



Project: Reception as a soft power: the universe of refugees between education, language and heritage

Description of the Project

Carried out in the fields of History, Education and Linguistics, this project seeks to enhance the interaction between refugees professors and research groups from Sérgio Vieira de Melo Chair – UFJF, which have implemented policies permanence at the university, focusing on cultural heritage.

Context of the Project

UFJF has a regional mission, focused on research, as well as an extensionist aptitude and a clear internationalist vocation, focusing on the training of human resources, researchers and teachers for primary, secondary and university education. It has consolidated itself as a relevant option among the universities located in the southeast region of the country, given its quality and strategic location (close to major centers), and has organized itself seeking to: a) Contribute to the qualified formation of human resources in the area of Human Sciences, especially in the areas of History and Education; b) To train qualified professionals to work in public and private education networks, at all levels and in institutions related to research and/or preservation of memory, both public and private; c) To contribute to the academic production in the area, through the production and dissemination of research of excellence; d) To disseminate to the public outside the Academy the results of research produced by the Program, returning to society the public investment that has been made over all these years. The goals are: a) Assisting in the implementation of public policies related to research and the preservation of historical and cultural heritage and Education and b) Constituting a space for the gathering of Brazilian and foreign researchers and for the development of inter-institutional collective research projects.

In this sense, the stay of the refugee professor should act to improve the quality of graduate studies, being able to teach classes, guide students, cooperate in the preparation of projects for fundraising in national and international agencies, as well as in the production of articles to be submitted to journals with high impact factor. The professor must also be able to expand internationalization activities, enable scientific and technological exchange and participation in research networks, primarily international ones. In order to boost the internationalization process, intensified over the last few years, the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research and the Board of International Relations at UFJF have carried out a series of initiatives with direct impacts on the institution's graduate programs, dedicated institution's graduate Internationalization. The relevance of the activities in which the refugee teacher will be inserted is to the extent that only the cultural interaction



promoted between the professor and his collaborators, within the scope of the project, it will enable fluidity in order to take advantage of the intellectual contribution brought by the refugee teacher, as well as the selected post doctoral student. Their research networks, as well as their projects could be interesting gateways to new programs and inter-institutional projects. Moreover, the triangulation among the Graduate Programs associated with this project (History, Education and Linguistics), will allow free transit in the various interests of the selected profile.

Inputs

The project will be developed in the scope of the Graduate Programs in History, Education, and Linguistics, and the professors and post doctoral fellow will have working offices with computers, unlimited internet access, and unrestricted access to the libraries and laboratories of the three Graduate Programs. The deepening of the two selected themes will serve as a gateway to new projects and the analysis of other related themes, which, in practice, has already been happening with the projects developed in the ambit of the Laboratory of Cultural Heritage - LAPA from UFJF such as in the projects developed in the context of the institutional of Heritage and International Relations group - The National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the research group of Applied Linguistics, Education and Human Rights (LAEDH), laboratories home to the pedagogical residence of the refugee teacher and his post doctoral student.

Problem

The welcoming is a *parti pris* of diversity. Diversity welcomes, it is of its nature. UFJF is characterized by being a university that excels in the diversity and plurality, without hiding any conflicts and disputes existing in its daily lives. Ignorance about the universe of people in a situation of refuge potentiates prejudice. With this as a premise, UFJF coexists with different religions, ethnicities, ideologies, nationalities and economic situations, which are found in a complex and vibrant way in our daily lives. Therefore, the expansion of human relations, with a plural bias, is enhanced by the admission of teachers who have in their cultural baggage the experience of refuge. The condition of refugees, this "compulsory differential" imposed on their lives can certainly help the academic community of our institution to share experiences that only the difficulties of the refugee situation can teach. On the other hand, it is undeniable that the presence of refugee professors will potentiate the internationalization of the Graduate Programs involved in this project. The expansion of international networks of contact and research along with the feasibility of establishing new international agreements will help to further consolidate a position that has guided the actions of this institution in the last decade. These contacts will also facilitate the viability of institutional exchange, with temporary departures of both teachers and students in research situations abroad, as well as the reception of other researchers/teachers who may be incorporated into the various research networks



already established. Cultural coexistence is undoubtedly another essential element in maintaining this plural position sponsored by UFJF. The arrival of foreign professors as refugees will make it possible to expand the exposure of themes dear to the universe of refuge and, with this, encourage new ways of learning from difficulties, seeking in the full experience of foreign academic experiences, a peaceful and stimulating way of coexistence for students, teachers and academic management.

