The Hope Impact is a Seventh-Day Adventist Church evangelistic project developed in the South American Division territory (SAD). This project is part of a broader integrated evangelism program and consists of the free distribution of books and other missionary materials - printed and digital - in all eight countries assisted by the SAD: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Since its creation, the Hope Impact has engaged church leaders and members, as well as other supporters and Adventist institutions, whose efforts have reached the most diverse publics in society. The initiative operates from local churches, where members are mobilized and organized into groups and carry out massive and diversified distribution of the material in sparsely or heavily populated locations.¹

**Organization**

In 2006, during a meeting of the worldwide leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the office of the General Conference (GC), in Washington, D.C. in the United States, emerged the idea to create an evangelistic project that would make possible a large distribution of missionary literature. Thus, the established purpose by the Church leadership was to print a large amount of a low-cost literature editions. The intention was that this material would be shared around the world, bringing messages of hope to the population.² At first, no name was given to this missionary initiative, although it was soon applied in some Church Divisions. The countries where the first mobilizations happened were Brazil in 2007 and then Russia.³

In South American territory, the concept of this evangelistic initiative was propagated to the Unions through the Adventist Publishing Ministries. In addition, to contribute to all the plans and strategies suggested by the GC leaders, the Church in South America added a certain dynamism of the Latin people to the project. In 2007, during a SAD directive board meeting, in Argentina, this program for the distribution of denominational literature received the name “Hope Impact.” This happened as a result of a combination of suggestions and reflections made by the present members at the occasion. Since then, in South America, what started as an evangelistic action has, over time, become a broad missionary movement that unites and mobilizes church members to permanently engage on an integrated evangelism.⁴

**History**

Also, in 2007, the first edition of the Hope Impact project was held in the SAD missionary field. That year, around 24.4 million copies of the magazine “Viva com Esperança” [Living with Hope] were handed out, which featured the Second Coming of Jesus as its main subject. Beyond this magazine, an amount of 3,167,000 of the “The Ten Commandments” book, written by Loron Wade, was also handed out. This book was about the God-given orders in Exodus 20, and how such ordinances are sources of wisdom that offer solutions to people’s real problems and situations. In Brazil, more than two million copies of this material were handed out. In Peru, the amount was around 550,000, and in Chile, more than 221,000. In Argentina, the distribution overcame 70,000 copies handed out, while in Ecuador, around 60,000 were distributed. In this edition, approximately 35,000 copies were handed out in Bolivia. In Paraguay, about 7,000 books were distributed, and in Uruguay, more than 6,000.⁵
From that first edition, the project was better structured and, in the following year (2008), started to be managed by the SAD Evangelism Department. In that year, a new material had been prepared, with the title “Esperança Para Viver” [Hope to Live], containing salvation themed related messages. The purpose of handing out these books was to present the message of Christ’s return in depth, as well as to stimulate the readers’ decision in favor of this teaching. At that time, the leadership of the South American Division recognized that this movement had become one of the greatest evangelization tools in this missionary field, promoting the major participation of church members. In that year, an amount of four million books were distributed throughout the eight SAD countries.

In 2009, about 29 million magazines “Um Dia de Esperança” [A Day of Hope] with the theme of Sabbath as the day of rest were handed out. Alongside with the magazine, 6.8 million copies of the book “Sinais de Esperança” [Signs of Hope], were printed and handed out in South American territory. This work narrated the stories of ten people who got to know Jesus through the Bible. Based on the prophecies, the book went through the signs that indicate the approach of a new moment in this world’s history: the second advent of Jesus, the greatest hope, a message that is part of the very name of the Adventist Church.

In the following year (2010), seeking to stimulate reflection on the importance of having a special relationship with God, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church produced a new material, the book “Tempo de Esperança” [Time of Hope], which caused great repercussion in South America. That year, 10,915,000 volumes were distributed throughout the SAD missionary field. In Brazil, approximately 7.5 million copies were handed out. Among the Hispanic countries, the distribution happened as it follows: Paraguay - 114,500; Uruguay – 55,000; Bolivia – 130,000; Peru – 700,000; Ecuador – 265,000; Chile - 1 million; and Argentina - 1,235,500. In total, about 3.5 million books were handed out to the South American population.

For the year 2011, the material produced was the book “Ainda Existe Esperança” [There is still Hope]. In this book, the content sought to reflect on issues related to the theme of hope with the biblical definition of the term, ways to develop hope in personal life, and the benefits obtained through this understanding. It was emphasized that all the current era anxieties will end, and it was sought to show that one day there will be an integral and complete well-being for all. In this line of thinking, applications on the theme were made to show its importance in solving life’s difficulties. This hope was communicated to people through the delivery of around 11,628,000 volumes of the book across South America’s territory.

