

Canada-Brazil

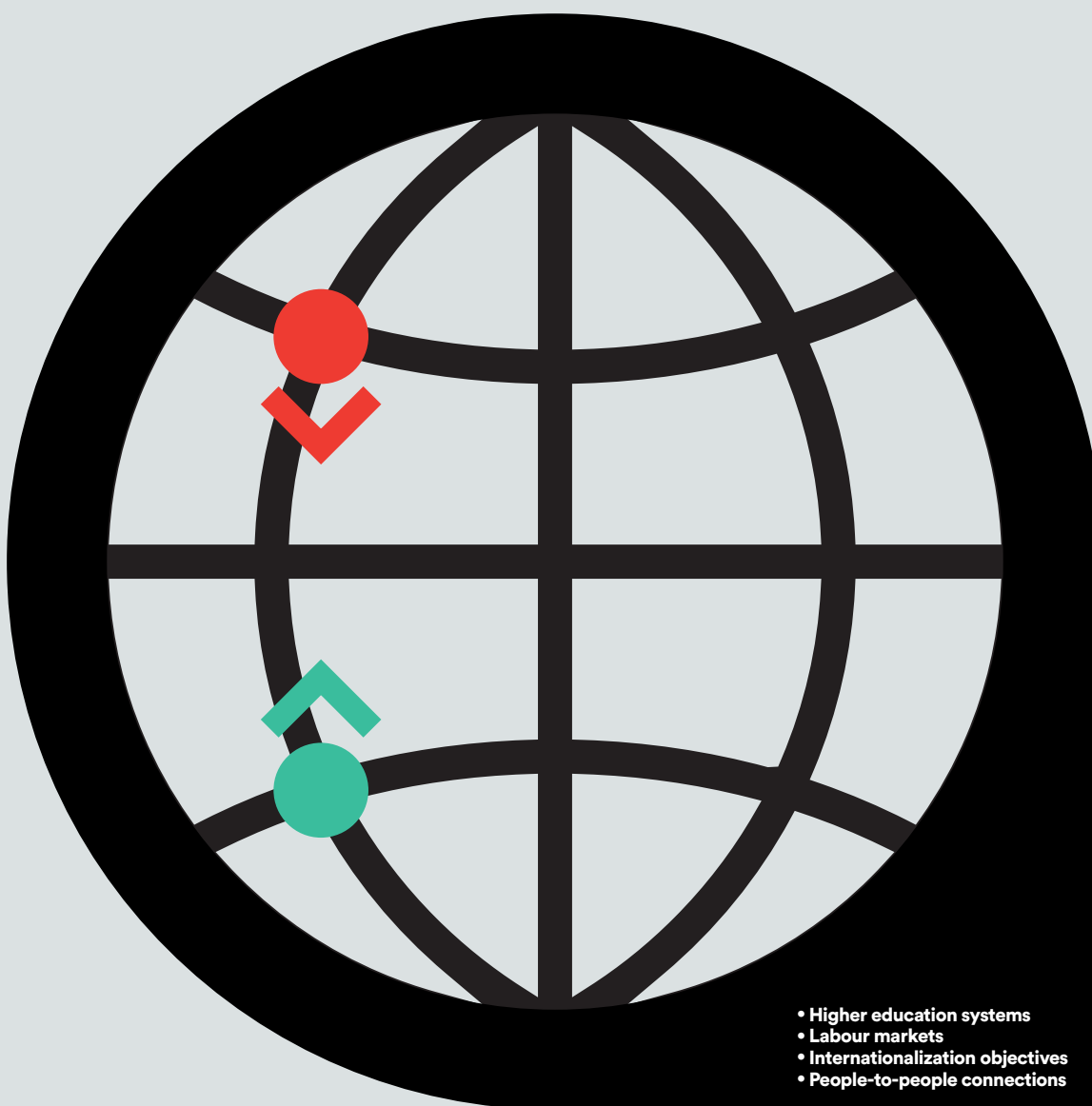
Language, Education and
Workforce Forum



Universities
Canada.

Workshop Report

March 21-22, 2016
São Paulo, Brazil



- Higher education systems
- Labour markets
- Internationalization objectives
- People-to-people connections



Representatives of the organizing partners (Universities Canada, Languages Canada, Colleges and Institutes Canada, the Brazilian Association for International Education (FAUBAI) and the Languages without Borders program of the Brazilian Ministry of Education) with Consul General of Canada to São Paulo Stéphane LaRue

Universities Canada, Languages Canada, Colleges and Institutes Canada, the Brazilian Association for International Education (FAUBAI) and the Languages without Borders program of the Brazilian Ministry of Education co-hosted the *2nd Canada-Brazil Language, Education and Workforce Forum* in São Paulo, Brazil March 21-22. The event was supported by the Canadian Embassy in Brasília, the Canadian Consulate General in São Paulo, and the Government of Canada's *Global Opportunities for Associations* program.

With close to 100 participants from Canadian and Brazilian universities, colleges, government and industry, the event was a bilateral, trilingual dialogue of international education practitioners, language education experts, senior policy-makers and industry leaders to discuss the needs of Brazil's and Canada's higher education systems and labour forces and to identify common solutions to support our mutual internationalization objectives.

