

## SÉRGIO VIEIRA DE MELLO CHAIR

REPORT

20 YEARS















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This report was prepared on the basis of information provided by the De Mello Chair universities. The data was collected during the months of June and July 2023 by means of a structured online questionnaire, covering the second half of 2022 and the first half of 2023.

UNHCR Brazil would like to thank all the universities that are members of the Mello Chair for their efforts on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, and the stateless population in Brazil.

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#### ANNUAL REPORT

# 2023

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## Presentation

It is with great joy that, when I took over the Representation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Brazil in January 2023, I saw the incredible scale reached by the Sérgio Vieira de Mello Chair (De Mello Chair) 20 years after its creation. At the time, the Chair was born out of the sensitivity and experience already accumulated in Brazilian academia about the challenges faced by refugees and stateless people around the world and in Brazil and the understanding that more needed to be done to support them in their search for protection and better solutions. The De Mello Chair was born inspired by the career of the honourable Brazilian who lends it its name, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, who died after a tragic attack in Baghdad on August 19, 2003.

In 2023, the Chair will complete two decades of work, now with the participation of 40 higher education institutions (HEIs) from all regions of the country. The level of engagement - which continues to grow - of excellent HEIs in favour of the refugee population in Brazil is a cause for celebration, whether in teaching, research, outreach, or through policies to facilitate admission to universities, or even advocacy actions to improve services through sectoral public policies.

In an increasingly complex world full of multi-causal conflicts that emerge and persist in all regions, there is an urgent need to step up efforts to ensure that no one is left behind, particularly forcibly displaced people. The latest edition of the UNHCR Annual Report, "Global Trends," launched in June 2023, indicates that the number of forcibly displaced people fleeing wars, violence, persecution, and human rights violations has risen to 108.4 million. This means that 1 in 74 people in the world are in a situation of forced displacement, a 21% increase in the number of people in this situation between the end of 2021 and the end of 2022. During this period, there were 35.3 million refugees, 5.4 million asylum seekers, 5.2 million people with other international protection needs, and 62.5 million internally displaced people. This significant increase is mainly due to the continuation of situations such as those in Venezuela, Ukraine, and Syria. Furthermore, there is a need for

further reflection on the correlation between climate change, socioenvironmental disasters, and human displacement.

In this year of the 2nd Global Refugee Forum and the inauguration of the Cartagena +40 process, the work of the De Mello Chair in supporting refugees, stateless people, and others in need of international protection deserves to be highlighted and celebrated as an international best practice. The De Mello Chair in Brazil is a regional and global benchmark and has become the standard for the UNHCR's engagement with universities in support of these people. And it couldn't be any different. In this report, we will see the results of the work of this network of universities, which, in partnership with the UNHCR, continues to strengthen the search for protection and solutions for the thousands of people in need of international protection.

Over the next few years in Brazil, I hope to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation with each of the universities that are part of the Sérgio Vieira de Mello Chair further. My sincerest thanks to everyone involved in this partnership!

Brasilia, October 2023.

DAVIDE TORZILLI

UNHCR Representative in Brazil

# Introduction and objectives

In 2003, UNHCR started an academic dissemination and training program in Latin America to strengthen the learning of university professors and students in the areas of International Refugee Law, International Human Rights Law, and International Humanitarian Law. The project initiative was named "Cátedra Sérgio Vieira de Mello" in honour of the Brazilian Sérgio Vieira de Mello, who died in Iraq in 2003 in an attack on the UN headquarters in that country, after spending a large part of his professional career at the United Nations working with refugees as a UNHCR official.

Over the last 20 years, the De Mello Chair has been a key player in ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers have access to rights and services in Brazil. It is motivated by the strengthening of an inclusive approach, protective education, and applied research to consolidate hosting refugees in the university environment and host communities. The De Mello Chair's engagement is, thus, multifaceted and allied with the *whole-of-society approach* that underlies the Global Compact on Refugees.

The De Mello Chair is currently made up of 40 HEIs spread across 13 federal units in the country, and its initiatives generally fall under the following pillars:



**TEACHING, INCLUDING ACCESS TO HIGHER** - The De Mello Chair promotes teaching and disseminating topics related to people's forced displacement, mainly the teaching of International Refugee Law, International Humanitarian Law, and International Human Rights Law. This axis is the basis for the creation of the De Mello Chair, and it is through teaching that the academic training and strengthening of the knowledge of teachers and students in these disciplines takes place. Through this axis, the De Mello Chair also promotes access to higher education for refugees and asylum seekers, supporting this population not only with specific admission calls and university permanence programs, but by offering support with the revalidation of diplomas as well.



**RESEARCH** - The De Mello Chair's research axis encourages the dissemination of topics related to the protection of refugees and their local integration in Brazil. The De Mello Chair seeks to achieve this goal through curricular and extracurricular activities, including conferences, seminars, and academic publications. It has been able to generate quantitative and qualitative data and provide a greater understanding of the sociocultural dynamics that impact local integration, contributing with evidence for the formulation of public policies aimed at this population, providing greater visibility to the issue of refugee protection within the academic community, civil society, the private sector, and the host community.

