A whole university approach to humanitarian migrant and refugee students’ integration: Reflections on the practical implementation of education policies and programmes at Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR), in Brazil

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A whole university approach to humanitarian migrant and refugee students’ integration: Reflections on the practical implementation of education policies and programmes at Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR), in Brazil

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Summary

We analyse how the arrival of migrants with humanitarian visas, and refugees in Brazil, impelled a university to develop grassroots practices of welcoming students and their communities. After a first recognition of linguistic needs of this newly arrived public, the university, under the initiative of the Department of Law, developed what we could call a whole university approach to integration, based on the principles of multidisciplinary work and of research-education-action. Under this approach, it developed and integrated several actions aimed at developing various literacies, maintaining health and emotional well-being, legal support, and community outreach, through multidisciplinary work teams and the involvement of student and volunteer educators. In this humanistic understanding of the role of higher education institutions in welcoming and integrating migrant and refugee students, we discuss the goals achieved, and the points that we continue to consider as being critical for a better integration of multidisciplinary initiatives, and for a better-articulated offer of initiatives aimed at the university and extra-university levels.

Keywords: integration, whole university approach, multidisciplinary teams, research-education-action

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Résumé

Nous analysons comment l’arrivée de migrants avec des visas humanitaires et de réfugiés au Brésil a poussé une université à développer des pratiques de base d’accueil des étudiants et de leurs communautés. Après une première reconnaissance des besoins linguistiques de ce public nouvellement arrivé, l’université, à l’initiative du département de droit, a développé ce que l’on pourrait appeler une approche universitaire holistique d’intégration, basée sur les principes du travail multidisciplinaire et de la recherche-éducation-action. Dans le cadre de cette approche, elle a développé et intégré plusieurs actions visant le développement de diverses littératies, le maintien de la santé et du bien-être émotionnel et l’apport de soutien juridique, grâce à des équipes de travail multidisciplinaires et à la participation d’étudiants et d’éducateurs bénévoles. Dans cette compréhension humaniste du rôle des établissements d’enseignement supérieur dans l’accueil et l’intégration des étudiants migrants et réfugiés, nous discutons des objectifs atteints et des points que nous continuons à considérer comme essentiels pour une meilleure intégration des initiatives multidisciplinaires et pour une offre mieux articulée d’initiatives destinées aux publics universitaire et extra-universitaire.

Mots-clés : intégration, approche universitaire holistique, équipes pluridisciplinaires, recherche-action

Introduction

The number of people in forced displacement has greatly increased in recent years all over the world, causing important transformations in the international scenario and in domestic societies. Brazil has not been immune to this process and, from being an emigration country in the 20th century, with part of its population leaving toward so-called developed countries, it has started to receive a considerable contingent of immigrants and refugees, especially since the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century.

Between 2010 and 2019, Brazil had a total of 1,085,673 immigrants, considering all legal statuses, with the majority being Haitians, followed by Venezuelans (OBMigra, 2020), constituting 1% of the population (in the U.S. they are 14% and in the European Union 8% of the population) (UN, 2020). Concerning refugees, the increase was appreciable: between
2011 and 2019, 239,706 people applied for refugee status, with 34% of that total only in 2019. Their recognition occurred in greater numbers in relation to Venezuelans (20,935), Syrians (3,768) and Congolese from the Democratic Republic of Congo (1,209).

As in other national contexts and particularly in the field of higher education, opportunities for refugees to join it are very limited, and the barriers for entry are complex and diversified, ranging from missing qualifications and evaluation of credentials, interrupted education and gaps in learning, limited language proficiency, information barriers, higher costs, limited resources from the host country to extend to refugees, legislative challenges, (structural) racism and insecurity within host countries (UNESCO, 2019). All this leads to potential education disadvantages affecting refugees and migrants (Molla, 2021). In our previous analysis of the integration policies in Brazil (Friedrich, Melo-Pfeifer & Ruano, 2021), we concluded that the country has a very favourable national legislation regarding the integration of migrants and refugees, and that civil society and higher education institutions are actively engaged in welcoming initiatives, but these follow a bottom-up flux (with little official support and interaction with top-down initiatives).

