



LABOR OBSERVATORY OF THE AMERICAS



Country Profile Argentina

2021



Total Area

2'780.400 Km2.



Population as per 2010 Census:

40,117,096 people¹.



Population estimated in 2021:

45,808,747 people.



Economically active population:

13,300,000 people



Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020:

389.59 billion US dollars, at current prices².



GDP in second quarter 2021:

The estimate shows a growth of 17.9% compared to the same period of the previous year

Population composition (2010 Census):



51,3%
female



47.6%
male

¹ This section draws from official data from Argentina's National Institute of Statistics and Census (INDEC for its acronym in Spanish).

² <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/national-profile.html?theme=2&country=arg&lang=en>





Analysis of the socio-economic situation

Employment.

In the second quarter of 2021, the employment rate – which measures the proportion of employed people in relation to the population ages 15 years and above – stood at 41.5%, equivalent to 12 million people. The activity rate was 48.4% for women, and 69.1% for men.

Unemployment.

In the second quarter of 2021, the unemployment rate – people who have no job, are available for work, and actively seek employment – stood at 9.6%. This percentage is equivalent to 1,300,000 people. The unemployment rate was 10.4% for women and 9.0% for men.

Inactive population.

15,600,000 people.

Informal employment:

,300,000 people, equivalent to 27.4% of the employed population, are non-salaried workers.

Poverty.

For the 31 metropolitan areas, 11,726,794 people live below the poverty line; within that group, 3,087,427 people are in extreme poverty. The incidence of poverty during the second half of 2020 went down by 1.4 percentage points. In contrast, extreme poverty went up 0.2 percentage points.





Context Highlights 2021

The global health crisis had a very strong impact on the Argentine economy, registering a 9.9% drop in GDP in 2020. Although the economy improved by the end of the first half of 2021, it is still 3.3% below its pre-pandemic trend.

The government of Alberto Fernandez – which defeated Macri’s neoliberalism in the presidential elections – projects an improvement in Argentina’s fiscal situation, resulting primarily from a combination of three factors: the implementation of emergency programs, the increase in international commodity prices, and the implementation of a tax on the country’s wealthiest citizens.

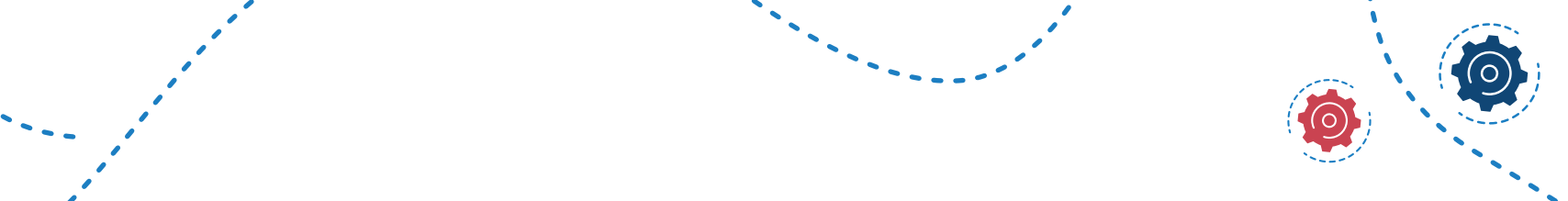
Despite the difficulties experienced in 2020, Argentina’s economy is showing signs of recovery, based on food production, manufacturing, and innovation in the technology sector.

In urban areas, 40.6% of people are impoverished, 10.7% of whom are in extreme poverty. This situation can be explained by the pandemic and the economic collapse resulting from the previous administration.

This year, the Fernandez government concluded the process of restructuring the local and foreign debt in foreign currency.

On political and electoral matters, the ruling party suffered a major setback in the Open, Simultaneous, and Mandatory Primary Elections (PASO for its acronym in Spanish) that were held in September. The opposition





coalition Juntos por el Cambio (Together for Change) won in most provinces and in the City of Buenos Aires, where the majority of the population lives. However, the government made a comeback in the November elections (after the primaries that defined the candidates for Congress), winning in the City of Buenos Aires. The ruling party therefore remains the main force in the Chamber of Deputies, although it lost the quorum in the Senate that had allowed it to discuss proposed laws without depending on support from other parties.