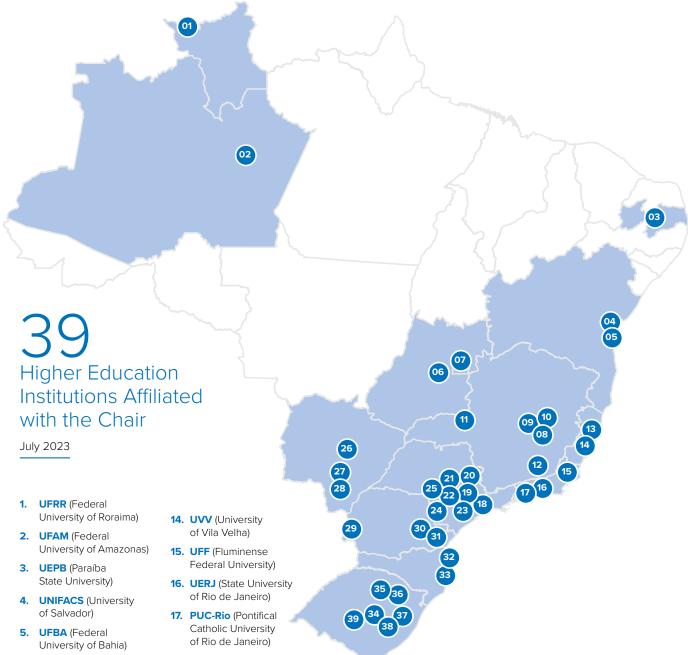


1. UFES, Vice-Rectory of Outreach, available at: <a href="https://bit.ly/47dwe0z">bit.ly/47dwe0z</a>>. Last accessed on August 7, 2022. ToFor more information, see the National University Outreach Policy, Available at: <a href="https://bit.ly/477BlKr">bit.ly/477BlKr</a>>. Last accessed on August 7, 2022.

**OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES** - University outreach is the interdisciplinary process that promotes the sharing of knowledge acquired through teaching and research at the university with the external public. It can be defined as the articulation of scientific knowledge acquired in the academic environment with the needs of the community in which the university is inserted, interacting with, and transforming social reality!. This process directly impacts the lives of refugees, through which the De Mello Chair guarantees a network of support and assistance and promotes greater local integration with the host communities. Among the university outreach projects carried out by the De Mello Chair in favour of the refugee population are health services in general, mental health and psychosocial support, Portuguese language teaching, legal aid, and labour integration..



**ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICYMAKING** - universities also advocate for strengthening the response of governments and seek to encourage authorities, non-governmental partners, and society in general to adopt practices that guarantee the protection of refugees at municipal, state, and/or national levels. Experience shows that academic institutions can contribute beyond traditional academic topics, since they have the capacity and technical resources to facilitate discussions on the most varied topics involving refugees.



- **6. UFG** (Federal University of Goiás)
- UnB (University of Brasilia)
- 8. PUC-Minas (Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais)
- UFMG (Federal University of Minas Gerais)
- **10. FJP** (João Pinheiro Foundation)
- **11. UFU** (Federal University of Uberlândia)
- **12. UFJF** (Federal University of Juiz de Fora)
- **13. UFES** (Federal University of Espírito Santo)

- **18. UNISANTOS** (Catholic University of Santos)
- **19. PUC-SP** (Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo)
- 20. UFSCAR (Federal University of São Carlos)
- 21. UNICAMP (State University of Campinas)
- **22. UFABC** (Federal University of ABC)
- **23. USP** (University of São Paulo)
- **24. UNIFESP** (Federal University of São Paulo)
- **25. FADI** (Sorocaba Law School)

- **26. UFMS** (Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul)
- **27. UEMS** (State University of Mato Grosso do Sul)
- **28. UFGD** (Federal University of Grandes Dourados)
- **29. UNILA** (Federal University of Latin American Integration)
- **30. UFPR** (University Federal do Paraná)
- **31. UniCuritiba** (University of Curitiba)
- **32. UNIVALI** (University of Vale do Itajaí)

- **33. UFSC** (Federal University of Santa Catarina)
- **34. PUC-RS** (Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul)
- **35. UPF** (University of Passo Fundo)
- **36. UCS** (University of Caxias do Sul)
- **37. UNISINOS** (University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos)
- **38. UFRGS** (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul)
- **39. UFSM** (Federal University of Santa Maria)

The De Mello Chair is, therefore, a crucial part of local protection networks. Through this network, the action of HEIs for the benefit of the refugee population is coordinated and constantly strengthened. Within the framework of the De Mello Chair, HEIs can channel efforts to protect refugees by sharing information and good practices. Each university acts through undergraduate and/or postgraduate programs in the areas of teaching, research, and outreach as to strengthen an inclusive approach, protective education, and applied research, in order to consolidate hosting people in situations of forced displacement in university life and guarantee means of peaceful coexistence with the local community, including through advocacy actions.



## **TEACHING**

Through the teaching axis, the De Mello Chair aims to teach and disseminate topics related to people's forced displacement, specifically the teaching of International Refugee Law, International Humanitarian Law, and International Human Rights Law. It is through teaching that academic training and the qualification of teachers and students in these subjects are possible. It is also within this scope that refugees and asylum seekers can have facilitated access to higher education, with the promotion of specific admission and re-admission academic notices aimed at the refugee population, the offering of permanence initiatives, and support with the revalidation of diplomas.

#### COURSES

Between July 2022 and July 2023, the De Mello Chair offered 291 courses on forced displacement in its undergraduate and/or postgraduate curricula. Approximately 184 courses were or are offered at the undergraduate level and another 107 at the postgraduate level, reaching approximately 7,060 Brazilian students, refugees, and migrants.

