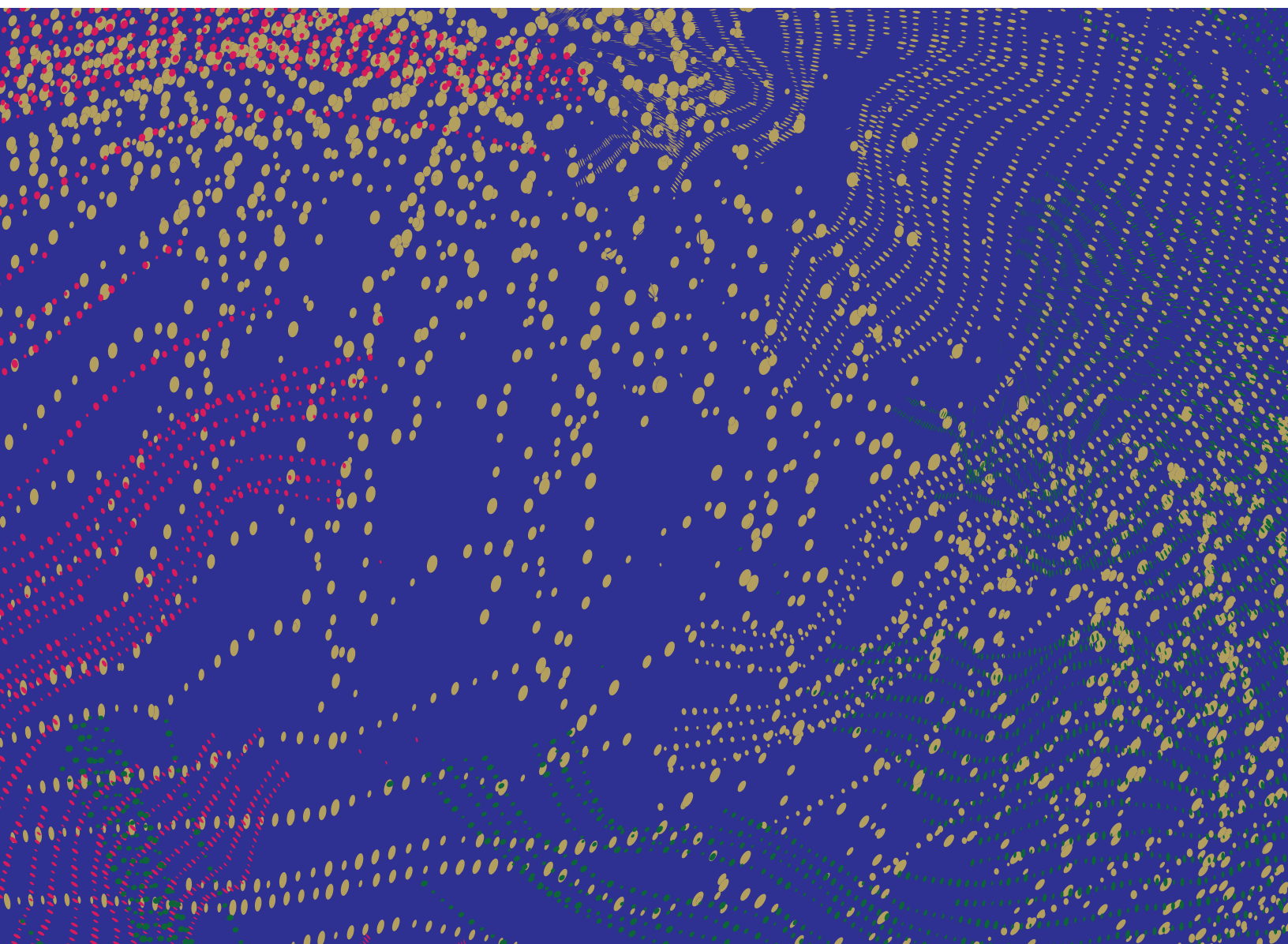


The World Humanities Report

The Languages without Borders Network in Brazil

Denise Abreu-e-Lima

Waldenor B. Moraes Filho



The World Humanities Report is a project of the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI), in collaboration with the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH). The views expressed in the contributions to the World Humanities Report are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors, scientific committee, or staff of CHCI.

The World Humanities Report gratefully acknowledges the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for funding this project.

© 2022 The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System

This work carries a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-NoDerivs 3.0 License. This license permits you to copy, distribute, and display this work as long as you mention and link back to the World Humanities Report, attribute the work appropriately (including both author and title), and do not adapt the content or use it commercially. For details, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/>.

This publication is available online at <https://worldhumanitiesreport.org>.

Suggested citation:

Abreu-e-Lima, Denise, and Waldenor B. Moraes Filho. *The Languages without Borders Network in Brazil*. World Humanities Report, CHCI, 2022.

More information about the authors can be found at the [end of this document](#).

