

ADRA Peru

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The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is a global humanitarian organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now in more than 130 countries, ADRA is one of the main non-governmental aid organizations (NGO) in the world. In Peru, it operates bringing relief to the needy, promoting their integral development, and providing humanitarian aid in cases of disasters.¹ ADRA Peru's headquarters is at 770 Angamos Oeste Ave., in Zip Code 15074 in the Miraflores district in the city of Lima in the Province of Lima and the Department of Lima in the Republic of Peru.²

ADRA Peru performs its voluntary work often for people from the more vulnerable layers of society--that is, in a situation of poverty and difficulty, without sufficient income to cover their basic needs, in order to help them live more healthfully. In addition, the Agency also carries out community development and humanitarian assistance projects without distinction of political, racial, religious origin, age, sex, or ethnic background. Thus, in addition to emergency relief, its actions are developed in nine areas: (1) water, sanitation, and hygiene; (2) emergency response and management; (3) promotion of judicial assistance; (4) community health; (5) nutrition and hunger reduction; (6) guaranteeing fundamental rights, (7) support for children in vulnerable situation; (8) employment and income generation; and (9) women valorization.³

Organization

From the beginning, members of the Adventist Church were concerned about the situation of less fortunate people. For that reason, around 1874, the first Dorcas Society was established in Battle Creek, Michigan, USA. It was a community outreach church program.⁴ This society was made up of women who used to meet regularly to provide clothing, food, or money to their churches and immediate community families who needed help meeting their basic needs. Around 1880, the society changed its name to the Battle Creek Church Maternal Association, and so the Church extended its work beyond its immediate community through social and assistive programs in Chicago's outskirt neighborhoods.

After World War II, seeing the great necessities the world was facing, the Dorcas Society's humanitarian work took a big step forward. Through a program to help those in need, the Church dedicated itself even more intensely to relieve the suffering and provide social welfare. With the support of associations that invested in the purchase of trucks for the transport of goods, many local congregations created storage and distribution

centers of food, clothing, and other products.⁵ With the growth of this kind of work, in 1956, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) expanded the concept of social service by establishing a new organization: the Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service or SAWS.⁶

Since then, facing growing emergencies such as wars, earthquakes, and countless situations affecting people everywhere, relief work for victims has taken on a global dimension. Therefore, in Peru, SAWS was a few years later took the name of the Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service (Obra Filantrópica y Asistencia Social Adventista or OFASA Peru),⁷ an attached entity to the Inca Union Mission Department of Lay Activities (União Inca or UI, today the South Peruvian Union Mission [União Peruana Sul or UPS), which at that time included the countries of Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia.

The first humanitarian relief efforts from OFASA Peru were intense from the beginning since, in the same week, they had to help with two scenarios caused by strong earthly movements. The first happened on January 15, 1958, when a devastating earthquake of magnitude 6.2 on the Richter scale shook the city of Arequipa in southern Peru.⁸ The second one happened just days later when they assisted the victims of the Esmeraldas province (Ecuador) who had been affected by a strong 7.8 Mw earthquake and a tsunami that took place on January 19, 1958.⁹ Also, around that same period, they helped families from the bordering communities of Peru and Bolivia who had been affected by the drought caused by the El Niño phenomenon¹⁰ from 1957 to 1958.

Two years later (1960), OFASA-SAWS Peru took action again, distributing food and second-hand clothes for the victims of the city of Puerto Maldonado and other towns in the South East of Peru such as Huanacáné and Sicuani, all severely affected by floods.¹¹

Shortly after, in 1964, the South American Division (SAD) regulated the operation of OFASA throughout its administrative territory. These policies clearly established the philanthropic and social welfare character of this institution. In this context, in the following year, on June 2, 1965, the Inca Union Mission Board of Directors voted to register with the Peruvian government the name of Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service (OFASA Peru) as a “religious entity of social assistance.”¹² Thus, as a result of this decision, “on August 12, 1965, the SDA [in Peru], faithful to its vocation of community service, established the OFASA Peru whose priority focus was directed to social assistance work providing clothing and food to poor people affected by natural disasters or in extreme poverty.”¹³ Its first director that year was Pastor Charles C. Case, a North American citizen.¹⁴

These legal and administrative adjustments provided the institution with the necessary conditions for the operation of food provision projects, according to an agreement made with the government of the United States. Later, OFASA Peru was registered as an organization by a public deed on November 29, 1967.¹⁵ From that moment on, OFASA Peru with the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)¹⁶ became one of the most important organizations to contribute to the progress of the country through various programs and projects.

