



ADRA Honduras headquarters.

Photo courtesy of Honduras Union Mission.

ADRA Honduras

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ADRA Honduras (ADRA OFASA de Honduras) provides humanitarian assistance, food security, economic development, basic health, basic education, and emergency response in Honduras. It works closely with its

parent company (ADRA International).

A Look at the Beginnings and Impact on Society

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Honduras carried out its first humanitarian and development actions in an extraofficial manner in 1979, functioning as a department of the Honduras Adventist Mission under the figure of Seventh-day Adventist World Service (SAWS). It was during the administration of Pastor Reynaldo Canales as president of the mission and of Engineer Armengol Garrido, associate director of SAWS, that these actions were carried out. On March 29, 1984, according to "Resolution No. 39 of the Property Registry," the legal status of the institution was registered, adopting the name, *Obra Filantrópica y Asistencia Social Adventista* ("SDA Welfare and Philanthropic Work") of Honduras (OFASA de Honduras). The offices at the time of legalization were in Valle de Angeles, Francisco Morazán, Honduras, with Carlos Molina as the first countrywide director.

The institution was organized with the main purposes: "[distribute] food, clothing, and medicine received from international organizations; provide social assistance to communities in accordance to their economic possibilities in respect to clothing, food, health, and education; establish food distribution centers; provide school snacks; assist vulnerable populations such as the elderly, mothers, and pregnant women; establish health services to provide preventive and curative services; establish mobile medical clinics; cooperate with the Honduras Ministry of Public Health; promote and execute community development programs and care for disaster victims..." and others.¹

Early SAWS Projects

During 1979-1983, SAWS developed two important projects. The first was oriented to farmers in the Valle de Ángeles area; agricultural skills were strengthened through technical support, provision of supplies, and financing of target production families. The second was oriented to the issue of family health and child nutrition and was developed in the city of Tegucigalpa and areas surrounding the central district. In 1983, this program was duplicated in the department of Lempira. Both projects were funded by the United States government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).²

Adopting the Name "ADRA OFASA de Honduras"

The Adventist World Church changed its approach to social assistance provided to populations. Therefore, in 1983, SAWS adopted a new name to reflect its new initiatives to assist in the development of communities and not to only assist socially and provide relief response in emergencies, as it had done before. The new name adopted by the Adventist World Church was Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).³ On May 22, 1996, to comply with ADRA's new policies and development approach, the Adventist church in Honduras

changed the name of SAWS Honduras to “ADRA OFASA de Honduras.”⁴

Answer to the Devastation of Hurricane Mitch

At the end of October 1998, Honduras was hit and devastated by Category 5 Hurricane Mitch, which left 7,007 dead and 8,052 missing.⁵ According to the UN, Hurricane Mitch generated the worst disaster in Latin America in the last 200 years. Hurricane Mitch represented over 20 years of social and economic setbacks for Honduras, which further increased the levels of poverty and social exclusion that, at the time, afflicted over 60% of the nation’s population.⁶

Through ADRA OFASA de Honduras, the Adventist Church managed both national and international resources to assist sheltered people nationwide who had been affected and evacuated. Humanitarian aid consisted of the distribution of hygiene items, mats, dry food rations, and clothing among other items.

In the context of this mega disaster, the construction of three housing projects was managed in the departments of Choluteca and Francisco Morazán. The first project consisted of 417 houses in Amaratéca valley called “Villa El Porvenir,” which benefited over 2,085 people. The second project consisted of 19 houses in La Escondida in the municipality of Valle de Ángeles, which benefited over 95 people. The third project consisted of 20 houses in the community of El Limón de La Cerca in the municipality of Choluteca. These projects permitted the relocation of families who had lost their homes due to floods and landslides caused by Hurricane Mitch. These projects were made possible thanks to the donations of friendly donor countries, the Seventh-day Adventist Church of North America, volunteers from the United States of America, in-kind contributions from the Honduran government, non-government organizations, and others.

Other Development Projects

Microfinance

In June 1999, a development project with a focus on microcredit in the central district and surrounding areas was implemented. The goal was to provide financing to vulnerable women, who were heads of households with no access to credit in Honduras’s banking system. This project’s purposes were to contribute to the integral development of communities and to provide opportunities to people with limited resources. This would help people develop economic activities to increase their income and improve their quality of life. This project helped these women, who faced the difficulty of reactivating their micro-enterprises, and others, who had not totally lost their businesses but had their productivity affected.