The present work aims to expose the educational policy aimed at the insertion, welcoming, and follow-up of humanitarian migrants and refugees in university education developed at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR). Taking the macro contextual backdrop explained above into account, this paper is structured as follows: first, we present the admission policies of the university and the legal instruments that frame them; in a second section, we present the whole university approach that guides the welcoming and integration actions of UFPR, both addressed to its migrant and refugee students and the migrant and refugee communities; and finally, we reflect on the interactions at the micro (particular courses and initiatives), meso (the institution) and macro (the society at large) levels that constitute the backbone of the UFPR whole university approach and the blind spots that can be identified and improved. We further raise the question of the transferability of the experiments set up in Brazil into other contexts.
1. University Admission of humanitarian migrant and refugee students in the UFPR

The academic community dealing with humanitarian and refugee migrants at the UFPR organised themselves in a program called 'Migratory Policy and Brazilian University Program' (PMUB), linked to the Sérgio Vieira de Mello Chair (UNHCR). The PMUB identified the great interest of the migrants/refugees, and their need to enter the University as regular students, and not only as recipients of educational services. The professors realised that many of them needed vacancies to be able to finish their undergraduate courses started in universities in their countries of origin, and that the migration process had prevented them from graduating. The need for specific actions to organise entry and start undergraduate and graduate courses, from the very beginning was also recognised. These teachers thus proposed to the University Rectory the creation of a system of remaining vacancies occupancy by humanitarian migrants and refugees. The project was sent to the Higher Council of Teaching, Research and Extension, which discussed the proposal and adopted a resolution allowing the admission of migrants with humanitarian visas, and refugees, onto any of the undergraduate courses at UFPR. Concerning courses that have remaining vacancies, due to dropouts and withdrawals of regular students from the university, a public notice is launched annually for the occupation of these vacancies by migrants with humanitarian visas, and refugees who had started undergraduate studies in their home country, on these specific courses or very similar ones.

The criteria for the selection of candidates are curriculum completion, time spent living in Brazil, knowledge of the Portuguese language, and a psychological interview. No fees are charged and the institutional bodies involved are the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the International Agency, the Rector's Office, and PMUB. Currently, there are 115 students¹, distributed among 33 different undergraduate courses at UFPR, who entered through this procedure. As these are remaining openings,

¹ These students come from the following countries: Benin, Congo, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Jordan, Peru, Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Togo and Venezuela.
the offer is always much smaller than the demand. The biggest challenge for the University today is keeping these students on the courses. Many of them have some form of support, either meals at the University Restaurant (3 meals a day), assistance for their permanence, or a scholarship. This scholarship comes from UFPR itself or from a Cooperation Agreement established between UFPR and Paraná Labor Prosecutor’s Office, which is coordinated by PMUB professors and will be referred to later in this work.

Four years later, facing the demand for special places for humanitarian migrants and refugees to do a full undergraduate course at the university, from the first to the last year, the whole team decided to propose the creation of a special ‘vestibular’. ‘Vestibular’ is the system in Brazil that brings together a set of exams that all students who have finished high school must take to enter university if they are approved. This proposal established the creation of 10 supplementary places for humanitarian migrants and refugees to enter UFPR.