Regarding the location of its administrative headquarters, in 1968, OFASA's central offices in Peru were in the Imperial Building (Edificio Imperial) located at 1807 Jirón Washington in the Cercado de Lima district in the city of Lima.¹⁷

History

The year 1970 marked a historical milestone for OFASA Peru. In that year, OFASA had an important participation in humanitarian aid fronts for care of victims from one of the biggest disasters in the history of Peru--namely, the earthquake of May 31, 1970,¹⁸ that greatly affected the Ancash region. On this occasion, OFASA Peru was one of the main agents for immediate emergency aid and later for the reconstruction of the city. This was done through food distribution projects and programs as well as resources and work provided by USAID. Later, in August 1972, OFASA Peru moved its headquarters to 770 Angamos Oeste Ave., Miraflores, Lima.¹⁹

In September 1972, the north regional headquarters in Chiclayo was purchased. The next year, April 1973, the Social Assistance and Medical Work Center (Centro de Asistencia Social y Obra Médica) began to operate there, offering general medicine and dentistry care. At that time, the health centers and medical dispensaries in the districts of Miraflores, La Victoria, Ventanilla, Callao, and Villa El Salvador continued to provide care and were equipped with dental instruments received from the United States. In December 1979, there was an urgent need to establish a food warehouse in the city of Arequipa.²⁰ Thus, the appropriate steps were taken with USAID, and 3,000 m² land was purchased from the Llanos brothers in the Hunter sector, Arequipa, where the OFASA south headquarters in Peru was established. Also, due to the need of more space, it was necessary to rent an auxiliary office in Lima at 4170 República de Panamá Ave. in the Surquillo district.

The next two decades were very active for the NGO in Peru--so much so that it has often been considered their "glorious times." In the early 1980s, given the large amount of available resources, OFASA Peru had to make structural changes to and strengthen its Food Control. In those years, great disasters happened in the country, such as the El Niño phenomenon from 1982 to 1983.²¹ On that occasion, OFASA supported those affected by the floods in the north of the country. Likewise, given the 1983 drought, OFASA started a well drilling project in Puno.

Still in 1983, the Adventist Church decided to change its name from Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service (SAWS) to Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).²² For that reason, in January 1985, the Adventist Church leadership in Peru chose to combine the two names together: Adventist Development and Relief Agency/Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service of Peru (ADRA/OFASA Peru).²³ Later, in December 1989, the Agency's management made another important administrative decision--Namely, to include the participation of secular staff members elected by the Church Board of Directors.

The work continued to expand. In the 1990's, the Adventist Centers of Community Development (Centros Adventistas de Desarrollo Comunitario or CADEC) was established to work directly with individuals and

community groups.²⁴ In addition, ADRA/OFASA of Peru and USAID strengthened their interventions through complementary feeding and food security programs at the national level. For that purpose, they incorporated professionals from various areas related to agriculture, health, and nutrition, among others. These professionals were regularly trained in higher education institutions. Along these lines, during the years 1989 and 1992, they implemented one of the first programs to fight poverty. Then, right away, the second program established by ADRA/OFASA and USAID was the Food Security Program that was started in September 1992. During 1993 to 1996, the Operative Multianual Plan (Plan Operativo Plurianual or POMA) was prepared for this purpose, and it had the components of Maternal and Child Health, Childhood Prevention and Attention, Integrated Rural Development, Micro-enterprises and Development of Infrastructure, and Basic Services.