When the Hope Impact program reached its sixth year of existence, the leadership of the Church in South America changed the handing out strategy. Instead of producing a book for distribution each year, the decision was to keep the same material for two consecutive years (2012-2013). During that biennium, approximately 54.4 million copies of the work “A Grande Esperança” [The Great Hope] were handed out in the eight countries that are part of the South American Division. The books were also handed out to indigenous people from more remote communities. The content of the book is about issues such as human suffering and its solution in Christ, the truth about life after death, instructions regarding true peace and the final victory of God’s love against the powers of evil.

These two years (2012-2013) were enriching for the Adventist Church in South America. Besides it had been a time for the greatest circulation of materials throughout the territory, there was the creation of a series of studies on DVD, entitled “A Última Esperança” [The Last Hope]. This initiative sought to solve the difficulties of access to the content of books, mainly by people who are illiterate or with difficulties to read. Also, in that biennium, Hope Impact got a website specifically designed for the project. From that new platform, people could find versions of all handed out books in its past editions, in different formats of materials on the most diverse digital platforms. Through the website, interested people had the opportunity to interact and write about their conversion stories, acting as a kind of “extension” of the books.

In 2014, the SAD leadership decided to return to the format adopted before 2012 (a different book each year), with the distribution of the book “A Única Esperança” [The Only Hope]. In this edition, approximately 16 million copies were handed out. In addition to returning to the previous format, this year’s edition also featured the internet as an important ally in the dissemination of the message. Through the Hope Impact website, the book was read by almost 840,000 people. Besides the web, mobile and PDF versions, the book also became available in audio format, both to listen to it online and to download and hear the narrative throughout the day. This is one of the resources that the Adventist Church has used to attract the attention and interest of new audiences, in addition to reaching people who would not have access to the material otherwise.

Each year, the project has been improved with the aim of including and reaching more and more people with the proclaimed message. Following this goal, in 2015, the Church launched and distributed the book “Viva Com Esperança” [Living with Hope]. This volume was a milestone in the history of the project, as it was the first book to be available in Brazilian Sign Language. The material in this format was designed for deaf people and produced so that it would also be an evangelistic tool. Since, in a general way, the productions directed to this audience are scarce. The goal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America was achieved by giving 20,000 copies of DVDs to deaf people, while more than 16 million copies of the physical book were also handed out to other South Americans.

In 2016, the distributed book was entitled “Esperança Viva” [Living Hope]. This literary work addressed some biblical doctrines considered confusing or controversial by society in general. Themes such as Sabbath keeping, the state of the dead, prosperity theology, the concepts of creationism as counterpart to evolutionism, and the use of “spiritual languages” in religious cults were subjects studied in this material. As usual in all editions of the project, all places and occasions are opportunities to evangelize. One of them happened with the ceremony of the Olympic Torch through the city of Rio de Janeiro. During the event, missionary books were also handed out. In total, that year, more
The year of 2017 was also important for the project, as the Hope Impact began its second decade of existence. In celebration of its first decade of work, Adventists went to the streets motivated to take a new step in the mission of continuing to carry out the message of hope to the entire field of the South American Division. From Patagonia, in the extreme south of Argentina, through northern Brazil, to Ecuador, more than two million Adventists in the eight countries of the subcontinent made efforts to hand over for free the book “Em Busca de Esperança” [Seeking Hope]. In total, 22 million units of this book left Brazil Publishing House where they were printed.

In that festive year, the distribution of the missionary book was set as it follows: in Brazil, about 16,432,000 copies of the book were handed out; in Argentina, 1,005,000 books; in Paraguay, 150,000 units were handed out, and in Uruguay, 80,000 materials reached the population. In Bolivia, 915,000 volumes of the book were distributed, and in Peru, 2,000. Adventists in Ecuador and Chile handed out 210,000 and 640,000 copies respectively. In the same year, a commemorative website was created in which the reader could also find digital copies of the books distributed in each edition of the Hope Impact project.

The following year (2018), a huge distribution took place on May 26. On that date, Adventists in South America went to the streets to hand over the population with thousands of copies of the book “O Poder da Esperança” [The Power of Hope] that addressed issues related to emotional health. The content once again met the needs of the population, reminding that each human being suffers from diseases which are difficult to diagnose and leading to deep distress. In this context, the aim of the book was to show how God has enough power to cure these diseases and to free man completely from sin. On the following day (27), health fairs and other community service initiatives took place, demonstrating compliance with the topics covered in the book. On the occasion, 15,011,345 volumes were distributed in Portuguese and 5,644,800 in Spanish.