Through the De Mello Chair, it is possible to reach a wide range of students and courses, showing the interdisciplinarity of the topic of forced displace-

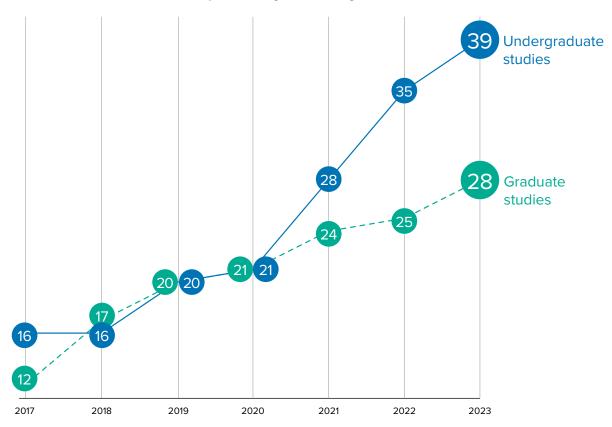
ment and the Chair's efforts to promote the subject. At the moment, courses related to the topic are offered in the following programs: Anthropology, Agricultural Sciences, Social Sciences, Applied Social Sciences, Communication, Demography, Law, Economics, Geography, Public Management, History, Journalism, Literature, Linguistics, Medicine, Pedagogy, Contemporary International Politics, Psychology, International Relations, Collective Health, International Security, Social Work, Sociology and Technology and Sustainability. All the HEIs in the De Mello Chair offered courses in their undergraduate programs, and 28 of them offered graduate courses.



"Introductory Concepts on Asylum and Studies on the Brazilian Borders Dynamics," course, taught by the coordinator of the UFMS De Mello Chair in partnership with UFES.

© UFES De Mello Chair

#### Chairs with courses related to the topic at undergraduate and graduate levels



During this period, PUC-Rio offered, for the first time, an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental postgraduate course entitled "Asylum and Refugee Populations: Multiple Perspectives." The course was jointly conceived, organized, and taught by 13 professors from five PUC-Rio departments, including the Institute of International Relations (IRI), the Department of Social Work, the Department of Law, the Department of Literature, and the Department of Psychology.

In partnership with De Mello Chair universities, UNHCR held training sessions on Humanitarian Journalism. The sessions took place in person between October 2022 and May 2023 at PUC-Minas, UFRR, UFSC, UFBA, Unifacs, and UNILA, and more than 860 students participated in the activities. The trainings were broadcast simultaneously to students from other universities, who could participate remotely, covering all five Brazilian regions. The UN-HCR works closely with journalists and media outlets worldwide, encouraging the production of content on forced displacement. The workshops help future journalists learn more about the technical terms and specificities of humanitarian news coverage and make them more sensitive to the situation. In Belo Horizonte and Florianópolis, Venezuelan journalist Carlos Escalona, who worked for a public television station in his home country and now works in the communications field in Brazil, told the students about his journey. He argues that a broader understanding of the humanitarian context of forced displacement helps to "break down barriers and build bridges" between people..

"The course is essential, not just for universities, but for the community as a whole, to eliminate many of the prejudices about refugees who come in search of protection to Brazil. To tell the stories of these people, *our* story, is important to get this message across."

## Carlos Escalona Venezuelan journalist

#### **FACILITATED ADMISSION**

Facilitated admission to higher education for forcibly displaced people is one of the De Mello Chair's initiatives that aim to intensify local integration processes and take into account the difficulties inherent to forced displacement. Refugees are often forced to leave their countries of origin without bringing with them documents proving their educational background and/or previous admission to HEls. In addition, language barriers are frequent in the first years of integration into their new host communities. In this sense, the De Mello Chair seeks to make it easier for refugees to meet some of the requirements for admission to higher education.

Between 2022 and 2023, **22 universities** had a facilitated admission procedure for undergraduate and graduate programs, **17** of which had a specific call for applications for refugees and/or other people in need of international protection. The De Mello Chair was able to ensure 962 specific vacancies for refugees and asylum seekers in undergraduate courses.

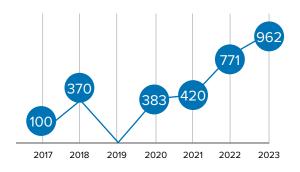
Currently, **613** refugees and asylum seekers are undergraduate students, **39** are master's students, and **12** are doctoral students. Thus, between 2022 and 2023, the De Mello Chair provided access to higher education to **over 650** refugees and/or other people in need of international protection. However, the number of students belonging to these groups who are regularly enrolled may be higher. Some universities have reported that the current online registration system does not allow for this classification, making it challenging to identify these people in the academic environment.



Call for applications in Creole by the Refugee Students and Humanitarian Visa Holders Hosting Program at UFRGS.

© UFRGS De Mello Chair

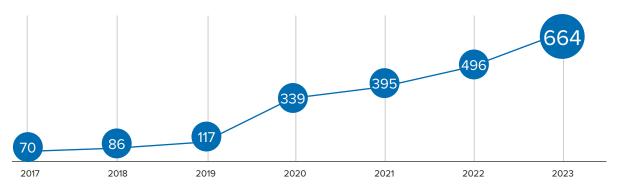
### Vacancies for refugees and asylum seekers in undergraduate courses



#### HEIs with facilitated admission to undergraduate and graduate courses



#### Students enrolled at HEIs per year

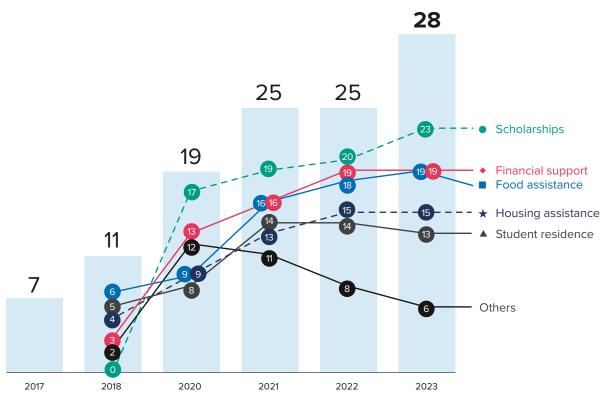


The UFSM Technical and Higher Education Access Program for refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and migrants in vulnerable situations was established by Resolution 041/2016 with the following criteria: expanding the possibility of access for this population, facilitating documentation as proof of high school education or equivalent, applying, in practice, what is already provided for in Law 9474/97 and waiving the need for the recognition of high school education through the State Secretariats of Education; approval with a minimum score in the National High School Examination; and the possibility of creating 5% supplementary vacancies in all courses, upon authorization from the respective commissions. UFSM's policy had been paralyzed for three years but was resumed in 2022. Similarly, UFRGS, UNISANTOS, and UEPB reported that they had suspended processes during the pandemic but are resuming these projects. In addition, UFSC, UFU, and UEMS reported that new facilitated admission processes have been approved at their respective universities.