To respect students’ sociocultural and sociolinguistic identities, admission exams are adapted to the migrants and refugees, assessing their potential through reducing the linguistic bias. Several test accommodation strategies were adopted, in order to make standardised tests fairer to newcomers and avoid linguistic, cultural, gender and ethnic bias at both the test and items levels (Elder, 2012; Shohamy, 2001). Testing accommodation can be defined as ‘a change in testing conditions that should not affect the test’s validity or reliability but that seeks to erase the impact of language proficiency [in the host country language] on test performance’ (Shohamy & Menken, 2015:260). In the case of the UFPR, texts were shortened, items being asked were related to general knowledge and not limited to the Brazilian reality, knowledge in mother tongues were considered a substitute for the foreign-language proficiency test (usually English), and the Portuguese language test was conceived under the principles of Portuguese as a Foreign Language (instead of the mother tongue of the test takers).

There have been two editions to date, totalling 20 students who entered through this normative process, from Angola, Argentina, Haiti, Iran, Peru, Syria and Venezuela.
2. A whole-university approach: Comprehensive support for students and communities

In 2013, after realising the large and still incoming number of migrants in the city of Curitiba, where the main campus of UFPR is located, a group of professors from the university decided to offer them free Portuguese language classes, creating different levels and having the students of the Language course as teachers. The public was basically Haitians, who were receiving a permanent visa from the Brazilian government for humanitarian reasons, and Syrians, who were receiving refugee status. This is how the first project came about, quickly followed by others, providing comprehensive support in multiple areas, in what we could call a whole university approach, being student-centered and combining research and action both to support the migrant/refugee graduation students and the migrant/refugee society. Our whole-university approach to integration of migrant and refugee students takes into consideration, not only the academic achievements of these students, but also their mental health and well-being, and their ability to cope with intercultural and academic issues, among other things. In this sense, UFPR tried to address many of the aspects of university life that can play a role in how students enter academia and, most of all, on how willing they are to finish their degrees. Our whole university approach has the aim to favour continuity of students’ academic path and, hence, the sustainability of our integration work. Because the UFPR, at large, and our research group, more specifically, understand the integration of the migrant and the refugee student as being part of a more holistic and ecological approach to the person and their integration, our actions support the students but are at the same time addressed at the community at large: the migrant and the refugee and the hosting communities of Curitiba (Gediel & Friedrich, 2020). At the same time, as our university is a public institution aimed at creating and disseminating knowledge through research that is (or should be) socially relevant and sustainable, UFPR engaged in a tripartite process of research-education-action, in order to capitalise from the experiences and learn from them, thus making the transfer of knowledge possible.
As we will see, through multidisciplinary work and the collaboration of staff and voluntary students, UFPR created a learning environment and an organisational culture that enhanced study for all and bidirectional intercultural learning opportunities. We categorised the provided support around three main areas: i) linguistic and electronic literacy support; ii) health, financial, administrative and legal support; and iii) intercultural education for workers of the institution and the community at large.

2.1 Linguistic and digital literacy support

Alongside financial and housing problems, many of the difficulties for migrant and refugee students in achieving academic degrees in a foreign country could be traced back to linguistic difficulties in the hosting language and lack of knowledge of the new academic culture (Arar, Haj-Yehia, Ross & Kondakci, 2019; Hirano, 2015). A major concern, that we then confirmed through situated research in this context (Ruano & Melpoifeifer, 2021), was that offering regular Portuguese classes might not be sufficient to cope with the challenges attached to the mastering of academic registers and conventions.

PMUB professors have been offering the ‘Linguistic and Academic Welcoming Course’ to many students to begin their undergraduate courses (freshmen), even before their faculty courses start. This offer focuses on Portuguese with specific purposes, for five weeks, in addition to information about how UFPR works, visits to the various campuses, lectures with vice-rectors, coordinators and staff from strategic areas, computer classes, activities with the psychology project team, among other activities. At the end of the five weeks, the ‘Re-Entry Congress’ is held, in which these students make an oral presentation about a theme chosen during the course and related to the undergraduate course they will start.

In this line, PMUB also created the extensive Academic Portuguese course, offered to all refugee freshmen, in which written and oral academic language genres are taught. This course was incorporated in 2020 into the PFS-Refugiado, explained later. In this course, the students have to write a weekly report about their academic life, including the challenges of the week. Through these tasks, we get to know how students are repeatedly confronted with prejudice, racism and xenophobic symbolic acts.
from some of their classmates, professors, and technical staff, still showing some institutionalised barriers to integration.

