

June 20 - World Refugee Day

The United Nations General Assembly (UN) in 2000 defined that, as of that year, June 20 would be the date for raising awareness of the refugee situation across the globe. Whether for reasons of war, religious or racial persecution, oppression of a government or group, or for any other reason that makes an individual give up everything he has and risk his or her life to seek shelter in another country, the number of refugees has grown dramatically in recent years, reaching almost 26 million people today, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Added to these, there are still more than 40 million who are called internal refugees (who do not cross an international border) and 3.5 million who have applied for asylum in a neighboring country.

Next to us Brazilians the most critical and well-known situation is that of the Venezuelans, who face a serious economic crisis and fit, for the most part, in the category of asylum requisition. In 2017, Brazil registered almost 34,000 requests for refuge, a number that increased to 80,000 the following year. It is as if, per day, more than 200 people cross the border trying to settle here.

With the urgent challenge of giving support to the Venezuelan brothers, the Scouts of Brazil launched in August 2018 a crowdfunding project to take the Scout Method to refugees and migrants in the capital Boa Vista. During the seven months of Integra Roraima Project, activities were already carried out in four autonomous sections and we had some scout promises. More than that, the project has met the needs of the Venezuelan people in articulating partnerships with other service organizations and the adequacy of the Scout Method for the culture and traditions of that specific public.

In addition to offering an opportunity for educational activities in Roraima, a second step of the Project aims to work in the interiorization of refugees. Some young people who passed through the Integra Project are being redirected to other regions of Brazil through *Operation Acolhida* and are encouraged to maintain contact with the Scout Movement, having in the destination city a reference group of people in case of need.