#### UNIVERSITY PERMANENCE PROGRAMS

Many people need more resources to pay for accommodation, food, and transport to stay at the university. To avoid an increase in drop-out rate, some universities have supported students on various fronts, such as financial aid, scholarships, housing assistance, vacancies in student residences, and support with transport assistance, among others. With this holistic approach in mind, UFBA runs a Program to Assist and Support Students from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds. UNISANTOS, for its part, has a student monitoring project, contacting students and coordinators of the courses they are enrolled in to assess ways to assist them.





Among the universities affiliated with the De Mello Chair<sup>3</sup>, several support permanence initiatives, such as the ones below:

	Scholarships <sup>1</sup>	Financial	Food	Housing	Student
Des Minne	_	assistance	assistance <sup>2</sup>	assistance	Residence
Puc-Minas	•				
PUC-Rio	•	•			
UCS	•				
UEMS	•	•		*	
UEPB	•	•		*	
UFABC	•	•		*	
UFAM					
UFBA	•	•		*	
UFES	•	•		*	
UFF	•	•		*	<b>A</b>
UFG	•	•		*	<b>A</b>
UFJF	•	•		*	<b>A</b>
UFMG	•	•		*	<b>A</b>
UFMS	•	•		*	<b>A</b>
UFPR	•	•		*	<b>A</b>
UFRR	•	•		*	<b>A</b>
UFSC	•	<b>*</b>		*	<b>A</b>
UFSM	•	<b>*</b>		*	
UNICAMP	•	•		*	<b>A</b>
UniCuritiba	•				
UNIFESP	•	•			<b>A</b>
UNILA	•	•		*	<b>A</b>
UNISANTOS	•	•			
UNIVALI					<b>A</b>
UPF	•				
Total	23	19	19	15	13

- 1. Scholarships: These include scientific initiation scholarships and others that cover tuition fees. Private universities reported awarding scholarships of up to 100%. In contrast, some universities mentioned their own notice to grant scholarships for refugees, asylum seekers, stateless people, and vulnerable immigrants.
- **2. Food assistance:** Mostly through the provision of free meals in university restaurants (RUs).
- **3.** FJP, UFRGS, FJP, UFRGS, and UNISINOS reported other permanence programs that fall out of the five categories presented.

#### **DIPLOMA REVALIDATION**

De Mello Chair has been working to promote the establishment of revalidation procedures that are sensitive to the specific situation of the refugee population. This also means considering issues linked to language barriers or the absence of supporting documents for their respective academic qualifications. Diploma revalidation allows refugees to find better job opportunities and achieve self-sufficiency. In addition, by being able to pursue their life projects and educational/professional aspirations, refugees can actively contribute to the development of their host communities.

In Brazil, in order for a diploma issued by a foreign institution to be recognized as valid, the person concerned must submit a series of documents to a public university, which will be responsible for analysing whether or not that diploma can be equivalent to a valid curriculum in the country. In this sense, the HEIs affiliates with the De Mello Chair create revalidation procedures explicitly aimed at the refugee population so that, ultimately, these people

can continue with their studies and any academic aspirations, as well as access job vacancies that match the professional training obtained in their countries of origin.

Recognizing the difficulties faced by those who were forcibly displaced in search of international protection, often without personal documents, article 14 of the Ministry of Education's Regulatory Ordinance No. 22, from 13 December 2016, provides that people recognized as refugees in Brazil are entitled to a facilitated process for the revalidation of diplomas so that this population has the opportunity to keep their academic achievements previously obtained. In addition, the states of São Paulo (Law No. 16.685/2018), Rio de Janeiro (Law No. 8.020/2018), and Paraná (Law No. 19.830/2019) have passed state laws that exempt refugees living in their respective states from paying fees for the revalidation of diplomas at public universities. Other universities are advocating with university councils or local and state political representatives to approve similar laws to extend the benefit of free diploma revalidation.

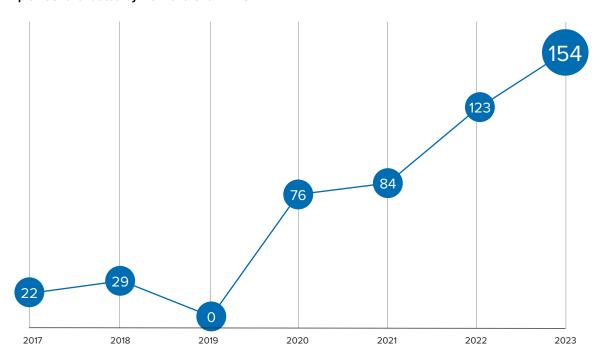
As a result of cooperation between the UNHCR and the De Mello Chairs, the "Revalidation of Refugee Diplomas: Challenges and Opportunities" report was launched on the current system for validating diplomas in Brazil, aiming to present the issue and assess possible improvements. In 2023, the Ministry of Education (MEC) published Ordinance 1.051/2023 regulating the issue.



The study was launched during the National Debate on Migration, Asylum and Statelessness Week, organized by the Ministry of Justice. Access the document using the code above.