After four years of developing those actions, the University group of professors, through new legislation, created ‘Year Zero’, aiming to enhance adaptation, reception and integration of the refugee or migrant student into the university and social life, increasing their chances of academic success. For this purpose, their first year at the university foresees formative activities that contemplate, at least, the following competencies: i) linguistic and cultural codes and practices in Portuguese, to skilfully follow other academic subjects and formative activities; ii) understanding of inclusion as a subject of rights and duties, necessary to the construction of more equitable and democratic social relations; iii) skills and knowledge related to the academic culture and daily life in UFPR; and iv) understanding the curriculum of the course on which the student is enrolled, its requirements and possibilities. This means that migrant and refugee freshmen take fewer subjects on their courses, have Portuguese classes, as well as Law, Computer and Psychology classes.

As we said before, the support offered by UFPR is not limited to enrolled students. Regarding migrants and refugees that are not regular graduation course students, the professors’ group created some special projects, executed by themselves and their students.

The very first one is the ‘Brazilian Portuguese for Humanitarian Migration Project’ (PBMH - external), developed within the framework of the Language and Literature course, which offers free courses in Brazilian Portuguese to migrants and refugees, regardless of the level of language knowledge. These linguistic courses are offered in addition to the promotion of cultural activities, translation and dissemination of information, and special workshops (Creole language, embroidery, etc.). The project started all the actions in the area, back in 2013. In those Brazilian Portuguese classes, the majority of students are Venezuelans, Haitians, Syrians, Congolese, but there are also other nationalities, especially Latin and African. The methodology ‘Revolving-revolving’ (Porta Giratória) allowing new students to enter at any time during the course is also used.

The number of women in the classes continuously increases and many students have to take their children to class with them. In the beginning, the children stayed in the classrooms, with no specific activity, making
learning difficult for their mothers. Together with the realisation that women were enrolled in Portuguese classes in inferior numbers and with higher drop-out rates than their male counterparts, in 2017 a specific space was created for children, where training and playful activities were carried out, becoming an autonomous project: 'Small Children from all over the world' (Pequenos do Mundo). In this project, activities are supervised by the coordinating teacher, in partnership with Psychology teachers and students, in a special room, with toys and appropriate teaching material, some of them donated from campaigns and UNHCR Brazil donations. Therefore, Pequenos do Mundo allows women to have equal access to education in the language of the host country and is a setting to allow mothers to attend the classes and children to socialise with peers.

Another area, but still related to the development of basic literacy skills, as we mentioned previously, is the Computer Training Courses for Immigrants and Refugees Project, from the Computer Science faculty, that offers free computer classes to the students of the Portuguese language courses, at two levels (basic and advanced). Those classes happen one hour before the language classes, to facilitate attendance and increase the permanence on both courses (Silva, Stein & Künze, 2020).

2.2 Social assistance: health, financial, administrative and legal support

Concerning social assistance and scholarship, UFPR is a federal public university, so students do not have to pay tuition. The Dean of Student Affairs closely monitors UFPR’s humanitarian migrant and refugee students and develops a selection process to provide housing aid, since there is no student dormitory at UFPR, food aid (to use the university restaurant free of charge), and permanence aid, which is a kind of scholarship. Besides, PMUB has an agreement with the Labor Prosecutor Office that makes available a budget from labour fines imposed on companies by the labour courts, which UFPR transforms into a permanence scholarship for some of the students, usually those who can’t get aid from the Pró-Reitoria de Assuntos Estudantis (Dean of Student Affairs, in English). In both cases, the students, who complain about the low standard of living they provide, consider the values low.