The Languages without Borders Network in Brazil

Denise Abreu-e-Lima Federal University of São Carlos

Waldenor B. Moraes Filho Federal University of Uberlandia

The humanities have a fundamental role to play in the construction of national identity and in the education of citizens who weave society together. According to Adriana Toso Kemp, “the humanities, when approached critically, have the potential to provide the necessary elements in the education process to produce critical thinking and empathy, indispensable virtues for democratic human coexistence and the conditions of possibility for producing a common world.”¹ This concept of a common world also extends to the idea of global citizenship in which cultural interaction plays an important role in people’s education in a globalized context and leads to intercultural competence. Such competence relies on curricula strategies and language education to help people become aware of what connects us globally.

A growing movement places education at the center of internationalization. In the context of higher education, we agree with Jane Knight when she defines the concept of internationalization as “the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society.”² This intentional process should promote multicultural and multilingual dialogue and in so doing contribute to the development of a spirit of tolerance and the promotion of opportunities for mutual understanding. As a result of this interaction between educational systems, this integrated world could foster cooperation among nations and cultures, enabling respect for different identities.

Whenever we talk about internationalization and educational movements,

¹ Adriana Toso Kemp “O papel das humanidades na educação para a democracia” [The role of humanities in education for democracy] (PhD diss., Universidade Regional do Noroeste do estado do Rio Grande do Sul, Campus Ijuí, 2018), <http://bibliodigital.unijui.edu.br:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/6054>.

² Hans de Wit, Fiona Hunter, Laura Howard, and Eva Egron-Polak, *Internationalisation of Higher Education* (Brussels: European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, 2015), <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1b743fec-8b6c-45c2-aa9e-2fdf0967757b/language-en>.

we need to focus on the practices and concepts that allow for linkages that bring people and ideas together. An internationalized world involves maneuvering so as to allow languages and cultures to interact without necessarily interfering with one another in importance or value. According to John Hudzik, internationalization should be seen as a broad movement that encompasses all educational sectors, in which everyone commits to its principles and develops ways to connect knowledge so that it becomes truly democratic, accessible to different people, cultures, and languages.³

Even though the internationalization of higher education has become a common practice over the past twenty-five years, especially in the Northern Hemisphere and in European countries with programs such as Erasmus Mundus,⁴ universities in the Southern Hemisphere have adopted other perspectives on internationalization due to their social and historical contexts. As a result, they have been developing their own strategies, following their own national policies and regulations.

Situated in the Southern Hemisphere, Brazil occupies a strategic position in Latin America and differs from the rest of the continent due to its formal colonization by the Portuguese. Brazil, as a continental country, has very significant cultural and historical diversity. It became independent in 1822, and it is still a young country, struggling to maintain a democratic sovereignty and still moving erratically between right and left ideologies. Government programs have considerable influence on the fate of thousands of citizens and, through the education sector, on the promotion of ideas. The federal government has great power over the national education network, regulating the whole system and financing tuition-free public federal schools and universities. Public funding impacts knowledge generation and research following government guidelines and priorities.

Throughout the history of Brazil, internationalization has played an important role within the academic community, specifically in the development of graduate programs. The major federal funding agency, CAPES,⁵ created in

³ John Hudzik, *Comprehensive Internationalization: Institutional Pathways to Success* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁴ Decision No. 2317/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 December 2003 establishing a programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries (Erasmus Mundus) (2004 to 2008), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/AUTO/?uri=celex:32003D2317>.

⁵ CAPES is a foundation within the Brazilian Ministry of Education with the central purpose of coordinating efforts to improve the quality of the country's faculty and staff in higher education through grant programs. CAPES is particularly concerned with the training of doctoral candidates, predoctoral short-term researchers, and postdoctoral scholars.

1971 to regulate and support graduate programs and faculty-building capacity, has promoted a strong national graduate system, supporting researchers' study abroad through the so-called mobility programs all over the world. Even though this has been a solid strategy from the beginning of CAPES, between 2011 and 2015, a period of great visibility for the internationalization of higher education on a global stage, Brazil launched one of its most important internationalization initiatives: the Science without Borders program.⁶ This program was launched in association with another federal government funding agency, the National Council for the Development Scientific and Technological Research (CNPq). According to its program guidelines,⁷ the main goal of Science without Borders is

to promote the consolidation and expansion of science, technology and innovation in Brazil by means of international exchange and mobility. The strategy envisioned aims to (a) increase the presence of students, scientists and industry personnel from Brazil in international institutions of excellence..., (b) encourage young talents and highly qualified researchers from abroad to work with local investigators in joint projects, contributing to the capacitation of human resources and promoting the return of Brazilian scientists working overseas, and (c) induce the internationalization of universities and research centers in Brazil by encouraging the establishment of international partnerships and a meaningful review of their internal procedures in order to make the interaction with foreign partners feasible.

Funding 101,000 mainly undergraduate Brazilian students, Science without Borders became the first program to fund mobility at this level of education. It funded the internationalization of technology and innovation at all levels of the educational system, in both private and public institutions. According to government directive, however, the program focused only on professions linked to STEM fields, leaving the humanities and social sciences out.

