SIEMPRO
Pablo Pucciarelli	Under Secretary, Implementation & Data Analysis	SIEMPRO
Fabian Repetto	Deputy	Children & Youth Ombudsman Office
Brenda Pietraccone	Advisor	MDS
Santiago Sueiro	Director, International Cooperation	MDS
Nayla Siancha	Director, Implementation & Monitoring	MDS
Lautaro Iglesias	Project Manager, Loan 8633-AR	MDS

Note: ANSES = National Social Security Administration; CEDLAS = Center of Distributive, Labor and Social Studies; CIPPEC = Center for the Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth; CONICET = National Scientific and Technical Research Council; DNPOIC = National Directorate of Projects with International Credit Agencies; ENAPROSS = Social Security and Protection Survey; ICR = Implementation Completion and Results Report; IADB = Inter-American Development Bank; MDS = Ministry of Social Development; MoF = Ministry of Finance; MTESS = Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security; SIEMPRO = Information, Evaluation and Monitoring System for Social Programs; UBA = University of Buenos Aires; UTDT = Torcuato Di Tella University.