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SPACE CARAVAN: AN EXPERIENCE IN AEROSPACE SCIENTIFIC DISSEMINATION IN THE
BRAZILIAN NORTHEASTERN REGION

Abstract

We present some results of the Space Caravan Project, an action coordinated by the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, in the Brazilian Northeastern region, result of a great union of efforts between several aerospace institutions in Brazil, as the Brazilian Northeastern Aerospace Network, Brazilian Space Agency and the Federal Institute of Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Norte. The main goal of the Space Caravan is to disseminate knowledge in Astronomy and Astronautics, to the Brazilian inlands, and, at the same time, be an inseminator and prospector of new talents, especially among students, through itinerant educational actions in municipalities with lack of museums and labs. One of the Project's objectives is to bring scientific knowledge on topics as, Space Exploration, Sky observations and Rocket Sciences, in playful approaches, achieving communities beyond the borders of large capitals. The project team intends to demonstrate the importance of aerospace scientific and technological development for the local and national progress and autonomy of the communities, promoting citizenship and inclusion, and also contributing to the scientific literacy of young people and lay citizens. Through immersive participation in the Project, the public will be able to experience these "windows of a new world" and reflect on the importance of science for the mankind in improving its quality of life. Around 20 cities, spread across 4 States, have already been served since November 2022. The Brazilian Northeastern region has less than 15 itinerant science projects and, considering its size, the challenges are enormous to meet all the demand from cities with little or no structure of centers and museums dedicated to the theme. The Space Caravan's itinerant trips are referred as "missions" and are carefully planned in various aspects, such as publicity plan in the city visited, target audience, thematic lectures, workshops offered, exhibition material, scientific instruments, experiments and planning of astronomical observations in public places. The missions aim to offer a meaningful experience for children, young people and adults, contributing to society's understanding and support of the importance of aerospace sciences development and its relevance to the progress of our country, planting the "little seed" to awaken new vocations for the area. With the motto "The inlands finding its Space", the Project, has contributed to internalizing aerospace scientific knowledge, bringing together scientists, students and the lay population in general, strengthening communication channels between universities and communities in the inlands of Northeastern Brazil.