© UFF De Mello Chair

#### Diplomas revalidated by De Mello Chair HEIs



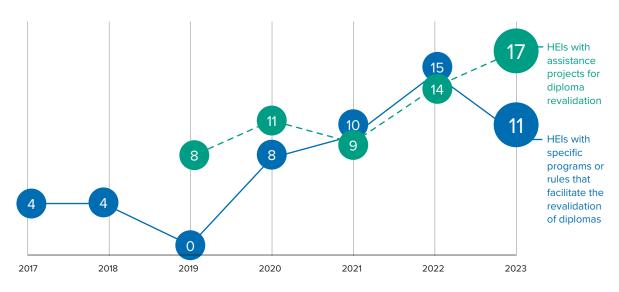
Between 2022 and 2023, 154 diplomas of refugees, stateless persons, asylum seekers, or those holding humanitarian visas were revalidated by the HEIs affiliated with the De Mello Chair. The universities with the highest number of diplomas revalidated this year were UFPR (67), UFF (36), and UFMS (27).

The revalidated diplomas referred to a variety of courses, including Administration, Architecture and Urbanism, Biology, Biological Sciences, Computer Sciences, Social Sciences, Law and Legal and Social Sciences, Economics and Economic Sciences, Energy Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, Telecommunications Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Journalism, Mathematics, Veterinary Medicine, Nutrition, Dentistry, Pedagogy, Psychology, Chemistry and Collective Health.

In order to collaborate with the diploma revalidation, 11 HEIs affiliated with "" UEPB, UFABC, UFBA, the De Mello Chair currently have a specific program or rule on facilitating the revalidation of diplomas for refugees, stateless persons, asylum seekers, or holders of humanitarian visas. In this case, revalidating degrees obtained abroad is made more flexible when a document is missing. The documentary situation can be justified, and compensatory evidence can be provided. It is necessary to submit the curriculum of the course completed for equivalence analysis.

UFES, UFF, UFJF, UFMS, UFPR, UFRGS, UFRR e UNIFESP.

#### HEIs with easier procedures for diploma revalidation



In addition, 17 HEIs partnered with the De Mello Chair to present projects ---- PUC-RS, UEMS, that support refugees in applying for diploma revalidation through electronic or face-to-face systems, liaising with the university that received the application and providing support with the necessary documentation and translations.

The nationalities of the refugees who benefited are also diverse, but the primary beneficiaries between 2022 and 2023 were Venezuelans, Syrians, Cubans, and Haitians.

UEPB, UFABC, UFBA, UFES, UFG, UFJF, UFMG, UFPR, UFRGS, UFSC, UFSM, Unifacs, UNILA, UPF e UVV.

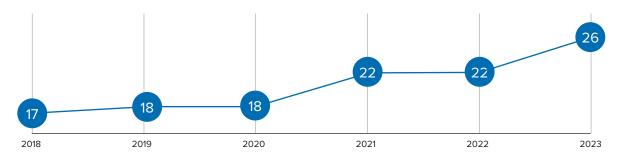
# RESEARCH

The research axis of the De Mello Chair aims to encourage and promote issues related to the protection and local integration of refugees in Brazil and around the world. The HEIs are responsible for disseminating and promoting the theme of international protection through curricular and extracurricular activities, including public conferences, participation in seminars, publications, and awarding research scholarships to outstanding students and professors.

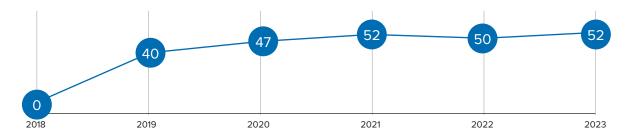
Data generation is also a fundamental component, as it enables a greater understanding of the sociocultural dynamics that impact the local integration of refugees, facilitating the development of public policies aimed at this population. In addition, quantitative and qualitative research also promote greater visibility of refugee protection in the academic community, civil society, the private sector, and host communities. In many cases, in partnership with the UNHCR, programs are developed to disseminate and raise awareness on the issue of forced displacement in Brazil and around the world, generally through the training of public agents and host communities involved in supporting and integrating refugees and asylum seekers in the country.

Between 2022 and 2023, the De Mello Chair motivated the creation or maintenance of **52** research groups on forced displacement and related topics, with lines of research that permeate the theme of asylum and migration in general. UNHCR also encourages research in partnership with civil society, academia, and public institutions, as well as the dissemination of quantitative and qualitative data on the refugee population and asylum seekers in Brazil.

#### Universities with research groups

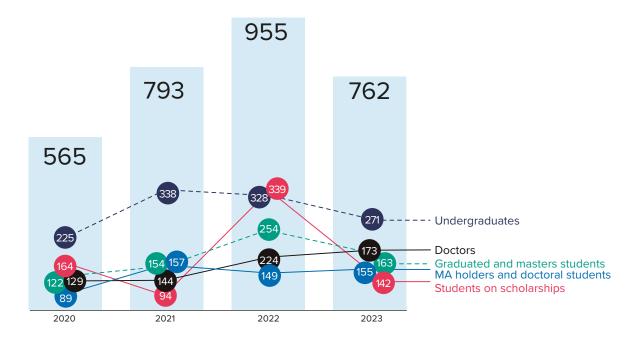


#### Research groups



These groups are made up of **762** researchers, including undergraduates (271 researchers), graduated and master's students (163), masters diploma holders and doctoral students (155), and doctorate diploma holders (173). Of these, 142 researchers receive research grants from state and federal funding institutions. A non-exhaustive list of papers published by De Mello Chair members between 2022 and 2023 can be found at the end of this report.

#### De Mello Chair researchers per year



From March to May 2023, the De Mello Chair and the UNHCR protection and information management teams collaborated on the "Secondary Data Analysis" project. This pilot project involved 48 undergraduate and graduate students from different regions of Brazil who received a certificate issued by the UNHCR and the universities affiliated with the De Mello Chair at the end of the project.

In the humanitarian context, assessing the needs of refugees and forcibly displaced people is essential to base strategic decisions that result in evidence-based responses. The data used in these assessments comes from primary and secondary sources. The "Secondary Data Analysis" project focused on secondary sources to deepen the understanding of producing information on the needs of refugees and forcibly displaced people, as well as to identify knowledge gaps in this context.

