

Comisión Argentina para los Refugiados
(CAREF)

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Description:

CAREF began its work in September 1973 through the efforts of three churches: Iglesia Evangelica del Rio de la Plata, Iglesia Evangelica Discipulos de Cristo and the Iglesia Evangelica Metodista Argentina. Through CAREF, the churches sought to respond to the urgent needs of refugees fleeing the aftermath of Salvador Allende's brutal overthrow. From 1973-1986, CAREF served 16,400 refugees - 96% of whom were Chilean. CAREF's activities and orientations have reflected the needs at different points in time. There have been times, for example, when CAREF's main task was to guide refugees who came to Argentina to be resettled in third countries. For a time, CAREF worked to assist some 245 Indochinese refugees who were resettled in Argentina.

In addition to its work with refugees, CAREF is presently working to assist Argentinians who are returning home as well as Uruguayans needing assistance. In 1985, CAREF assisted 503 refugees.

The situation for refugees in Buenos Aires is serious. Economically, conditions are difficult: housing is very expensive, and jobs are scarce. UNHCR has sharply reduced its assistance increasing pressure on CAREF. In 1985 UNHCR reduced its stipend to A 20.- per month which was completely inadequate to meet even the most minimum for needs of refugees. Moreover, the refugees presently arriving are young, militant, angry and often those men who lack skills and education. This has created a situation of considerable pressure on CAREF.

CAREF's programmes for refugees include:

- 1) Assistance to refugees (with UNHCR), specifically: emergency aid, durable solutions, resettlement in other countries, family reunification, repatriation, and scholarships.
- 2) Labour programmes to facilitate the insertion of refugees into the job labour force.
- 3) Training. Support and scholarships for training which will lead to employment.
- 4) Integral health
- 5) Preparation for returning to Chile.

- 6) Argentine returnees and foreigners living in Argentina
- 7) Assistance in special situations.

Moreover, CAREF seeks to increase public awareness, and to coordinate its work with Human Rights organizations.

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