With the increase in the number of the Adventist Church members throughout Peru, an administrative reorganization became necessary. Thus, the former Inca Union Mission was reorganized in 1996 as the Peruvian Union Mission. This growth continued, and 10 years later, the SDA church in Peru divided its territory and created two unions: the North Peru Union Mission and the South Peru Union Mission. This way, ADRA/OFASA was under the administration of the UPS, also located at 770 Angamos Oeste Ave. in Miraflores, Lima.²⁵

At the end of the decade, in May 1999, the Board of Directors approved the request to change the name of ADRA/OFASA Peru to ADRA Peru.²⁶ And although the name ADRA Peru was already commonly used in the 1990s, the official change was voted by the SDA Church almost four years later (2003), and it was thus registered with INDECOPI. This was decided during an assembly held on April 28, 2003, with Anthony Markus Stahl serving as secretary of the ADRA/OFASA Peru Administrative Board, and they carried out the process of presenting the change of the company name to a public deed, which officially occurred on May 8, 2003.²⁷

Role and Position in the Country

A new millennium had begun, and with it, new challenges would come. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency of Peru, with more than 35 years of service to Peruvian society, was already seen as one of the main humanitarian aid agencies in the country. With a presence in almost all Peru's regions, ADRA Peru had become one of the government's main allies, and the media reported positively some of the actions carried out by the organization in favor of the needy.

Just as ADRA Peru's image was a positive one among by national institutions, foreign entities also saw it in this light and trusted their work. In this sense, once again, the Agency had the opportunity to continue partnership with USAID in the fight against poverty. In April 2001, the Plan for Andean Food Security (Plan Andino de Seguridad Alimentaria) was prepared, and it was carried out during fiscal years 2001 to 2008. At the beginning of that period, on June 23, 2001, Peru again suffered a devastating earthquake of a magnitude equal to 6.9 mb (Ms = 7.9)²⁸ followed by a tsunami that affected more than 320,000 people in the regions of Arequipa, Moquegua, and Tacna. Facing these tragedies, ADRA Peru supplied basic humanitarian aid, including 27 tons of food from

Title II of PL 480 (Public Law 480)²⁹ donated by USAID. Likewise, it distributed “blankets, drinking water, and tents for 1,000 families in the Moquegua area, about 20 kilometers south of Arequipa.”³⁰

Another event that caused a series of disasters with very complicated situations was the earthquake that took place on August 15, 2007.³¹ It shook the Ica region with a magnitude of 7.9 degrees on the Richter scale, causing the death of more than 550 people and wounding hundreds of people. Thousands of Peruvians were affected as the strong telluric movement destroyed houses, roads, churches, and health care facilities. ADRA Peru had an immediate presence, installing two aid and food posts in Pisco and Chincha, respectively. On the other hand, nearly two years later, with the financial collaboration of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and ADRA Spain, ADRA Peru delivered until November 2010 about 94 earthquake-proof houses of 120 m² and valued at US \$ 30,000.00 each. Thus, 550 people benefited from this project that sought to provide better living conditions to them.³²

In addition to emergency assistance when disasters happen, ADRA Peru has contributed to the Peruvian people through projects that generate employment and income. For that purpose, “it contributes to the comprehensive development of vulnerable and low-income entrepreneurs in the country’s marginalized urban and countryside areas” through its program called “Microfinance Portfolio.” In this program, the Institution offers “microfinance solutions and education, instilling values with responsible actions.”³³

ADRA has also been working in association with Adventist Church volunteer programs. In 2011, ADRA Peru gave further impulse to the project “Adventist Volunteering, a network of supportive action to the community and responses to emergencies in Peru.” This program implements charity service of the church members in the country. The Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service (Ação Solidária Adventista or ASA) was created in June 2011 at the SAD level. Thanks to this program and to the funds of its National Public Fundraiser “Disaster Relief and Solidarity Actions, thousands of Seventh-day Adventists in Peru have had the opportunity to participate in the mission of helping others.”³⁴

In 2014, ADRA Peru received public recognition from the Ministry of Health for promoting habits that contributed to the development of healthy habits. This distinction was awarded on June 4, 2014, for the work done during the previous year.³⁵ Still in that same year and with the support of other institutions, the Agency planted 13,000 agroforestry seedlings (12 hectares) in the Sacred Inca Valley (Valle Sagrado de los Incas) and San Gerónimo, en Cusco. With this action, ADRA Peru sought agricultural improvement in the region and, in turn, generated better environmental conditions and improved the quality of life for many rural families.