Considering administrative and legal support, a special project has been created to assist not only migrants and refugee graduate students but also
those from society. ‘Refuge, Migration and Hospitality Project’ (also known as Porta 28), developed in Law School, is located in the UFPR’s Historic Building where Professors and students daily provided all kinds of help, be it in person, by phone or email. Law students work with all kinds of migrants and refugees issues, namely rectification of information in documents, translations, the progress of the refugee recognition process, and entry into family reunion requests. In the field of education, they assist with foreign high school credits recognition, foreign college degree recognition and university admission. The project is responsible for the agreement with the National Refugee Committee of the Ministry of Justice (placed in Brasília), through which official interviews with asylum seekers have been conducted.

‘AMMAR – Alliance of Migrants, Refugees and Stateless Women’ is an interdisciplinary initiative involving women university professors and students, Brazilians and migrants from all courses, especially, Law School and Psychology. It promotes actions directed toward all migrant and refugee women who have been victims of gender violence. The participants have been active in the field of awareness, and integral accompaniment of concrete isolated cases, in workplaces where harassment has been noticed, in places of commerce where they have suffered discrimination, and at the women’s special police department and in the diverse organs that compose the Brazilian Women’s House in Curitiba. It acts in collaboration with the Migrant Women’s Network, which involves the Labor Prosecutor’s Office, Brazilian Bar Association, Women’s Police Station, IOM, among other entities.

Related to health and psychological care, there are two main projects, MOVE and Caminhos do SUS:
– ‘MOVE, Migration and Subjectivation Processes: Psychoanalysis and Politics in the Migrant and Refugee Care Network’, is a project developed in the Psychology Department. It offers psychological care and support to migrants and refugees in the community and acts in the process of selection and monitoring of migrants and refugees for various purposes within the university. It also tutors these students and accompanies them on the trajectory of their undergraduate and graduate courses at UFPR.
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– In the Brazilian Public Health System Pathway Project (Caminhos do SUS), Medical School professors and students disseminate information and raise awareness about health and the Brazilian Unified System, for migrants and refugees. The University also has a general medical structure that offers primary medical care to all students.

2.3 Intercultural education of the internal team and hosting community at large

A recent initiative proposed by PMUB was a training course for the UFPR internal community (administrative staff, professors, course coordinators) on the reception of migrants and refugee graduating students. The course, called 'Overcoming (our) borders: international migration and the reception of migrants and refugees', featured four modules on the following topics: i) human displacement and the situation of migrants and refugees in Brazil; ii) UFPR’s action already implemented for migrants and refugees; iii) the reality of migrant and refugee students at UFPR; and iv) the fight against oppression and inequality in its multiple dimensions, in the social space and the academic space. The central idea of the training was to discuss, through reflective practice, how to improve the university’s relationship with its migrant and refugee students, and in addition, to be another tool to prevent and combat racism and xenophobia. At the end of the course, participants created an institutional support network for these students.

Another action in this direction, promoted by PMUB in partnership with the Communication and Marketing Superintendence, to raise awareness and train the UFPR community in the process of welcoming migrants and refugees at the University, was the institutional campaign called ‘New starts are possible’ (Recomeços são possíveis). This action aims at raising awareness of the need to practise empathy with students who left their countries in search of better living conditions. So, at the beginning of the 2019 academic year, that organism sent all professors, students and administrative staff an email to publicise the campaign featuring migrant and refugee students (and their narratives of displacement), and explaining the importance of having them at UFPR. At the same time, some publicity arts were published on the UFPR social networks.
In addition to internal university community awareness, it has always been a concern of the Program to sensitise UFPR’s external community to the issue of forced displacement. In this sense, the cultural initiative ‘Literature of Refuge’, literary meetings open to the public at large, addressing the theme of forced displacement throughout the 20th century, was developed. In these meetings, foreign literary excerpts are read, first, in the original, usually by students from the author’s country of origin, and then the translation, which is usually done by the students as one of the assignments of the Portuguese course. These meetings are thematic, held in public places, such as the historical buildings, theatres or bookstores in the city. At the end of the readings, a debate is proposed about the literary texts and the feelings they evoke (Ruano & Cursino, 2019).