The students were divided into groups by thematic areas: education, food security, health, humanitarian transport, integration, nutrition, protection, child protection, protection against gender-based violence, protection against human trafficking, and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene). The students conducted secondary data analysis (totalling 33 documents) using the DEEP secondary data systematization tool, a collaborative analytical platform that aims to generate effective humanitarian responses. This joint effort resulted in three products:

- An Excel spreadsheet compiling the information generated by DEEP was presented at the R4V Brazil platform's Refugee and Migrant Needs Analysis (RMNA) Workshop. It was also shared with R4V Brazil's sectoral leaders to support them in drafting the sectoral chapters of <a href="mailto:the RMNA">the RMNA</a> <a href="mailto:2023 regional document">2023 regional document</a>. This document, in turn, guides the humanitarian response of partner organizations through the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP).
- Reports drawn up by each thematic group, summarizing the findings based on the analysis of secondary data.
- Presentation of the results during a plenary session for all UNHCR operation staff in Brazil.

This project not only generated important secondary data on the needs of refugees and forcibly displaced persons, but also contributed to educating participants about this population's needs. In addition, the project promoted knowledge about the production of information that serves as a basis for designing evidence-based humanitarian responses. This project is considered successful and can be repeated if the parties involved are interested.





University outreach is an interdisciplinary process that promotes interaction between HEIs and other sectors of society. It is an educational, cultural, scientific, and political process that transforms and is transformed in conjunction with the social sectors <u>involved</u><sup>2</sup>. Rather than a third function of the university, <u>outreach is understood from a perspective of the university's role in society</u><sup>3</sup>.

Outreach directly impacts the lives of refugees and asylum seekers and is one of the most immediate means of guaranteeing protection. Through these activities, a network of support and assistance is guaranteed for people in vulnerable situations, and greater local integration and peaceful coexistence

#### 2. bit.ly/477BIKr

 National Plan for University Outreach. Updated Edition. Available at: bit.ly/3QFnxXy, Access on July 28, 2021.

between the refugee population and the host community is promoted. For universities, it is an excellent way of connecting future professionals to other cultures, which is essential for professional growth.

In this report, we address outreach projects within the following themes:











It is our understanding that the activities carried out by the HEIs affiliated with the De Mello Chair are diverse, and not all fall into the five categories chosen for this report. The UFRGS Cárceres Project, for example, is carried out in partnership with the Superintendence of Prison Services of Rio Grande do Sul (SUSEPE), the State Public Defender's Office (DPE), and the Rio Grande do Sul Department of Justice and Public Security, aiming to produce an Information Guide and Communication Support for refugees and migrants imprisoned in the state. The Guide will be translated into five languages chosen based on the research conducted during the 14 field trips to interview refugees and migrants incarcerated in the state's ten penitentiary regions.

UFRR, for its part, developed the ComUNIDADE project in the Operation Welcome shelters, offering technical support on structural aspects of the shelters, promoting environmental awareness actions, geography knowledge, assistance to women giving birth, curriculum development, and counselling on posture and behaviour in job interviews, as well as prevention actions with specific groups, such as women in shelters. This project offered 20 outreach scholarships to undergraduate students.

Below, we report the service data on each of the outreach activities per year:

#### **HEALTH SERVICES**

The 1988 Federal Constitution and Law 9.474/97 guarantee the right to health for asylum seekers and refugees. Effective access to this right is one of the main challenges for this population. Particularly during the pandemic, access to health and vaccines has become an important issue.

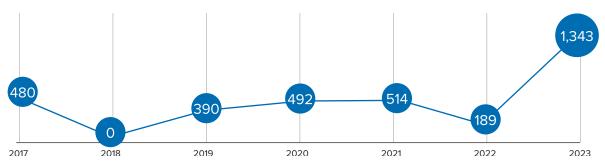
For this reason, every year, more HEIs linked to the De Mello Chair offer complementary services to support the physical and mental health of the refugee population, provided by various undergraduate or graduate programs, mainly through their health care, medicine, and psychology departments.

Some examples of the services available include access to the hospitals and clinics run by the HEIs, as well as to community services of primary, dental, and emergency care, and health-related courses. In addition, activities, and training to raise awareness among managers and professionals working in the health area are also being developed by De Mello Chair universities. In 2023, 12 uni- "UNICAMP, UNIFESP versities offered services in this area, having provided around 580 services.



PUC-Minas, UEMS, UFBA, UFF, UFG, UFJF, UFMG, UFPR, UFRR, e UNISANTOS.

#### Health/psychosocial care



## MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

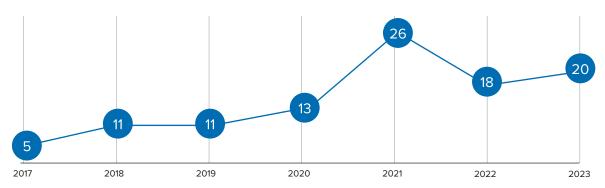
Forced displacement results in impactful and profound experiences, which can cause or deepen traumas in those who have gone through them. This is why access to and support for mental health and psychosocial well-being are fundamental for welcoming, strengthening, and empowering people in need of international protection. This is how this population will feel prepared to restart their lives in Brazil. One of UNHCR's protection efforts is to ensure that medium and long-term risks and consequences related to mental health and psychosocial well-being are prevented and mitigated.

In 2022, **20 HEIs** reported that they offered these services. Referrals are often made by civil society organizations that have the most direct contact with asylum seekers and refugees. HEIs are fundamental elements of this hosting and support network for the integration and protection of this population. Throughout the year covered by this report, more than 750 people were assisted.



