The impact of the Brazilian Science without Borders programme on university internationalization: Sapienza's and UNESP experience

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The Science without Borders Programme

National Development Strategy

• Massive investment in education & research skills development knowledge-based economy
• Focus on national strategic challenges (Engineering and other technological areas); Promotion of industrial R,D&I

Programme Objectives

• Boost Brazilian science, technology, innovation and competitiveness through the expansion of international mobility. (100.000 fellowships in 4 years)
• Increase the presence of Brazilian researchers and students of various levels in institutions of excellence overseas;
• Attract young scientific talents and highly qualified researchers to work in Brazil.
Science without Border… in Italy

A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT BRASIL

• Boost in interest in Italy-Brazil cooperation in higher education and research

PROGRAMME COORDINATION

• University of Bologna
  ☑ Cooperative, rather than competitive approach
    (different from other European countries)

TARGET GROUPS

• Sandwich undergraduates
• Degree seeking PhD
• Sandwich PhD
• Post-Doc
The Italian SwB network

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
University of Bologna (secretariat)
University of Florence
University of Milano
Polytechnic of Milano
University of Padova
University of Pisa
Sapienza University of Rome
University of Rome ‘Tor Vergata’
University of Roma Tre
Polytechnic of Torino
University of Trento
University of Camerino
University of Siena
University of Venezia Ca’ Foscari
University of Modena & Reggio Emilia

Public reseach centres
CNR - Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche
Instituto BIOGEM

Companies: TELECOM ITALIA
The Italian SwB network – new partners

**NEW HEI (2014/2015)**
- University of Trieste
- University of Udine
- IUAV
- Polytechnic University of Marche
- University of Salerno
- University of Bergamo
- University of Genova
- University of Palermo
- University of Pavia
- University of Torino

**NEW RESEARCH CENTRES (2014/2015)**
- ENEA
- Area Science Park di Trieste
Facts and figures

ITALY

• Programme duration: 2012-1016
• 2012 Call (undergraduates): 400 students
• 2013 Call (undergraduates): 1200 students (currently in Italy)
• 2014 Call (undergraduates): 950 students (arriving in August 2014)

SAPIENZA

• 2012 Call (undergrad): 54
• 2013 Call (undergrad): 127 (over 200 applications received)
• 2014 Call (undergrad): 176 (approx. 500 applications received – despite the general decrease in applications for Italy)
SwB impact on Sapienza’s internationalization (1)

Central level (International Office)

- Fully portuguese-speaking dedicated staff
- Social media
- Webinars
- Fairs
- Word of mouth
- Personalized map of Rome & Sapienza

- Student guides in PT
- Information videos
- New partnerships
- Improvement of international student database
- Launch of ‘Buddy programme’
- Organization of 1° welcome week
- Ongoing QA
- Sharing of good practices with other Italian HEI
- Increased collaboration

- 54 176 (in 3 years)
- Brazil not key market until 2012
- Big numbers require strategic changes

- Non-EU student mobility increased

- Student support services improved

- New marketing approaches
SwB impact on Sapienza’s internationalization (2)

Faculty level

- High commitment of professors
- New welcome procedures at Faculty level
- Organization of extra-curricular activities for international students (especially Fac. Architecture)

- Access to Sapienza career service also for international students
- Dedicated internship portal by UNIBO
- Involvement in research projects

Improvement of Faculty international student services

Integration of internships in mobility period

Involvement of students in project & team work
Key challenge 1: credit recognition

Our tools:

• Use of Learning Agreement + ECTS
• *However:* reluctance by Brazilian Universities & students; lack of knowledge of EU tools; skepticism by students (they often prefer to ‘add value’ to their academic curricula rather than have full recognition)
SwB ITALY: Open challenges

Key challenge 2: international student integration

Our solutions:
- Buddy programmes, joint team work, welcome week, etc.
- However: more foreign students on campus do not necessarily produce a more internationalized student community
  - Academic, cultural and/or social marginalisation of international students is still a challenge
SwB at Unesp

Brazil – outgoing students
• 2012 to 2014 Calls (undergraduates): 40,582

UNESP – outgoing students
• 2012 Call (undergraduates): 108 students
• 2013 Call (undergraduates): 404 students
• 2014 Call (undergraduates): 771 students
Science without Borders

http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf/painel-de-controle
## Last Call – distribution

**Italy – 9th national position and 4th Unesp (2014 Call)**

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Impacts on Internationalization at Unesp (1)

Unesp has doubled the amount of outgoing students after SwB
Impacts on Internationalization at Unesp (2)

- Milestone for Internationalization of brazilian universities – comparable to Erasmus in Europe;

- Great majority of universities started to create new internal structures to manage the program;

- Investment in language teaching and official certification – especially English to prepare students to apply; Unesp offered crash course in Italian to prepare students;

- Change of scenario in terms of potential partnerships (large amount of representatives of diverse countries visited to disseminate their programs);
Impacts on Internationalization at Unesp (3)

- Students requests for different teaching models with decrease of classwork (in Brazil – 8 hours/day);

- Opportunities for disadvantaged student to take up international mobility;

- Flexibility towards credit recognition, especially in courses like Medicine;

- English without Borders – massive investment in English language diagnosis;

- Integration of schools and faculties towards internationalization;
Summary

Key questions for discussion:

• What impact had the SwB programme on the internationalization of your universities so far?

• What recognition tools/mechanisms have put in place? Do you face any difficulties with this?

• How do you handle the integration difficulties of foreign students at your institution?

• What comes next for Science without Borders?

• How will brazilian universities assess the quality of the mobilities?

• Brazilian universities requested to directly manage the scholarships and mobilities; what impact might that bring?
Contacts

www.cienciasemfronteiras.it
http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br

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THANK YOU!