Many in Brazil believe that innovation and technology are related only to STEM fields. The exclusion of the humanities from the Science without Borders program stimulated debate about the near invisibility of humanities in Brazil despite the contributions that they make to society. This situation too often leads to a lack of investment in humanities research, weakening the humanities' ability to play a role as fundamental agents of knowledge making. Humanities and social sciences play a fundamental role in innovation and technology, but

⁶ Presidência da República, Casa Civil, Subchefia para Assuntos Jurídicos, Decreto No 7.642, de 13 de dezembro de 2011, Institui o Programa Ciência sem Fronteiras [Decree No. 7.642 of December 13, 2011, establishing the Science without Borders program], http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2011-2014/2011/decreto/d7642.htm.

⁷ The Program, Science without Borders, <http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf-eng/goals>.

they have been systematically undersupported because of misperceptions of their immediate impact on society. The humanities and social sciences are also necessary for developing a critical internationalization process, as can be seen in the case of Science without Borders. The program intended to internationalize Brazilian research, but it is impossible to address internationalization without

Despite the humanities having been left outside its purview, Science without Borders required specialists in the humanities both in order to get it off the ground and to make it viable.

considering language as the basis for communication among people and the central role of language education. And, indeed, despite the humanities having been left outside its purview, Science without Borders required specialists in the humanities both in order to get it off the ground and to make it viable. Because of the low level of foreign language

proficiency, especially in English, of the academic community, the Brazilian government had to develop a supplemental program in foreign language instruction to prepare the academic community to apply for the Science without Borders grants. This program would become known as Languages without Borders.

In the rest of this essay, we discuss how Languages without Borders was organized and the impact it has had and continues to have, despite insufficient investment or support from the government.

The Brazilian Educational Context

To understand how Languages without Borders was organized, it is important to begin with an overview of the Brazilian educational context. Public education in Brazil extends from early childhood education to the highest university level (doctoral degrees). By public education we mean that there are no tuition fees at any level, all of them being covered by taxes. The Brazilian law that organizes the national (public) educational system divides it into three levels: early childhood education, which is the responsibility of municipalities and counties; basic education (elementary school through the completion of what we call high school, covering ages seven to seventeen), which is the responsibility of the states; and higher education, which is the responsibility of the federal government. In practice, however, municipal, state, and federal governments

are able to expand their role across these levels.⁸ The basic education curriculum, for example, is organized and proposed by the federal government, but states and municipalities have the right to adapt national guidelines to their regional contexts.

Language teaching in Brazil focuses mainly on the teaching of Brazilian Portuguese and, more recently, the Brazilian sign language, LIBRAS. Despite several modifications, Portuguese language and mathematics still occupy a large part of the curriculum. Foreign languages have been losing ground in schools to the point that most students have just one fifty-minute class per week, with English being the most taught foreign language. The limited space for foreign languages in the curriculum, a lack of interest in the teaching profession, low salaries, large classes, and other factors result in graduates who are poorly prepared to communicate in foreign languages and who have little knowledge of other cultures.

To become an accredited foreign language teacher in Brazil, a person must be licensed as a teacher after completing an undergraduate program in languages and literature for the appropriate language. Universities prepare these teachers to work in basic education, as described above. As higher education internationalized, however, a new niche was created for foreign language teachers: helping members of the academic community, whether public or private, with linguistic proficiency. A few have been able to learn foreign languages in private language schools, and even fewer have had the opportunity to take an immersion course in the country of the target language.

For thousands of university students, the Science without Borders program presented an opportunity both for professional development and for cultural and linguistic enrichment abroad. To qualify, however, students had to include in their application language proficiency certificates, and many of them could not. To address this problem, the federal government, assisted by the rectors of the federal universities, launched the English without Borders program in 2012.⁹ Created by a group of applied linguists, the new program focused on three no-cost initiatives: (1) online, self-instructional courses for the entire academic

⁸ According to the 2019 Higher Education Census, there are 302 public higher education institutions and more than 2,000 private ones. *Resumo técnico do Censo da Educação Superior 2019* [Technical summary of the Higher Education Census 2019] (Brasília: Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira, 2021), https://download.inep.gov.br/publicacoes/institucionais/estatisticas_e_indicadores/resumo_tecnico_censo_da_educacao_superior_2019.pdf.

⁹ Ministério da Educação, Portaria No 1.466, de 18 de dezembro de 2012, Institui o Programa Inglês sem Fronteiras [Ordinance No. 1.466 of December 18, 2012, establishing the English without Borders program], http://isf.mec.gov.br/ingles/images/pdf/portaria_normativa_1466_2012.pdf.

community; (2) TOEFL ITP proficiency tests for those wishing to apply to Science without Borders and other academic mobility programs; and (3) in-person courses offered at federal universities. In 2014, in response to international partners and with the support of foreign language experts in Brazil, the program expanded to cover six additional languages—English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese for foreigners, and Spanish—and was renamed Languages without Borders. The three initiatives mentioned above applied to all seven languages, with some sponsored by international partners.

The applied linguists saw Languages without Borders as an opportunity to change the biased mindset that does not recognize the importance of the humanities in the development of science, technology, and innovation.