In 2015, ASA and ADRA Peru helped 199 poor people with disabilities in the Cajamarca, Junín, San Martín, and Lima regions, and provided them with biomechanical devices including wheelchairs, walkers, and crutches. In the provincial municipality of Huancayo, they donated 53 more wheelchairs.³⁶ Even in this same year, before a new episode of the El Niño phenomenon (rated with an estimated probability of strong to extraordinary), ADRA Peru trained more than 900 Volunteers of Emergency and Hope (VEE) in the regions of Tumbes, Piura,

Lambayeque, La Libertad, Ancash (Chimbote), and Lima – and in these places, Emergency Operations Centers (Centros de Operações de Emergência or COE) were installed. In addition, ADRA Peru promoted the Virtual Warehouse system that called on companies to prepare to donate emergency supplies that were needed. This was promoted in partnership with the Panamericana Television, the Army, and the Peruvian Air Force.³⁷ Thank God the probability of occurrence decreased, and the emergency response was not necessary.

On August 12, 2015, ADRA Peru celebrated its 50th anniversary of institutional history. In commemoration, a special week of morning devotions was held for its workers that was led by Dr. Mario Ochoa, vice president of ADRA International. Staff members reaffirmed their commitment to this so important social work of the Adventist Church. On that same special day, “the media and prominent journalists congratulated ADRA Peru for its work in the country.”³⁸ About a month later, on September 9, “ADRA received recognition of the Congress of the Republic of Peru, through a diploma of honor.” Finally, the commemorative activities for its 50th years concluded with a thanksgiving ceremony in which God and the main development partners of ADRA Peru were recognized and thanked. The main message was delivered by the SAD president, Pastor Erton Köhler, who recognized that “ADRA Peru was, is, and will continue to be in God’s hands.”³⁹

Until the end of 2015, ADRA Peru had “its headquarters in Lima, seven regional offices and was developing humanitarian programs and projects in 14 departments of Peru, its thematic lines being microfinance, health, nutrition, infrastructure development and basic services, environment, governance, education and emergencies.”⁴⁰

In the summer of 2016, ADRA Peru, with its team of professionals and a group of 800 young volunteers from the Caleb Mission Project,⁴¹ volunteered to help the population of Pucallpa in the prevention of dengue, chikungunya, and Zika. Thus, in a single day, 2,086 houses were visited in the districts of Manantay and Callería in which they collected approximately 10 tons of useless items.⁴²

Continuing with its purpose of serving humanity, in 2019, ADRA Peru participated in the “Sheltering Houses” project and delivered 50 houses to the residents of the Palccoyo community. In this region, located 4,200 meters above sea level, the temperature reaches 20° degrees Celsius below zero. According to a report by the Peruvian Ministry of Health (Ministério da Saúde Peruano or MINSa), in 2018, approximately 600 people lost their lives due to low temperatures. This project had the support of the Credit Bank of Peru (BCP) and the Panamericana Television.⁴³

In 2020, facing the dire situation in the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government took preventive measures to contain the spread of the disease. For this reason, ADRA Peru, together with the Wiese Foundation and the support of Panamericana Television, launched the fundraising campaign in April called “We are together,”⁴⁴ delivering food kits and vouchers for the purchase of a basic food basket, among other assistance actions.⁴⁵ In addition, the Agency, through the “funds of its National Public Collection ‘Aid for Disasters and Solidarity Actions,’ [delivered] with the support of its emergency volunteers and in coordination with the Ministry

of the Interior [of Peru], baskets of basic emergency food for 10 days, to vulnerable families who did not [receive] any type of financial assistance in different parts of the country.”⁴⁶

In conclusion, the history of ADRA Peru has shown that this institution has consistently helped, cared for, taught, and served as many people as possible. In everything it does, ADRA Peru seeks to fulfill the purpose of “serving humanity so that everyone lives as God wants them to. With justice, compassion and love.”

List of Directors⁴⁷

C. C. Case (1965-1967); Henry Baerg (1967-1969); L. J. Patton (1970-1977); Dale Kongorski (1978); William H. Jenson (1979-1981); Dwight Taylor (1982-1988); Edwin Baumgartner (1989-1992); Heriberto Müller (1993-1998); Ronald Kuhn (1998-2000) Anthony Stahl (2001-2003); Douglas Havens (2005); Walter Britton (2006-2010); Luis Barba (2011-2013); Plinio Vergara (2013-present).⁴⁸

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