Among other significant matters, the decriminalization of abortion on all grounds (Law 26.710) entered into force on 14 January 2021, after receiving the President's approval. This is a victory for the Argentine feminist movement and an important landmark for the feminist struggle in Latin America. The approved law allows Argentine women to have an abortion legally, freely, and free of charge in the first 14 weeks of gestation.



Actions and Denunciations (national and international) by Trade Unions and other social sectors

The pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in the region. The trade union movement in Argentina has denounced the unpayable and odious debt that continues to hinder macroeconomic readjustment, and which places a high burden on the popular working class. Moreover, working class peoples are subjected to the impositions of the International Monetary Fund's policies.

Complaints from the region lodged with the International Labor Organization (ILO) continue to increase as a result of the systematic violation of the rights of the working class. Argentina continues to defend organizations and involve more social sectors in the effort to ensure the enforceability of rights.

It also denounces the attempts to use ways of associating – such as cooperatives – and ways of developing cooperativism to enable labor fraud and generate profits for big capital through the outsourcing of labor. The unions maintain that the cooperatives' history of struggle cannot be manipulated and turned into instruments of precariousness in the world of work.





Trade union proposals and initiatives

The trade union movement in Argentina agrees on the need to deepen the ways of building solidarity in the country, in the region, and internationally— an active, effective, and deep solidarity. This requires building stronger unions with a sense of unity.

The unions believe that the processes of building unity must take place in a pluralist manner and ensure consensus as the basis for union action. In the unity required for the struggle against transnational corporations and impunity, an alliance with diverse social movements is a necessary condition for dialogue with trade union structures and for feedback regarding visions and positions to fight against the prevailing inequalities in the country and in the region.

Unity will make it possible to confront the pandemic of neoliberalism and COVID-19, and the resulting consequences of capital concentration and transnationalization. Thus, political formation is highlighted as a way to achieve trade union transformation and the consolidation of new forms of worker organization and participation. We propose to conduct all possible

political advocacy efforts to ensure that the ILO elects a person who will lead the institution without defending sectoral interests, creating divisions within the working class, or disarticulating historical processes.

An important trade union initiative is taking place in the field of communications, both at the level of affiliates and at the international level. The paradigm shift of the last period requires effort and focus on the construction of communications actions. The current immediacy is an advantage, but it also leads to dissociation from concrete spaces, in a digital storm that unites a high percentage of people working remotely. Therefore, we must enable technological tools but above all, process tools, so that communications in the trade union movement enables assertive dialogue and the creation of responses to the crisis.



The strengthening of the trade union movement at the international level is another proposal from the trade unions in Argentina. In this sense, the proposal is to continue the path of joint coordination and convergence to demand and define a just transition based on the struggle against the privatization of companies, on the control of production and the creation of decent work, giving new meaning to the notion of social justice.

The dispute for democracy is another ongoing initiative. Debate is essential towards the creation of plurinational and multicultural States, where participation through social dialogue is materialized in the construction of public policy, with significant contributions from the trade union world.

It is important to continue promoting alternative forms of mobilization in light of movement restrictions. In Argentina, trade unions have influenced the governmental and political-social agenda with direct and effective participation in campaigns such as the campaign to pass the tax on the country's wealthiest citizens.

In this same field of action, trade unions are debating and emphasizing the reduction of the working day, currently set in the country at a 48-hour work-week. A reduction to 40 hours has been proposed despite constant obstacles

from employers. The trade unions continue to demand that the reduction in hours not be conditioned to a reduction in wages, since the aim is to improve working conditions, and not to reduce the income of the working class in order to guarantee corporate accumulation.

Although the women's struggle in the country has seen positive changes, the trade unions propose to continue the inter-sectoral support and alliances with women's organizations, also for formative exchange.

Another initiative relates to the continuity of the debate regarding the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. The main focus is to continue developing contrasting analyses in line with the vision built by TUCA and its affiliates – broadly, with the Development Platform of the Americas (PLADA for its acronym in Spanish) and specifically, with its vision of Sustainable Development built from a working class perspective. This vision was established collectively through an important convergence of the main social movements of the region and the continent that come together in the Continental Platform for Democracy and Against Neoliberalism.





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