Even though Languages without Borders managed all three initiatives, it in particular focused on the in-person courses, because they involved a complexity of teacher education strategies and mattered the most for the development of internationalization and the humanities in Brazil. The group of applied linguists had in mind a long-term movement, beyond the immediate demands and deadlines of the Science without Borders program, that could address the needs of foreign language learning for generations to come, with long-lasting impacts on teacher education and curricula. Considering language learning as the basis for internationalization, the applied linguists saw Languages without Borders as an opportunity to change the biased mindset that does not recognize the importance of the humanities in the development of science, technology, and innovation.

The focus of undergraduate programs in languages and literature at Brazilian universities is on providing critical education about practical methodologies, approaches, and the development of pedagogical materials that can help prepare children and teenagers for life, the workplace, or postsecondary education. Foreign language students, however, do not undergo any verification of their level of proficiency throughout their education. This is due both to a lack of consensus among language specialists and to various matters of practicality. Even though the training of professionals in public universities is considered “excellent” by governmental evaluation standards and by the academic community, there is no mechanism in place to ensure proper foreign language proficiency in the

teachers it educates. In addition, those with a higher level of proficiency end up pursuing jobs in companies and private schools with more attractive salaries. The lack of a proficiency requirement ends up contributing to a cycle of low regard for foreign language education and low language proficiency among graduates.

Languages without Borders is a response to this situation. Through the collaborative work and collective intelligence of teams of specialists from Brazilian public universities, Languages without Borders is committed to valuing language professionals and language teaching. The program set out to improve the training and proficiency of the undergraduate students of languages and literature by enlisting them as teachers-in-training in the internationalization of institutions of public higher education in Brazil. The program also ended up creating more opportunities for foreign language professionals, who previously had not been positioned as collaborators and participants in the internationalization process of higher education.

The Languages without Borders Program

As mentioned above, the Brazilian federal government created the Languages without Borders program according to a proposal presented by applied linguists and specialists in foreign languages. The proposal included three main initiatives:

1. Free foreign language proficiency tests (TOEFL ITP). The federal government purchased 550,000 TOEFL ITP tests to help students gain access to universities in countries that required English-language proficiency. Other foreign language tests were subsidized by international partners. This increase in availability of proficiency tests required additional test-taking centers, as some states had only one for their entire area. Since public universities existed in every state, they became official test-taking centers, allowing more students to gain access to proficiency tests.
2. The creation of new language centers specific to the Languages without Borders program,¹⁰ which offer free language courses to the entire university community. The teachers in these centers were undergraduate teachers-in-training who had advanced-level skills in one of the seven foreign languages. English teachers received a monthly grant from the Brazilian government that allowed them to dedicate twenty hours per week to a teaching residency, which

¹⁰ Existing languages centers focused on the teaching of foreign languages in general, while Languages without Borders centers specialized in teaching languages for academic and specific purposes, with an eye on internationalization processes.

included training and pedagogical practice. Teachers of languages other than English were subsidized by Brazilian universities, except for Japanese language teachers, who were fully subsidized by the Japan Foundation, and some Italian language teachers, who were subsidized by the Italian Embassy. The French and German governments contributed some language tutors.

3. Self-instructional online courses with virtual tutoring. These digital modes of instruction allowed the academic community even greater access to foreign language learning.

After open calls for participation, 141 public institutions of higher education became accredited as part of the Languages without Borders program. They were distributed throughout the national territory and presented different categories as public institutions: 59 federal universities, 21 state universities, 1 municipal university, 25 federal colleges, and 35 state colleges. The institutions chose which language they would be accredited to teach, as shown in table 1.

Table 1. The number of public institutions of higher education offering in-person foreign courses annually, and the number of openings, in the Languages without Borders program

Language	Public institutions of higher education	Languages without Borders annual openings
English	141	116,000
French	38	4,200
German	15	700
Italian	16	1,800
Japanese	6	900
Portuguese as a foreign language	62	7,000
Spanish	42	4,600

Source: Data collected by Languages without Borders management group.

Table 1 shows the extent of the investment in the English language as well as the expansion of offerings of Portuguese as a foreign language. Before the accreditation call, only seventeen institutions of public higher education offered Portuguese as a foreign language. The federal government directly promoted the teaching of English by investing in specific grants for teachers and coordinators. This resulted in more English courses being offered at the Brazilian universities. The expansion of Portuguese as a foreign language made clear the need to see internationalization from the point of view of both those going abroad (mobility OUT) and those coming to Brazil (mobility IN).

The offer of free proficiency tests not only helped students participate in mobility programs such as Science without Borders but also allowed for the diagnostic mapping of English proficiency levels in the academic community. This mapping was carried out between 2013 and 2018. Figure 1 shows the results, using the proficiency descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), with level A1 as the most basic level and C2 the most advanced. (The TOEFL ITP test does not measure A1 and C2 levels.) Although it involved a limited sample from among the two million individuals who constitute the public higher education community, the mapping results that there is still much room for improvement in English-language proficiency in the country.