Another intercultural activity that took place was the show ‘Voices and Cultures’, presented by migrant and refugee students from UFPR to disseminate the plurality of voices and cultures existing at the university (Ruano et al., 2020). The dramaturgy was built together with the students during the Portuguese classes in the year 2018 and had the support of a drama teacher. To generate content, the group started with the productions made throughout the course, such as autobiographical texts. Some students chose to stage part of the dramatisation dialogues in their mother tongues, others sang and recited songs and authorial poetry. In addition, some students recorded excerpts from their academic diaries and presented them in skits during the event.

Thus, through these actions, involving the migrant and the hosting communities, we have tried, on the one hand, to sensitise the internal community of UFPR about the need to develop welcoming and empathic practices towards migrant and refugee students, and, on the other hand, to build a bridge between the migrant and the hosting communities (Maher, 2007).

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2 The presentations took place in two important theatres in the city of Curitiba: Capela Santa Maria and Teatro Guaíra.
3. Discussion: lessons learned and looking forward

The narrative account in this paper showed how UFPR reacted to a socially and educationally pressing issue. After almost 8 years of continuous activism, in which migrant and refugee students participated at all stages (from planning to execution and, to a lesser extent, to assessment), the whole university approach we described needs to engage in reflexive action, to find ways for further development and growing participation. The approach, we saw, covered curricular and extracurricular activities, aimed at students and communities, both migrant and non-migrant. This holistic approach is intended to be ecological in the sense that promoting the integration of migrant and refugee students in Higher Education cannot be seen as detached from the broader context; it depends on initiatives facilitating the enrolment in a specific course (we could see it here as a micro level), but it happens in meso and macro contexts, meaning, the University as an environment (meso level) in interaction with the city, the society and the political scenarios (the macro level). As we conceive of it, the admission of migrant and refugee students is an important step to increase the chances of achieving Higher Education studies (through test accommodation, for example), but it is at the level of the interaction between micro, meso and macro levels that the permanence of these students in the institution is possible. We thus organise our discussion on paths forward around these three levels.

At the micro level (the different programs), we identify the need to articulate the development of skills in the heritage/home language and in the language of the host country, through the development of more integrated pedagogies. Another possibility facilitating migrant and refugee students could be the establishment of a program of mentorship, in which students with and/or without migrant and refugee backgrounds would assist the newcomers. A particular self-assessment and monitoring of each program could also be envisaged. We saw how the university opened up to migrants and refugees. It would be important to take a step further and empower these students to create their own initiatives opening up to the academia and the population in general: empowering meaning here not just being enrolled in initiatives designed for them, but also becoming the (co)designers of their own courses and initiatives.
At the meso level (the institution), the time has come to reflect on the coherence and complementarity of all the projects, and on how to engage migrant and refugee students themselves in the processes of decision-making. Another aspect worthwhile reflecting on is the interaction between volunteers and professionals and the permanence of volunteers in the projects, to make them more sustainable and to capitalise on the experience each person makes. The coordinating professors of each project also carry out such activities voluntarily, in actions that are considered extension activities and that do not exclude the teaching and research activities that are part of their assignments.

Having said this, it is important to fully institutionalise the program ‘Migration Policy and Brazilian University Program’, meaning, becoming an organic element of the academic life and assignments of the institution and its staff, and not dependent (almost exclusively) on individuals who might (have to) abandon the university and leave a part of the project behind. A step forward could be the launching of internal guidelines on the integration policies of the institution, referring to shared responsibilities of all bodies and specific missions assigned to different faculties.