PUC-Minas, PUC-Rio,
UFBA, UFES, UFF, UFG,
UFJF, UFMG, UFMS,
"UFPR, UFRGS, UFSC,
UFSM, UNICAMP,
Unifacs, UNIFESP,
UNILA, UNISANTOS,
UNIVALI e UVV.

#### HEIs that offer psychosocial and/or mental health services.



#### PORTUGUESE TEACHING

Knowledge of the Portuguese language is one of the major challenges faced by forcibly displaced persons who have recently arrived in Brazil. Without the Portuguese language, it is challenging for these people to integrate into society and the workplace. In addition, knowledge of Portuguese is also essential for guaranteeing access to services and rights, as the local service network often only communicates in this language.



For this reason, the De Mello Chair HEls are encouraged to provide free access for refugees and asylum seekers, whether or not they are enrolled in universities, to language courses offered by the institutions, preferably Portuguese as the Host Language (PLAC) courses. UNHCR encourages more and more HEls to get involved in this activity, and more vacancies to be made available. 23 universities offered Portuguese courses to more than 1,800 refugees and asylum seekers between 2022 and 2023.

The importance of teaching the Portuguese language for the protection and local integration of refugees can be seen in the PUC-Rio project "Stories of migration and asylum in the school environment: narrating, living together, transforming," which takes place in partnership with the Professor Zuleika Nunes Alencar Municipal School and the Archdiocesan Caritas of Rio de Janeiro Program for Assistance to Refugees and Asylum seekers (PARES). The school identified daily situations of vulnerability and violence, including different forms of prejudice, discrimination, and bullying against Venezuelan students, who were also facing difficulties in learning Portuguese, affecting their social interactions and academic performance. Given this diagnosis, a series of literary and artistic mediation activities were carried out, aimed at promoting stimulating contact with the Portuguese language and Brazilian culture and specifically directed at students in need of asylum without losing sight of the cultural and linguistic repertoires that the students bring with them.

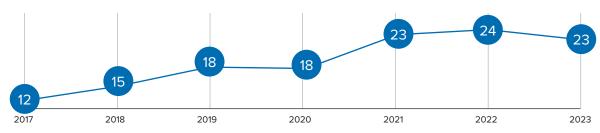
PUC-Minas, UEMS,
UEPB, UERJ, UFABC,
UFBA, UFF, UFGD, UFJF,
UFMG, UFMS, UFRGS,
UFRR, UFSC, UFSCAR,
... UFSM, UFU, UNICAMP,
UniCuritiba, UnB,
UNIFACS, UNIFESP,
UNILA, UNIVALI, UVV



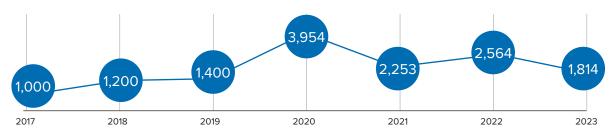
Refugee children learn Portuguese through the Nossa Casa program, offered to youngsters and adults by UFABC.

©UFABC De Mello Chair

#### **HEIs offering Portuguese courses**



#### Annual vacancies in Portuguese language courses



#### **LEGAL AID**

Access to justice and legal assistance are essential for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as for their integration into the host community. Through the legal centres of the HEIs associated with the De Mello Chair, it is possible to find an effective way of making these services economically accessible to the population, as well as giving students experience in the field and an intercultural experience.



In 2023, **20 universities** offered legal aid, providing more than 6,300 ser- "FADI-Sorocaba, PUC-vices. These figures demonstrate the relevance of guaranteeing this service Minas, PUC-Rio, to this population, and UNHCR encourages other HEIs to develop projects PUC-RS, UEPB, UFBA and implement similar services in their planning.

UFES, UFG, UFJF,

During the calendar year of this report, there were numerous initiatives to support pre-documentation assistance for refugees and asylum seekers. In order to prevent many people from having expired documents or waiting many days to be assisted, the Federal Police has sought partnerships with civil society to speed up this assistance. In this process of approximation and cooperation with civil society, the universities linked to the De Mello Chair play an important role in assisting refugees in various regions.

Among these projects, the UPF Migrant Desk has been providing access to documentation and legal aid in the Passo Fundo region. Launched during the period of this report, this project is a partnership between the university, the local branch of the Order of Attorneys of Brazil, and the city of Passo Fundo, and it has already guaranteed quality service to more than 3,800 refugees and migrants.

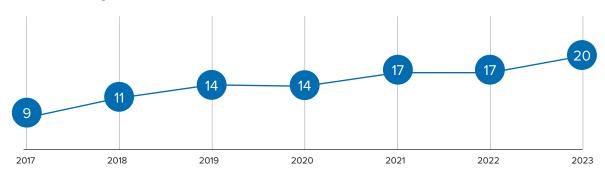
FADI-Sorocaba, PUC-Minas, PUC-Rio,
PUC-RS, UEPB, UFBA,
UFES, UFG, UFJF,
UFMG, UFMS, UFPR,
UFRGS, UFSC, UFSM,
Unifacs, UNISANTOS,
UNIVALI, UPF e UVV.



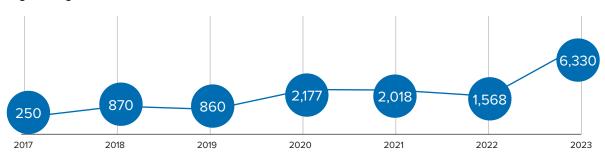
Legal assistance in progress at the Migrant Desk, an UPF initiative.

© UPF De Mello Chair

#### HEIs that offer legal aid



#### Legal aid figures



#### LABOR INTEGRATION

Refugees can integrate fully in Brazil through work and employment, achieving financial independence and self-sufficiency. The issue of work is related to the prospect of a dignified life and empowerment. When integrated from the point of view of employment, the refugee population contributes economically to the diversification of the economy, as well as with their skills to society as a whole.