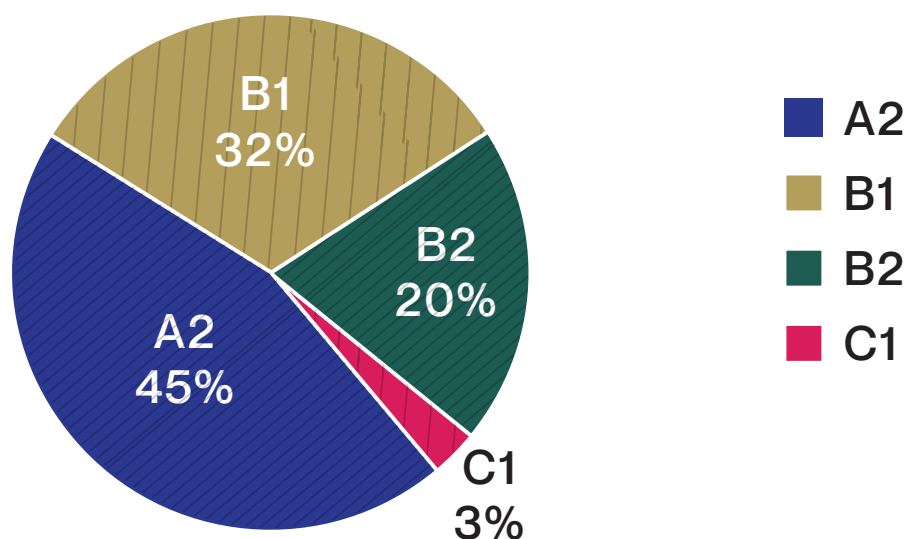


Figure 1. Level of English-language proficiency based on 550,000 TOEFL ITP tests. Level A2 is the most basic level and C1 the most advanced. Data collected by Languages without Borders management group.

As A1 and C2 levels were not evaluated by TOEFL ITP test, these data show a significant number of students (42 percent) with basic (A2) proficiency. (Keep in mind that the test was not mandatory, and so only those who thought they had some level of proficiency in English applied to take it.) It also shows a majority of people (52 percent) at the intermediate levels of proficiency (B1 and B2), needing encouragement to reach the advanced level C of proficiency. The test served as a diagnostic evaluation and helped the Ministry of Education, the funding agencies, and the universities to draw institutional maps, which then influenced the design of language policies. Test scores could also be used to places members of the academic community who wanted to take the English courses offered within the program.

Online courses were provided specifically for English, French, German, and Italian. The US company Cengage was hired to develop a self-instructional course in English, called My English Online (or MEO). About five million passwords were made available for the five proficiency levels of the course so that anyone belonging to the academic community could apply and complete the levels. For the German language, there was a partnership with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to offer 3,843 passwords for accessing its online course with virtual tutoring. For the Italian language, there was a partnership with the Italian Embassy to offer 500 access codes to the Italian course promoted by a group of Italian universities (Icon). For French, a partnership with the French Embassy and the Alliance Française granted around 3,000 vouchers to the Français sans Frontières course.

Management of the Languages without Borders Program

Within the federal government, it was necessary to create a management group to organize and manage the Languages without Borders program nationally. The management group consisted of nine members: a national president, a vice president for languages and technologies, and a vice president for each of the seven languages. All members of the management group were applied linguists with doctoral and postdoctoral training in their language area and university professors at public universities. The president and vice president were specialists in the use of technologies and distance education, in addition to having experience in university management. The language vice presidents organized the four initiatives outlined above collectively with experts in their respective language. More than 400 specialists with training in the humanities participated in the seven language teams. The management group organized program guidelines,

open calls, meetings with international partners, and course offerings, from the creation of specific courses to final certification. Every logistic strategy was collaboratively designed to take regional and institutional differences into consideration. The management group was also tied into the Ministry of Education in the Higher Education Secretariat in that its president was reassigned from activities at her home institution to the Ministry of Education and given a specific management position. This was the first time in the history of the Ministry of Education that language specialists were allowed to manage and be responsible for a nationwide program. This arrangement was mirrored by the institutions, where applied linguists coordinated the program initiatives locally and articulated them nationally through the management group. It should be acknowledged, however, that the specialists do not necessarily have the required administrative skills, and some therefore had to learn how to deal with daily management routines to ensure the flow of activities and to meet the objectives and deadlines defined at a national level.

On the foundation laid by the management group, Languages without Borders maintained constant and fruitful dialogue with specialists from accredited educational institutions, government agencies, and other partners, building on both bottom-up and top-down perspectives. Considering this dynamic process, some of the program's goals were foreseen from its very beginning, while others emerged along the way, not having been fully anticipated at the beginning. One such important but late-arriving goal was related to the teachers-in-training. Under the supervision of applied linguists, who took on the role of local coordinators, teachers-in-training taught courses to the academic community. Initially, when the program was created, the documents did not emphasize language teachers' own education. The main goal, as mentioned above, was to help the academic community develop language proficiency to apply to mobility programs. Over the course of the implementation of Languages without Borders, however, the need to focus on teacher training could not be ignored. It became official in the third version of the federal ordinance that instituted Languages without Borders, which included teacher education as it expanded the program's scope of action.¹¹

Locally, Languages without Borders was organized into specific language centers, which mirrored the management organization: a general coordinator who organized local programming and was the focal point for coordination

¹¹ Ministério da Educação, Portaria No 30, de janeiro de 2016, Amplia o Programa Idiomassem Fronteiras [Ordinance No. 30 of January 2016, expanding the Languages without Borders program], http://isf.mec.gov.br/images/2016/janeiro/Portaria_30_IdiomassemFronteiras_2016.pdf.

with the management group at the Ministry of Education; and a coordinator for each language, who organized the initiatives locally in the language for which the institution had been accredited. The overall management organization is shown in figure 2.