With a forward-focused view on advancing Canada-Brazil collaboration and cooperation, participants explored:

- the role of internationalization of higher education in building a global workforce;
- the role of institutions, industry and government in internationalization and opportunities for international/intersectoral collaboration; and
- how best to move beyond the *Science without Borders* era to a deeper Canada-Brazil higher education relationship, through work-integrated learning, industry engagement and research.

In light of the current political-economic context in Brazil and uncertainty around future *Science without Borders/Languages without Borders* funding, discussions focused on identifying long-term, sustainable modes of collaboration. A significant commitment to maintaining existing linkages and inciting new creative forms of partnership was expressed by both Canadian and Brazilian participants.



Building a Global Workforce

The event was greatly enriched by the participation and perspectives offered from not-for-profit, academic, government and industry representatives. The importance of language and international experience in preparing students for current and future labour market needs was highlighted. The benefits of study abroad in building soft skills, flexibility and adaptability, and ability to function in a global work context were identified.

Marcelo Sarkis, chair of the Innovation, Science and Technology Committee, Brazil-Canada Chamber of Commerce highlighted the importance of language for business success – noting that profit, revenue and market share are equally impacted by language skills. Language skills are imperative in the business world and cannot be separated from culture. The notion is that “if the parties speak and understand the same language and just as important have an appreciation for each other’s business culture, both sides win.”

Joe Blomeley, former vice president, Policy Innovation and Skills at the Business Council

of Canada shared results from a recent survey of large Canadian employers. He noted that employers are increasingly looking for “innovation-readiness skills” for entry-level hiring, and are focusing less on hard skills and functional knowledge. He also noted that expectations for entry-level hires have changed dramatically due to advances in technology and robotics – new employees are expected “to hit the ground running with thinking roles in the company.” As a result, it is much more difficult for students to ease into the workplace. Increasing opportunities for student participation in work-integrated learning - including international opportunities between Canada and Brazil - based on partnerships between postsecondary institutions and companies is seen as integral to preparing the future workforce.

João Ricciarelli, managing director, Bombardier Brazil pointed out that there is much work to be done to create relationships between post-secondary institutions in Brazil and industry in Brazil and Canada to provide opportunities for the development of talent – and in the long-term to subsequently boost Brazil and Canada’s global competitiveness.



Rick Savone, Ambassador of Canada to Brazil



João Ricciarelli, Managing Director, Bombardier in Brazil

Yvon Doyle, Director, External Relations, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Government of Québec

Marie-Josée Fortin, Director, International Partnerships, Colleges and Institutes Canada

Joe Blomeley, (Former) Vice President, Policy Innovation and Skills, Business Council of Canada



Opportunities for Intersectoral/ International Collaboration

Institutions, industry and government all have an important role to play in the internationalization of higher education and the development of a global workforce. For example, there is a role for government in developing public policy that will support the internationalization of higher education. The *Science without Borders* program was viewed by participants as a bold project for internationalization of higher education that put Brazil on the international map. Government policies are required to advance the quantity and quality of foreign language learning in both the Brazilian and Canadian contexts – thereby preparing citizens for a global labour market.

Several opportunities for research and research training collaboration between Canada and Brazil were raised at the event – in particular the notion that industry-academic collaboration can and ought to extend beyond national boundaries. Marcelo Sarkis noted that Brazilian companies in Canada are natural partners for academic collaboration and can share what soft skills are required to succeed in business in Canada and Brazil. There is a leadership role to be played by industry in providing opportunities for talent development through work-integrated learning. It was noted that Canada is very strong in co-op programming – over half of Canadian university graduates have some form of experiential learning during their studies. Yet, demand for these types of experience is rising and more placement opportunities are needed – this demand could be supported through placements in Brazil.

Participants agreed that there is significant opportunity for multilateral/bilateral academic

research collaboration on issues of common interest to Canada, Brazil and other countries. Even very local problems have global relevance and will be best addressed through international collaboration with an emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches – in particular with the inclusion of social sciences and humanities disciplines. As Martha Crago, vice president, Research, Dalhousie University and academic representative to the *Canada-Brazil Science and Technology Joint Committee* pointed out, research priorities need to go beyond business/economic interests. “Canada and Brazil could do incredible social sciences and humanities research together – for example, through joint projects on Indigenous issues. Our scholarly resources could be put to tremendous use in better serving our Indigenous populations.”