The microfinance program was initially funded by the *Cooperación Europea*, ADRA Germany, ADRA Spain, and the Inter-American Division (IAD). Later, in 2003, monetary support was received from the Canadian

International Development Agency (CIDA). The microfinance program is a comprehensive economic development service that benefits over 3,500 micro-entrepreneurs (80% women) in various departments of the country with financing products to address areas of commerce, service, small industry, home improvement, working capital, agricultural activities, and others. By 2019, the program had an active loan portfolio of \$3,300,000 USD.

Basic Health

Between 2002-2012, a dental health program was initiated with the purpose of improving oral health for the poor people in the central district and surrounding areas. Dental hygiene, diagnoses, dental treatment services, and preventive and corrective services were provided. The program was initially supported with funds from CIDA, ADRA Germany, USAID, and ADRA OFASA de Honduras.

Food Safety

In 2004, USAID approved a five-year project called "Development Assistance Program in support of subsistence farmers" (DAP Project Title II PL 450) for \$15,000,000 USD. This project contributed to reducing food insecurity in 11 municipalities and 129 rural communities in the department of Santa Bárbara. Benefited families fell within the 60% poverty rate. Components of the project included training in agricultural areas, administration of natural resources, strengthening the community, and basic health for mothers, primarily those with children under five years of age.

A total of 81,101 people were assisted. There were 8,360 men who participated in natural resources management, of which 6,132 received agricultural inputs, training in good agricultural practices, and continuous technical assistance. Also benefited were 60,710 mothers, who participated in the "food for development" program.

During 2007-2009, an agricultural irrigation project was implemented in 24 communities of Santa Bárbara. The United States' Millennium Challenge Corporation funded the project and provided \$1,000 USD per community. The main goal was to improve the levels of productivity, market access, and income generation for local producers through the construction of 15 community irrigation systems, which benefited over 1,350 people directly and 5,500 indirectly.

ADRA OFASA de Honduras concentrates its actions on sustainable agricultural development in over 10 municipalities located in part of the Central American Dry Corridor. In 2019, over 2,500 vulnerable families in the departments of Francisco Morazán and the northern sector of Choluteca were assisted. Some main actions taken were constructing water reservoirs for irrigation, installing drip irrigation systems, reforesting micro-basin recharge areas, diversifying livelihoods resilient to climate change, training and technical assistance, strengthening and promoting good habits of personal hygiene and family nutrition, and others. The main

donors were the World Food Program, USAID's Office of Food for Peace, ADRA International, and the Honduran Secretary of Agriculture and Livestock.⁷

Artisan Women of Ojojona

During 2009-2011, a project focused on strengthening the micro-entrepreneurial capacities of artisan women of the municipality of Ojojona, Francisco Morazán, was implemented. This project was carried out under the management of ADRA Spain and with the cooperation of the Queen Sofía Foundation for a value of \$308,000 USD. The project directly benefited 75 families by providing a suitable place to store, display, and market their handcrafted clay products. Training in customer service and micro-business administration was also offered to strengthen the skills of artisan women.

Recurrent Drought

During 2016-2019, ADRA OFASA de Honduras administered over \$500,000 USD from different United Nations agencies (UNICEF, World Food Program, Pan American Health Organization) for the revival of livelihoods, cash transfers, training on issues of water and basic sanitation, well restoration to improve access to and quality of water for human consumption, and others. These humanitarian actions were carried out within the framework of the United Nations' Central Emergency Response Fund, benefiting some 5,000 families affected by droughts which caused the loss of 80% of their crops.

Construction of ADRA Facilities

On September 11, 2001, ADRA OFASA de Honduras inaugurated its main office. During the opening ceremony, ADRA IAD Director Wally Amundson, ADRA International President Ralph Waltz, and the Honduras Japanese ambassador and his secretary were present. First Lady of the Republic of Honduras Mrs. Mary de Flores had been invited for this important event, but she could not attend due to the crisis generated by the attacks on the twin towers at the World Trade Center in New York City.

The construction of the new facilities was made possible by the actions and efforts of Pastor Walter Britton, who arranged a donation of \$35,000 USD from ADRA International to purchase the property, and a donation of \$20,000 USD from the Embassy of Japan. The building was constructed on a property of the Japan Embassy secretary, who agreed to sell it at a good price with the understanding that ADRA would use part of the building for community service. The building is located in Colonia El Prado, La Salud Street, in front of the Instituto Hondureño de la Niñez y la Familia (IHNFA) in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The land has an area of 738 square meters and is worth \$205,000 USD. The building has three floors, a terrace, two parking areas, and a garden area, totaling 1,684 square meters of construction valued at \$800,000 USD.

