



AS IT IS

Almost Half of Argentines in Poverty

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About 42 percent of Argentinians live at or below the poverty rate, the government said. The rate of poverty in the nation of 45 million people has increased since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

The pandemic has also caused three years of deep economic recession to worsen.

Eduardo David Rodriguez is one of the more than 18 million Argentinians living in poverty. He brings fruits and vegetables to sell in a market in Buenos Aires twice a week to help support his family. He lives with his wife and two of their four children in a small house outside the country's capital. There is no bathroom, running water or fuel to cook with.

"Work here is tough, that's the truth, but there's no other **option** than to come here and bring the family back the daily bread," Rodriguez told Reuters. He said he earns about 12,000 pesos each month.

For Rodriguez and his wife, who also works, their monthly family **income** usually reaches around 39,000 pesos. That is well short of the poverty line for a family of four – about 67,000 pesos.

Argentina is rich in natural resources, from cattle and corn to natural gas. But inflation, poor economic decision-making, and years of debt crises have severely weakened the country's economy.

"Sometimes we can only eat so much. We don't **indulge** in **luxuries** but, well, thank God we don't starve," said Rodriguez's wife Maria. She works in the family's neighborhood clearing storm drains, which carry water away from the streets.

"Sometimes we have enough and sometimes not."

In his free time, Rodriguez teaches football, the sport called soccer in the United States, to children from other poor homes. He works to support their hopes of a professional career in the sport as an escape from poverty.

"I love being with the boys, and I come to do it without any **obligation** and without any salary, I do it from passion, because the truth is this is what keeps me going every day," Rodriguez said.

I'm Jonathan Evans.

Miguel Lo Bianco and Claudia Martini reported on this story for the Reuters news service. Jonathan Evans adapted this story for Learning English. Susan Shand was the editor.

Words in This Story

option – *n.* something that can be chosen; a choice or possibility

income – *n.* money that is earned from work, investments, business, etc.

indulge – *v.* to allow yourself to have or do something as a special pleasure

luxury – *n.* a condition or situation of great comfort, ease, and wealth

obligation – *n.* something that you must do because of a law, rule, promise, etc.