The goals of this proposal are:

1st: To deepen the internationalization of the Graduate Programs involved, enabling the production and extroversion of cutting-edge research in the area of human sciences;

2nd: To consolidate actions that can become permanent practices in the academic calendar of the institution, such as specific calls for collaboration of refugee professors (volunteers or scholarship holders) that help in the consolidation of existing research groups and the feasibility of new groups, thus potentiating a greater attractiveness of students on topics still little discussed by them, brought from the experience of the selected refugee professors.

3rd: To deliver, at the end of this project, academic products that consolidate this exchange, having as a result, the insertion and expansion of the refugee community.

Relevance

The activities will be carried out in three dimensions:

Articulation: participation in projects in the field of cultural heritage and education whose data generation processes occur concomitantly with extensionist actions in dialogue with the community outside the University.

Induction: it foresees the engagement of refugee researchers in a process of data generation committed to the demands of the environment and to cognitive social justice, through scientific updating and careful listening to the participating community, so that the material and human resources of the University are mobilized in an ethical and responsible way.

Training: the participation of refugee researchers will contribute both to their self-formation and to the formation of the collective. Three dimensions will be considered: scientific, sociocultural and pedagogical, based on the participation in the research groups involved.

Theoretical-methodological discussion

As the new century unfolds, the x-ray of power relations reveals new actors. Cultural heritage is one of these actors emerging from multilateral debates. The refugee is another actor that emerges from a humanitarian crisis never before experienced by humanity. Although there seems to be no connection to support the approximation of both, what is perceived is that forced migration requires many to carry with them only their memories and intangible cultural manifestations of their people. In a refuge situation, one does not carry the material goods, but



the immaterial ones belong as historical ballast of their origins. Learning the mechanisms of understanding this thematic expansion benefits the assembly of new humanitarian and heritage (inter) national valuations. It's necessary to understand how the contact points between the refuge situation and intangible cultural manifestations take place, which has as its path of action, a reflection on soft power as the master key for several locked doors around the globe. A relevant scientific contribution is the mapping of the political force that the intangible heritages that refugees bring in their cultural baggage and the understanding of the relevant role that this intangible collection has in the wake of world heritage preservation in recent years. The scientific/intellectual contribution of the project consists in being associated with the expansion of international interlocution that Sérgio Vieira de Melo Chair (CSVM-UFJF) has been developing. At the institutional level, the project proposes the promotion of academic exchange among refugee researchers in Brazil, enhancing transnational relations and circulation between the various possible themes in the universe of soft power, intangible heritage and refuge. These fields of action intersect in the search for understanding how soft power can act as a tool for heritage preservation at the international level, with the universe of refuge as a theme of understanding and a starting point.

The reception of the refugees as an example of soft power

In international politics, power is considered a means and an end by which a relationship of domination of one party over the other develops which guarantees one of the parties the possibility of determining the behavior of the other parties, in the pursuit of their interests. The definition serves as a stimulus to broaden our understanding of the proposed object. By its very nature, soft power is a relative and intangible concept, inherently difficult to quantify. In this scenario, the central theoretical framework of this research discusses the concept propagated by Joseph Nye Jr who recovered arguments from classical realism related to the capacity of conviction, persuasion, attraction and organized them under a new theoretical framework. The term "soft power" came to be used by scholars as the ability to influence other people to do what you want by attraction rather than coercion: a kind of co-optive behavior.

The link between the concepts of soft power, narratives, cultural goods, and welcoming refugees is one such possibility of appropriation in the face of this very flexible concept. It's from this liminal point that we start to contextualize the object in question. Therefore, this research faces a central task: to show that the connection between cultural heritage, the experience of refugees and soft power is relevant and, for that reason, it seeks to document significant examples to this end, choosing Brazil as a comparative field with international examples. In this project we intend to build bridges for an increasingly heterogeneous presence of cultural manifestations in our campus, aiming at the improvement of the collection, cataloging and visibility of the so-called immaterial heritages of refugee people and its effects for education, especially in teacher training, considering that institutions such as schools and universities are assuming a significant role in the reception and integration of the refugees.