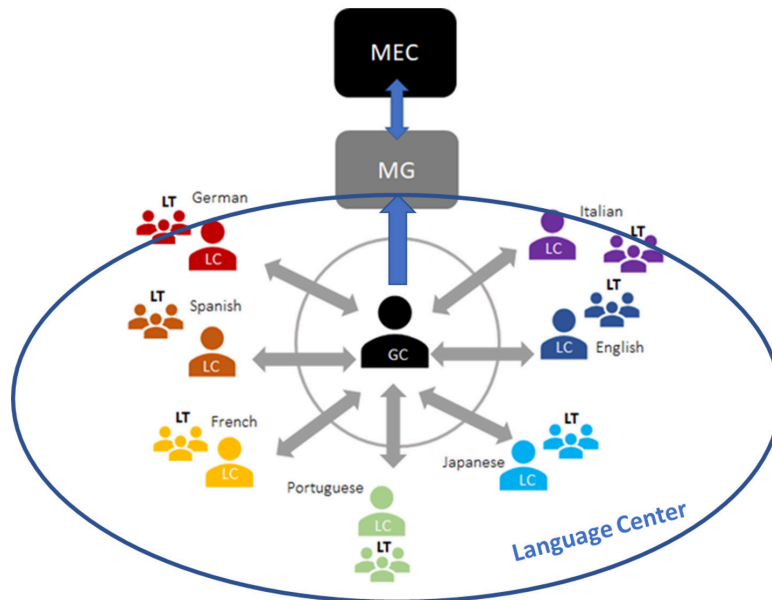


Figure 2. Management system of the Languages without Borders program. MEC = Brazilian Ministry of Education; MG = management group; GC= general coordinator; LC = language coordinator; LT = language teacher-in-training. Data collected by Languages without Borders management group.

At the local level, language coordinators and the general coordinator dealt with issues related to administration of the language center: the needs for infrastructure, logistical and financial support, and other specific local issues. In order to implement the guidelines in their local contexts and to solve problems, the local language coordinators maintained direct relationships with their peers at other centers and with the respective vice president for that language at the national level. Thus, another communication network was created, allowing the vice president to bring the needs of each language to the management group. This dynamic is shown in figure 3.

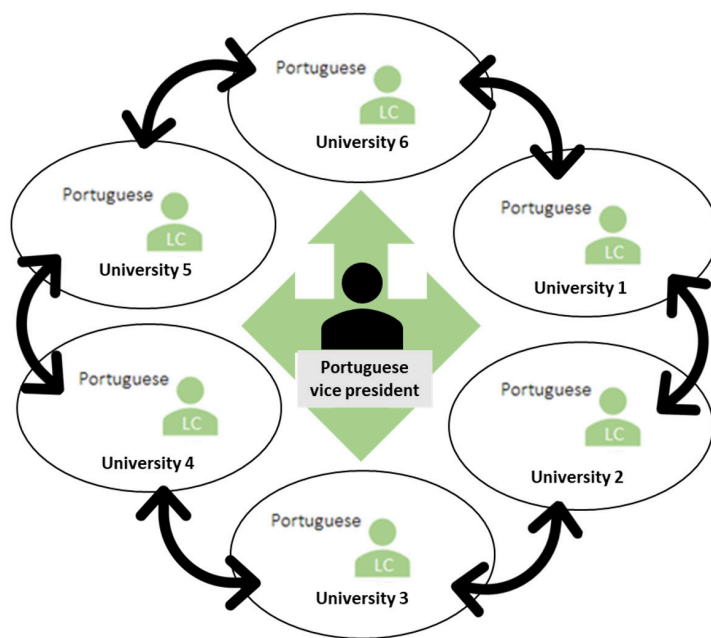


Figure 3. Interaction of the language coordinators with the vice president for a specific language. Data collected by Languages without Borders management group.

Even though figures 2 and 3 suggest an organic nature to these relationships, dialogue was not always successful. Personnel management is a delicate process, and Languages without Borders brought together specialists from different areas of specialization who otherwise did not know each other, making it difficult to find common ground. Another difficulty was treating all the languages equally when government grants were financing only English instruction. This was not a choice made by the management group, which made every effort to include in the same budget the distribution of grants for all languages, according to priorities and needs for implementation. Although we had some success demonstrating the necessity of defining more specific criteria for the redistribution of grants within the same budget, the new guideline was not signed before the 2018 national elections that led to a change of administration and the suspension of the Languages without Borders program.