Information on entering the formal labour market, the labour rights that asylum seekers and refugees should enjoy from the moment they arrive in Brazil, and access to a work permit (CTPS) is essential. Higher education institutions have a lot to contribute in terms of services and generating data on the profile and potential of this population. From July 2022 to July 2023, 14 universities of - .... UFSM, UNICAMP, fered labour integration services. During this period, the number of labour integration services was 559.

PUC-Minas, PUC-RS, UEMS, UEPB, UFMS, UFPR, UFRR, UFSC, UniCuritiba, Unifacs, UNIVALI e UVV.



Between July 2022 and July 2023, De Mello Chair members held 123 events, including courses, seminars, workshops, lectures, roundtables, book launches, and service taskforces.

The online content promoted by the universities is available at acnur.org/ portugues/catedra-sergio-vieira-de-mello/eventos

For example, the "Training Program in Human Mobility and Forced Displacement" (ForMigra) was held to prepare people to assist refugees and migrants. The activity was promoted by the Missionary Sisters of São Carlos Borromeo -Scalabrinianas Congregation through the Centre for Migrant Assistance (CAM) in Caxias do Sul and four universities linked to the De Mello Chair (UCS, UPF, UFBA, UFSM), as well as the Federal University of Pampa (UNIPAMPA) and the Federal University of Fronteira Sul (UFFS). Almost a thousand people attended the events.

## **ADVOCACY**

Universities play a vital role in strengthening government responses and helping to influence authorities, non-governmental partners, and society as a whole to adopt practices that ensure

protection for those in need. They help transform policies and services that affect displaced and stateless people at the municipal, state and/or national levels. In 2023, 24 universities promoted advocacy actions at various levels, participating in networks and committees for the local refugee, migrant, or asylum-seeking population, and supporting municipal and state governments in elaborating hosting plans.

PUC-Minas, PUC-RJ, UCS, UEMS, UEPB, UFABC, UFBA, UFES, UFF, UFG, UFGD, UFJF, UFMG, UFPR, UFRGS, UFRR, UFSM, UFU, UNICAMP, UNIFACS, UNISINOS, UNIVALI, UPF e UVV.



## Conclusion

As shown, over the last 20 years, the De Mello Chair has been a key player in ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers have access to rights and services in Brazil. It is motivated by strengthening the inclusive approach, protective education, and applied research to consolidate hosting people in situations of forced displacement in the university environment and in host communities. The Chair's engagement is, thus, multifaceted and aligned with the whole-of-society approach, which underlies the Global Compact on Refugees.

The main benefits for the refugee population identified within the scope of action of the 39 De Mello Chairs this past year are:

UNHCR officials and professors from international HEIs affiliated to the De Mello Chair network visit the Centre of Integration and Citizenship for Immigrants in the state of São Paulo, where Unifesp supports the registration of asylum claims. Recognized internationally, the De Mello Chair model is expanding and currently adopted in eight countries, in addition to Brazil.

To find out more, access the QR code above or the link <u>bit.ly/49JoF4b</u>

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#### TEACHING,

including access to higher education, diploma revalidation and university permanence. The De Mello Chairs offer 291 courses on forced displacement in its undergraduate and/or graduate curricula. Approximately 184 courses were or are offered at the undergraduate level and another 107 at the graduate level, reaching approximately 7,060 students.

22 universities had a facilitated admission procedure for undergraduate and graduate programs, and 17 of them had a specific call for applications for refugees and/or other people in need of international protection. The De Mello Chair was, thus, able to guarantee 962 specific vacancies for refugees and asylum seekers in undergraduate programs. Currently, 613 refugees and asylum seekers are undergraduate students, as well as 39 master's students and 12 doctoral students. 28 De Mello Chairs have university permanence programs, ranging from housing and food assistance to the offering of scholarships.

**154 diplomas** of refugees, stateless persons, asylum seekers, or those holding humanitarian visas have been revalidated by the HEIs affiliated with the De Mello Chair. Currently, **11** De Mello Chairs have a specific program or standard for facilitating the revalidation of diplomas, and **17** De Mello Chairs have projects to support diploma revalidation requests.



The De Mello Chair has motivated the creation or maintenance of **52** research groups on forced displacement or related topics, with research lines that generally permeate the asylum and migration issue. These groups are made up of **762** researchers, including undergraduates (271 researchers), graduated and master's students (163), MA holders and doctoral students (155), and doctors (173). Of these, **142** researchers receive research grants from state and federal funding institutions.



**OUTREACH**and Community
Services

**12** De Mello Chairs offered **health services** to the refugee population, such as access to hospitals and clinics run by the HEIs, services offered by the university in primary, dental and emergency care, and referrals in the health area. Around 580 appointments were made.

20 De Mello Chairs offered mental health and psychosocial support services. Referrals are often made by civil society organizations that have the most direct contact with refugees and asylum seekers. The De Mello Chair is a fundamental element of this network of hosting and supporting this population for their integration and protection. During the year covered by this report, the De Mello Chair facilitated more than 750 mental health and psychosocial support appointments.

**23** De Mello Chairs offered **Portuguese language courses** to more than 1,800 refugees and asylum seekers in Brazil.

20 De Mello Chairs offer legal aid, facilitating more than 6,300 appointments.

**14** De Mello Chairs offered **labour integration services**, providing information on entering the formal labour market, labour rights for the refugee population, and how to issue a work permit in Brazil, among other actions, providing more than 500 services.



**ADVOCACY** and public policymaking

The De Mello Chair helps to transform policies and services that affect refugees and stateless people at municipal, state, and/or national levels. **24 universities** promoted advocacy actions at various levels, participating in networks and committees aimed at the refugee, migrant, or asylum-seeking population and supporting local and state governments in elaborating hosting plans.

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