Another building was constructed in Colonia El Prado in 2004-2005 and inaugurated in 2006. This new construction of 950 square meters was intended to provide a training center and a warehouse valued at \$310,000 USD.⁸

Time of Crisis and Changes

When the USAID Development Assistance Program Santa Bárbara project was completed, ADRA OFASA de Honduras reduced its staff from 120 to less than 20 employees. This drastic reduction in staff and operations was due to a number of external factors such as the coup d'état that led to the overthrow of President Manuel Zelaya at the end of 2009, the global economic crisis caused by the problems in the real estate market in the United States, and cooperating agencies refocusing development aid mostly to countries in Africa and Asia.

In the first months of 2012, under a new administration, challenging decisions were made, which forced ADRA OFASA de Honduras to reinvent and refocus its efforts with the aim of preventing closure of its operations. Thanks to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to the work and commitment of all the staff, to the strategic decisions made by the executive officers, to the support of the members of the board of directors, and to Honduras Union Mission, the agency avoided closure, strengthened development, and grew its operations in a sustainable way.

Some of the decisions taken were to strengthen and expand the operations of financing services in the departments of Comayagua, La Paz, and Choluteca as the main source of self-sustainability; to promote community service initiatives with Adventist churches and strengthen relationships with the local church and administrators; and to position itself in geographical areas and in sectoral issues aligned with the priorities of the Country Vision 2010-2038 and the Nation Plan 2010-2022 and with the programmatic priorities of the cooperating organizations in Honduras.

In 2019, ADRA OFASA de Honduras had 55 permanent employees, a main office, and two regional microfinance offices in Comayagua and Choluteca. In addition, it had three offices for projects: one in the city of San José, Choluteca; one in the city of Reitoca, Francisco Morazán; and one in the city of Curarén, Francisco Morazán.

Strategic Role and Influence in the Country

ADRA OFASA de Honduras is an active member of the Regional Humanitarian Network (Redhum) of Honduras, coordinating emergency response actions along with different humanitarian personnel from the country's civil society. The agency is affiliated with the Federation of Private Development Organizations of Honduras (FOPRIDEH) and, in 2016-2019, formed part of the board of directors.⁹ It is also affiliated with the Microfinance Network of Honduras (REDMICROH). The executive director, Pastor Luis Trundle, was appointed member of the oversight board for the period 2019-2020. Additionally, ADRA OFASA de Honduras is an active member of several spaces and sectorial tables such as the National Risk Management Board, the Food and Nutrition

Security Bureau, and the Water and Basic Sanitation Bureau. It is also an active member in the coordination of the Permanent Contingency Commission (COPECO) of Honduras's humanitarian efforts.

ADRA OFASA de Honduras is also a member of the Program Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) of ADRA International global network. By 2019, it had framework cooperation agreements with the Directorate of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (DICTA), the Forestry Conservation Institute (ICF), the Secretary of Agriculture and Livestock, and several NGOs, including World Vision Honduras, Help in Action, Quality of Life, and Doctors Without Borders. ADRA OFASA de Honduras maintains direct communication with its followers, friends, donors, volunteers, and general public through its website and through accounts on social media networks.

List of Directors

Carlos Molina (1984-1986); Jose Alberto Moran (1987); Richard Howell (1988-1989); Oscar Villeda and Armengol Garrido (1990-1993); Nelson Tabares (1994-1995); Walter Britton (1996-2007); Claudio Sandoval (2007-2011); Luis Trundle (2011-).

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1. Legal status of OFASA de Honduras, 1984, Chapter II: Object, Article 2-7.
2. Historic memories of the institutional profile of ADRA Honduras.
3. "Our History," *ADRA*, accessed 2019, <https://adra.org/about-adra/history/>.
4. Certification of the Secretary of Interior and Justice 091-96.
5. CEPAL Report 1999, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.
6. Ginés Suárez and Walter J. Sánchez, *Desastres, Riesgo y Desarrollo en Honduras*, January 2012, accessed 2019, https://www.undp.org/content/dam/honduras/docs/publicaciones/Desastres_Riesgo_y_Developmento_en_Honduras.pdf.
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9. "FOPRIDEH Celebró con Éxito XLVIII Asamblea General Ordinaria," *FOPRIDEH: Federación de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo de Honduras*, accessed 2019, <https://www.observatoriodescentralizacion.org/foprideh-celebro-con-exito-xlviii-asamblea-general-ordinaria/>.

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