Refuge and soft power

The refuge is first and foremost a situation of extreme vulnerability. The connection that is made between the concept of soft power and the action of refugee permanence expresses a search that goes back more than half a century. It's from the unfolding of the preservation actions of the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) that emerges the unrestricted expansion of the concept of refugee: "a person who fears persecution on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, social group, religion, or political opinion". It's important to consider that both the classical and the expanded definition of refugee (in 1969 and later reaffirmed by the Cartagena Convention, in 1993) do not define a subject of law, but rather delimit a situation of human rights violation in which a particular person must be declared to be in a refugee situation.

In the context of people in situations of refuge, programs and policies that follow the principles of reception as a flow of exchanges, not only symbolic, have become examples of good practice, especially if integrated into an expanded reception policy for this population. However, much remains to be done to ensure that all refugees can enjoy rights, live in peace and rebuild their lives with dignity. The perception of human rights to be a universal master key for the equalization of peoples feeds the basic premise of this project. It's estimated that there are today in Brazil, a little more than 1.5 million migrants and refugees and, approximately, 455 thousand people returned to Brazilian territory, being the main nationalities of resident forced migrants the Venezuelan, Haitian and Bolivian, as well as people coming from countries of all five continents. Data from the National Committee for Refugees indicate that there were 60,011 recognized refugees in the country by December 2021, and that between 2011 and 2021 alone, 297,712 people requested refuge in Brazil.

The great humanitarian challenge demands an end to wars and persecution; it requires more emergency resources from developed countries and more openness of their borders to receive refugees. But it also demands that countries receive refugees with solidarity and hospitality, without fear or prejudice. The role of universities in the movement to welcome these refugees has been increasingly highlighted in the international debate on refuge. This diagnosis is contained in the two most recent international agreements on the topic, the Global Compact for Refugees, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, both signed in 2018. Brazil has witnessed the emergence of local public initiatives to promote the integration and protection of these populations.

The state of Minas Gerais is an example of how the recent growth in the population of refugees, migrants, stateless persons, and returnees has required an institutional response focused on migration governance in order to promote the reception and local integration of these people. In this context, the city of Juiz de Fora stands out for being the third largest in the state in receiving refugees (data for 2022). In Juiz de Fora, there are approximately 2.5 thousand to three thousand people in refugee or refugee situations, a huge contingent that, at this moment,



comes mostly from Venezuela, given the political conditions in that country. When this picture is composed of children and adolescents, they are referred to the education network public city.

The philosopher Jacques Derrida defended the idea of "unconditional hospitality". For him, the refugee should be welcomed with hospitality even if he doesn't contribute directly with the development of the society that welcomed him. However, practical situations in the lives of refugees have shown that refugees always collaborate with the development of the society which welcomed them, whether through their skills and intelligence, sensitivity, worldview and work, directly influencing the way society sees them and assimilates their contributions. For this reason, the coming of refugee professors in this project may set the precedent for an integration that is not only hospitable, but above all powerful and defining new patterns of cultural assimilation and transformation, both inside and outside the university. Education is a universal right of all people in the world. Therefore, the inclusion and integration of forced migrants in schools and universities in host countries is a high challenge. In the exceptional case of education professionals who are in refugee status, this situation is even more pressing, as they lack opportunities for insertion into the academic community, which finds fertile ground in this project.

The selected professor must teach courses on the refugee theme and its intersection with cultural heritage in graduate courses in History, Education and Linguistics and will participate as a mediator in the Heritage and International Relations research group and in the Applied Linguistics, Education and Human Rights (LAEDH) research group, as well as in the activities planned under the Sérgio Vieira de Mello Chair - UFJF. It must, therefore, have a profile that is able to move through the areas of the selected Graduate Programs. Thus, proposals that address themes such as (a) cultural heritage and migration and/or (b) education and teacher training for socio-diverse contexts and/or (c) linguistic education in contexts of migration and refuge will be given preference in the selection process.

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