The language coordinators supervised all matters related to the education of the teachers-in-training at their respective universities as well as matters related to the offering of courses, the production of materials, and other language-related issues. The language teachers-in-training were undergraduate students from local languages and literature programs selected by an open call. As part of the application procedure, candidates were required to demonstrate a satisfactory

proficiency level as well as teaching and student management skills. These undergraduate students, considered in the program as teachers-in-training, remained in the Languages without Borders program for up to two years in a practicum “residency” program. The residency consisted of twenty hours per week divided into the following activities:

- Five hours of weekly training, organized by the language coordinator, which covered methodological, theoretical, and practical issues, analysis of teaching materials, and assessment, among other matters related to teacher

Languages without Borders . . . demonstrated the strength of the humanities as a cornerstone in the education of university students who wish to become integrated into international contexts.

education. Differently from what is done in undergraduate courses, Languages without Borders sought to provide specialized training in matters related to academic internationalization. The teachers studied how to offer courses based on foreign languages for specific academic purposes. All pedagogical activities involved the process of peer,

adviser, and student feedback on the issues experienced in their practice.

- Twelve hours of teaching language courses, with three groups of twenty students for four hours each. The courses offered were based on the content, level of difficulty, and required proficiency.
- Three hours of providing tutoring and assistance to students and/or other administrative-pedagogical activities.

Organizing teacher training in this way allowed the network of language coordinators to offer language education to more than 1,200 Languages without Borders teachers-in-training over six years.

Throughout the course of implementing an innovative proposal like Languages without Borders, three values were essential to achieve long-term success: patience, flexibility, and perseverance. At Languages without Borders, the needs for them were quite clear, as the program involved many leaders, including government management on different political and institutional fronts, while respecting the autonomy of the higher education institutions, and the possibility of many difficulties due to so many national and international partners. These values work in combination with technical knowledge, planning, communication skills, respect for differences, and the desire to work collaboratively, integrating bottom-up and top-down perspectives, in a constant movement of listening and debate. The fruitful ideas arising from Languages

without Borders developed in a participatory manner and demonstrated the strength of the humanities as a cornerstone in the education of university students who wish to become integrated into international contexts.

Communication

Since its inception, Languages without Borders has involved a complex structure of initiatives and communication. Because of the program's national scope and many complex institutional realities and needs, the management group needed to rely on technological infrastructure to allow greater visibility of its activities and the flow of information. As a result, the Ministry of Education's information technology team developed an online management system for all program initiatives: registration for tests and courses, offer of on-site courses, room management, monitoring of activities, issuance of certificates for all seven languages involved in Languages without Borders. Within the system, managers at different levels could use twenty-eight different types of reports, which greatly assisted the work of local and national managers in planning their local initiatives and accountability. For communication among managers, the management group, and the language center teams, rooms were organized in the Moodle virtual environment and files were shared for the exchange of best practices. WhatsApp was one of the communication tools most used by the teams. Organized by language and by management profile, the groups in WhatsApp facilitated quick solutions to problems that the coordinators faced in their daily routine.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Languages without Borders actively connected via online resources. Several initiatives were carried out in different locales such as virtual coordination and instruction between a Languages without Borders coordinator and teachers. Pilot groups were organized for language courses offered remotely in a synchronous mode, with the Languages without Borders teacher in one place and the students gathered in person in another. These initiatives were aimed mainly at solving the problem of not having enough language professionals in some communities. These experiences ended up providing important learning experience for the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020.

The Impact of the Languages without Borders Program

After its six years of activity (2012–18) under the purview of Brazil's Ministry of Education, the Languages without Borders program had a significant impact on the country's higher education, especially in the areas of teaching and learning foreign languages, teacher training, research in applied linguistics, and the inclusion and appreciation of humanities professionals in the internationalization processes. Thanks to Languages without Borders, in the area of teaching and learning, foreign languages access to courses and tests was expanded, including to entire communities, since the offer was subsidized by the federal government for all public institutions of higher education. Due to the public nature of the call for accreditation to the program, within one year of accreditation the institutions had to present their linguistic policy. This allowed the language experts and applied linguists at these institutions to organize themselves into committees to discuss what was linguistically pertinent to each community, considering its history and local and regional context. By the end of the process, the management group had received ninety institutional language policy documents generated by different teams, an unprecedented expansion for the country. These language policies had a direct impact on the planning of internationalization initiatives at public higher education institutions, spurring them to participate in other internationalization programs promoted by the federal government after Science without Borders. CAPES, the main funding agency for Science without Borders, launched a similar program focused on research and postgraduate studies, with a smaller scope in terms of numbers served. The program, named CAPES-PrInt, included the humanities in the fields served. The new program requires high proficiency in foreign languages from candidates.

In the area of teacher training, Languages without Borders implemented a teaching practicum residency program in which teachers-in-training could specialize during their undergraduate period, allowing them to experience their profession while being supervised by language specialists as explained before. Many Languages without Borders teachers-in-training credit their professional success to the experience they had throughout the program: opportunities for technical enrichment, the opening of professional horizons, and the experience of collaborative work and critical discussions about internationalization, which had hitherto been only aimed at technological and biomedical fields.