We referred to the trilogy research-education-action. The articulation between these three elements could be strengthened through the development of postgraduate research on the projects and their accomplishments, thus helping to legitimate them at the university level and creating meaningful knowledge for the institution. The aforementioned articulation could also be strengthened through specific monitoring and assessment actions in the sense of discovering ways to optimise the offers and their results. This research could both follow an ethic and an emic perspective, i.e., based on researchers’ and refugees’ perspectives, respectively, meaning doing research about, for and with refugee and migrant students.

In terms of ways forward at the meso level, engaging in processes of listening to the academic population to discover new paths and redesign others in the face of contextual fluctuations and/or constraints (political changes, changes in terms of funding of institutions, changes in the populations targeted by hosting initiatives, etc.) might be necessary soon. A blind spot we see is the lack of support provided for graduate migrant and refugee students at the professional level: after enrolment and permanence in the institution leading to graduation, how are migrant and refugee ex-students integrated into the labour market? We need to compare
entry trajectories into the labour market of regular, and migrant and refugee ex-students, to understand similarities and differences in the trajectories, hurdles and obstacles faced by both groups. This step, we believe, is crucial to assess the transformative potential of our whole university approach.

At the **macro level** (Brazilian society and academia at large), direct interaction with other Brazilian and Latin American universities with hosting programs already established or being established could be fostered. Such interaction would leverage exchange about experiences and practices, advances and setbacks, and favour the eventual creation of a network of universities interested in developing a ‘whole university approach to migrant and refugee students’ integration’, articulating research, education, action, and quality assurance and assessment.

**Conclusion**

Brazil doesn’t seem to be losing its role as a host country in the times to come, as the countries most represented in the statistical surveys of incoming migrants and refugees are still facing political, social and economic instability that does not promote the safe return of their citizens. The recent events leading to the murder of Haiti’s president is an important sign of that instability.

In terms of transferability of the whole university approach presented here to other contexts, some issues must be considered. First, Brazil, like other countries, has a federal structure, meaning that each federal state has the independence to pursue its own policies. In the Federal State of Paraná the regulations and the powers allocated to the public university of UFPR allowed these initiatives to take place (even if their survival might be menaced by political intervention at the level of university management and financing). Another issue that has to be taken into consideration is the question of the structures (already) in place and how they might combine at a grassroots and at a higher political level. In a previous contribution (Friedrich, Melo-Pfeifer & Ruano, 2021), we compared the German and the Brazilian policies on integration of refugees and
migrants, focusing on the right to language education and the linguistic rights of these target populations. We showed that both countries have different approaches to this issue: Germany seems to be predominantly top-down oriented, while Brazil is fertile in terms of grassroots initiatives, following a bottom-up tendency. This might be because different countries have different histories of contact with migrant and refugee populations over the years. Germany, for example, experienced different cycles of migration, with peaks of migration and refuge after the end of the Second World War; Brazil has less experience in this domain (see Wejsa & Lesser, 2018, for a historic panorama). In both cases, however, public opinion and media coverage tend to thematise the reception and integration of migrants and refugees as a new ‘problem’, an emergency, in the double sense of the word: something that has suddenly emerged and something that must be responded to quickly, as it is a critical situation. So, the transferability of the experiences we reported on in this contribution is also dependent on the social representations in the host countries.

Also importantly, the implementation and success of such initiatives hinge on the individual migrants and refugees themselves, as ‘putting resources in place is not a sufficient measure of equity as people are differently positioned to transform such opportunities into valued outcomes’ (Molla, 2021:2). It is thus important to know the life, academic and linguistic trajectories of the individuals and to understand how they can or will use the academic resources without impediment (idem), avoiding discrimination against (some of) the students that the university itself wants to reach.

Each country (but also every institution) must access the best strategy to implement the whole university approach we presented or some of the ideas included in it. As we saw in the previous section, a coherent strategy should go beyond isolated initiatives and the institution itself, that is, an endemic and inward-looking perspective, articulating initiatives at micro, meso and macro levels.
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