Deepening the Canada-Brazil Higher Education Relationship – Beyond Science without Borders

Brazilian participants highlighted both positive and challenging aspects of the current *Science without Borders* program. The program launched the internationalization of higher education institutions at a national scale in Brazil. As noted by Leandro Tessler, professor, Gleb Wataghin Institute of Physics, University of Campinas (Unicamp): “there were many failures of the *Science without Borders* program but the main problem created was the perception that Brazil is a consumer of language and education services. Rather, Brazil should be considered as a partner in research.” The *Science without Borders* model is viewed by many Brazilians as financially unsustainable. Several participants emphasized the need to move internationalization discussions beyond the mobility of Brazilian students to focus on



Marcelo Sarkis, Chair,
Innovation, Science and
Technology Committee,
Brazil-Canada Chamber of
Commerce



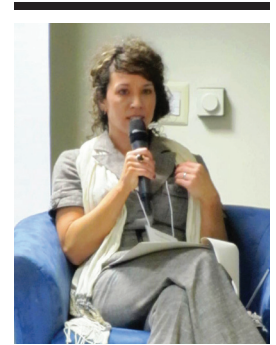
Martha Crago, Vice President,
Research, Dalhousie University
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the Canada-Brazil Science and
Technology Joint Committee



cooperation and more reciprocal relations. It was noted that reciprocity does not mean equal numbers of students moving between countries, but rather equal overall benefits. Despite the current challenges, participants deemed that now is the most appropriate time to invest in education, partnerships and a long-term vision to capitalize on the momentum that has been created by *Science without Borders*.

While providing mobility opportunities for Brazilian students will remain important – through exchanges or other funding programs, there was also significant emphasis in the discussions on the need to encourage Canadian students to learn Portuguese and study in Brazil. Summer programs in Brazil, or courses taught in English in Brazil may help to entice Canadian students. Furthermore, it was suggested that the provision of opportunities for faculty mobility may present a sustainable and high impact solution. Faculty members that gain international experience will bring this knowledge back to their classrooms and impact a wide number of students.

Strategic partnerships were noted as an important way forward in the Canada-Brazil higher education relationship. There are significant opportunities for collaboration in the sciences and the social sciences and humanities on specific challenges such as climate change, an aging population, and Indigenous issues. Through strategic partnerships, funding sources can be leveraged. As pointed out by Stéphanie Dion, director of International Affairs at Université de Montréal, partnerships can lead to different benefits for each partner (including reputation, influence, rankings, staff development, and sharing practices). As Lia Pachalski, vice coordinator, International Relations Forum, Conselho Nacional das Instituições da Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica (CONIF) pointed out, in the strategic selection of institutions for partnerships, it is imperative that partners understand each other’s unique missions and values as institutions and adjust accordingly. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to internationalization or international partnerships.



Stéphanie Dion, Director, International Affairs, Université de Montréal



Nicole Poirier, Language Learning Centre coordinator, Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick

Leandro Tessler, Professor, Gleb Wataghin Institute of Physics, University of Campinas (Unicamp)

Waldenor Moraes, Vice-president, Idiomas sem Fronteiras (Languages without Borders) program



Small-group discussions



Digital technologies provide an additional significant opportunity for exploring new types of partnerships between Canada and Brazil and need to be considered more in institutional international strategies according to Andy Lang, director, Concordia International, Concordia University. Digital technologies are reducing time and space – and surpassing the need for travel. New models of internationalization between Canada and Brazil through technology should be explored. For example, technology could facilitate twinned classrooms providing an important means of ‘internationalization at home’ for both Brazilian and Canadian students. As noted by Stéphane Larue, consul general of Canada in São Paulo, internationalization efforts should focus not only on productivity and economic growth, but on social inclusion and equality.

Fundamental cultural changes are required in both Canada and Brazil in order to advance partnerships and the internationalization of higher education. Both countries will need to do more to encourage a culture of mobility among their students. This will require funding support, faculty promotion, and an understanding by parents of the benefits that such opportunities bring. Postsecondary institution staff and faculty need to be prepared for internationalization through their own international experiences. The role of institutions in recognizing and integrating other cultures on their campuses will also be instrumental in advancing internationalization efforts. Integration of language training into curriculum is viewed as imperative for preparing students to be abroad and understand other cultures – but it must start at an early age. Stricter language requirements must be enforced in the K-12 sector to ensure real proficiency.

Next Steps

Universities Canada, Languages Canada, Colleges and Institutes Canada, the Brazilian Association for International Education (FAUBAI) and the Languages without Borders program of the Brazilian Ministry of Education remain committed to advancing the Canada-Brazil higher education relationship by promoting bilateral academic relations and providing opportunities for institutions to engage with each other. Student, faculty and institutional connections between Canada and Brazil are what will ultimately define the success of the relationship. The *2nd Canada-Brazil Language, Education and Workforce Forum* was an opportunity to not only analyze the dynamics and opportunities of the Canada-Brazil higher education relationship, but to actively build on the relationship through new institutional connections and expansion of existing partnerships. Participating institutions will continue to explore opportunities through new institutional contacts acquired at the event and to leverage existing partnerships to promote new innovative forms of collaboration. The mobilization of talent will be critical to building an innovative, inclusive and prosperous Canada and Brazil.

The forum was co-hosted by Universities Canada, Languages Canada, Colleges and Institutes Canada, the Brazilian Association for International Education (FAUBAI) and the Languages without Borders program of the Brazilian Ministry of Education, with the generous support and collaboration of the Canadian Consulate General in São Paulo and the Government of Canada's *Global Opportunities for Associations* program.



In collaboration with:





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