In the field of applied linguistics, many term and master's and doctoral research papers were produced, published, and disseminated at scientific congresses in Brazil and abroad from research done in relation to the Languages without

Borders program. More than 400 academic works arising from or related to the program and the role of languages in the internationalization of Brazilian universities have already been published. This impact has already been noticed at the internationalization events in Brazil, where there are now specific sessions aimed at foreign languages and initiatives that involve language professionals. This is an unmistakable reflection of the strength of Languages without Borders within the humanities in Brazil's academic sector. The program has also gained international recognition for its impacts on public policy, with the Languages without Borders president receiving two awards: the Distinguished Hubert H. Humphrey Leadership Award from the US Embassy in Brazil in 2016 and the Noble Partnership Award by the Canadian Embassy in 2017.

In Brazilian institutions of public higher education, language specialists are increasingly occupying management and leadership positions in charge of the implementation of the institutional language policy. They also support activities of the international affairs offices around language proficiency initiatives. Before Languages without Borders, the participation of university professors and foreign language specialists in internationalization processes in Brazil was negligible. In general, internationalization processes had been managed by agencies focused on the so-called hard sciences, with little or no emphasis on language issues, essential in any process of academic interaction and internationalization of higher education.

Languages without Borders and the Andifes Network

After six years, during which the management group worked under ten different ministers of education and seven different secretaries of higher education, in three different government administrations, the Languages without Borders program was suspended in 2018. The network of specialists, organized by the management group, coordinated its transfer to a nongovernmental organization, the National Association of Presidents of Federal Institutions of Higher Education (Andifes),¹² which works with the demands, needs, and policies of universities to the federal government—Ministry of Education, the Brazilian National Congress, funding agencies—and society in general. Transferring the Languages without Borders initiatives to Andifes was a strategy to continue strengthening the internationalization processes of the federal institutions of higher education.

¹² ANDIFES, Resolução do Conselho Pleno da ANDIFES 01/2919, de 12 de novembro de 2019 [Full ANDIFES council resolution 01/2919 of November 12, 2019], https://www.andifes.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Resolucao-Conselho-Pleno-01_2019.pdf.

Since 2019, Languages without Borders has been operational through Andifes and has reorganized its initiatives in order to address such issues as inequity among languages and frequent interruptions in leadership. Now, with more experience and vision, the network can further share the contributions of language teaching without being worried about political changes, since Andifes is managed by the presidents of the institutions themselves without the direct interference of the government.

The new administration at Andifes has instituted some important changes. One is that any foreign language specialist linked to a higher education institution, whether public or private, Brazilian or foreign, can now participate in Languages without Borders. Likewise, institutions can now become accredited even if they do not offer undergraduate programs in language teaching, but, due to the nature of the association, only federal institutions linked to Andifes can be accredited.

The team no longer calls itself a “program” but rather a “network,” offering courses nationally and collaboratively, with the participation of teachers-in-training from different public higher education institutions who teach foreign languages to the entire community of accredited universities. With these changes, we are putting into practice the fundamental concept, expressed in the phrase that has accompanied us since our origins, “without borders”: without institutional borders, without campus borders, without city, state, or national borders, as the network allows specialists from outside Brazil to be part of it. In addition to the education of undergraduate students, the Languages without Borders Network also innovates by offering an articulated, online, and nationally accredited specialization course for the seven languages. The idea is to contribute to the continuing education of foreign language professionals working in the context of the internationalization of the institutions of public higher education and, furthermore, to prepare language professionals to welcome foreigners and refugees in Brazil, with an overall goal of readying the community for a global citizenship that is more tolerant, more solidary, and more humane.

Most of the accredited specialists are civil servants committed to the development of science and the improvement of the free and quality public education offered at the Brazilian institutions. In this sense, the management group seeks institutional recognition for its initiatives to attract the additional involvement of specialists into its network.

The Languages without Borders Network is also focused on recognizing professionals in the humanities, who provide access to critical thinking so

necessary today by expanding access to knowledge in different languages. Hence, Languages without Borders has been a movement that reinforces the importance of humanities education to contribute to the building of a more understanding and tolerant society. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum reminds us that the problems that affect humanity involve all of us, and it is essential that we come together to cooperate in an intense and horizontal way, without precedent.¹³ That includes the importance of learning one or more foreign languages, as part of a critical education that goes beyond the limits of instrumentalization and contributes to an education more integrated with global issues and focused on a comprehensive reading and interpretation of the world. The Andifes Languages without Borders Network, therefore, plays an important role in the development of a comprehensive plurilingual educational environment. One of its major contributions has been to help in the critical role of the internationalization Brazil's public institutions of higher education, which illustrates the role the humanities play in the holistic education of academics in their multiple realities.

¹³ Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Denise Abreu-e-Lima is the former president of the Languages without Borders program and current national coordinator of the Andifes Languages without Borders Network. She is a professor at the Federal University of São Carlos in Brazil.

Waldenor B. Moraes Filho is the former vice president for languages and technology at the Languages without Borders program and current national coordinator of languages and technology at the Andifes Languages without Borders Network. He is a professor of linguistics at the Federal University of Uberlandia in Brazil.