Later, in 2019, the project was performed once again. And the book’s thematic for this missionary book on that occasion was the dimension of familiar problems and difficulties. The content was addressed to the relationship between husband and wife, parents and children, the daily dramas and dynamics of family functioning. In addition, each subject was concluded with the presentation of ways to overcome the family relationship challenges. The book was entitled “Esperança para a Família” [Hope for the Family], and its central message showed that the Author of the family is willing to restore His original plan for real happiness. In that year, a total of 21,845,485 copies of the book were handed out. Everyone participated actively in the distribution, both members and employees of the Church’s administrative units in the South American Division territory.

For the year 2020, a total of 18,990,036 books were printed. With each passing year, the program is renewed through community actions, health fairs and other initiatives that are developed during the project activities. All of this mobilization, besides the awakening of the interest of the public in the books content, brings together strengths and resources that contribute to strengthening the testimony of the Adventist Church’s message and supports the mission of spreading out the gospel to all. The distribution of books to homes, buildings, airports, bus stations, rural areas and other places, through the general effort of the organization, shows that the mission of preaching is also being accomplished through literature.

Role and Place of the Project in the Region

On several occasions, the Hope Impact is also recognized as a contribution in favor of reading, with the potential to stimulate cultural development. This way, the project has gained relevance in all countries, and was even recognized by civil authorities. In Brazil, during a South American Division leader meeting with the then Minister of Education of the country, the SAD leadership presented the numbers of Hope Impact to the head of the federal portfolio. The minister almost didn’t believe it and even asked to repeat the information. He was impressed with such “an offer of culture that the Church provides to this country.”

However, more than contributing to reading, the development of the project carries with it the impact that the Word of God has when communicated through messages that transmit hope to humanity. As a result, many lives have been transformed through this initiative, providing stories that inspire and show divine benevolence. One of these stories is the conversion of Virginia Noriega, who in 2011, in Ecuador, found a worn-out volume of the book “Ainda Existe Esperança” [There is still Hope] lying on the floor. She was going through a delicate moment in her life, where she couldn't find any other solution for her marriage, other than divorce. As she read the words written there, she understood the love that Jesus had for her. “Only the title, it was what I was looking for,” she said, remembering that moment. At the end of the reading, she asked God for mercy and looked for Bible studies. Shortly after, Virginia and her son Nelson were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
Testimonies of conversion multiply in all places where the seeds of hope have been planted through each material. In Sao Paulo, the biggest city of Brazil, it is unusual to give attention to the frequent approach of street vendors that work on street traffic lights and avenues. However, in the 2014 edition of the project, a businessman received a copy of the book “Viva com Esperança” [Living with Hope] in precisely this circumstance. Jefferson Caetano had left the Adventist Church 16 years ago, and understood that it was a call to return. He was going through a troubled moment in his life, and he saw that moment God's response to his life and family. Jefferson was baptized in 2016, and now congregates in a temple located two blocks away from his home. Like Jefferson and Virginia, there are still many others, whose stories testify of the power of Heaven leading them to the path of truth through the Hope Impact program.

**Directors**
Erton Köhler (2007-present)

**Associate Directors**
Alejandro Bullón (2007-2010); Luís Gonçalves Silva (2010-present)

**SOURCES**

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**NOTES**


3. Erton Köhler (SAD president), interviewed by Adolfo S. Suarez (SAD-SALT Rector), with content sent by Whatsapp to Carlos Flavio Teixeira (ESDA associate editor), December 17, 2019.


6. Rafael Rossi (SAD Communication Director), e-mail message to Caiky Xavier Almeida (ESDA editorial staff assistant), January 8, 2020.


11. Rafael Rossi (SAD Communication Director), e-mail message to Caiky Xavier Almeida (ESDA editorial staff assistant), January 8, 2020.

12. Ibid.

13. Rafael Rossi (SAD Communication Director), e-mail message to Júlio César Ribeiro (Ellen G. White Research Center secretary), January 9, 2020.


15. Ibid.


21. Rafael Rossi (SAD Communication Director), e-mail message to Caiky Xavier Almeida (ESDA editorial staff assistant), January 8, 2020.


23. Rafael Rossi (SAD Communication Director), e-mail message to Caiky Xavier Almeida (ESDA editorial staff assistant), January 8, 2020.

24. “The Health Fair is a one, two or more days event, open to the public of all ethnicities and beliefs, without cost or profit. It is usually organized in public places such as gyms, schools, parks, squares and shopping malls. The community is invited to participate and receive the benefits of the tests and instructions.” Luiz Fernando Sella and Daniela Tiemi Kanno, Health Fair Manual (Brasília, DF: South American Division, 2015), 15.

25. Rafael Rossi (SAD Communication Director), e-mail message to Caiky Xavier Almeida (ESDA editorial staff assistant), January 8, 2020.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

