The Sobral Education Revolution: Providing foundational learning for all students in a disadvantage context
Centro Lemann for Leadership & Equity in Education is an independent, non-partisan and global nonprofit organisation created by the Lemann Foundation and inspired by the education case of Sobral.

Through leadership training programmes and applied research, we contribute to change mindsets and systems to increase education quality and equity levels in Brazil and the Global South.
INEQUALITY IN BRAZIL: FOR ALL ITS ABUNDANCE, BRAZIL REMAINS WIDELY UNEQUAL.

Photograph: Tuca Vieira. Socioeconomic disparities in São Paulo, Brazil

Top 10 Largest Economies in the World:
1. United States
2. China
3. Japan
4. Germany
5. United Kingdom
6. France
7. India
8. Italy
9. Brazil
10. Canada

Source: World Bank, 2018

Top 10 Most Unequal Countries in the World:
1. South Africa
2. Namibia
3. Zambia
4. Central African Republic
5. Lesotho
6. Mozambique
7. Brazil
8. Botswana
9. Swaziland
10. Saint Lucia

Source: PNUD and World Bank
INEQUALITIES IN BRAZIL: FOR ALL ITS ABUNDANCE, BRAZIL REMAINS WIDELY UNEQUAL.

213 million inhabitants: World’s 5th largest country

97 million Afro-Brazilians: Would make up the world’s largest black country outside Africa

Socio-Economic Disparities: 1% of the richest Brazilians earned 34 times the average income of the poorest half of the population

Racial Disparities: The average monthly income of Brazilian white workers was 74% higher than workers of color. Women of color received the equivalent to 44% of white males’ income.
SOBRAL: A CITY WITH LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVELS...

Location: Ceará, the 5th poorest state in Brazil

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sobral</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>2,068 km²</td>
<td>8.5 million km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>212,437</td>
<td>213 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita</td>
<td>US$ 4,232</td>
<td>US$ 6,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDI (Human Development Index)</td>
<td>0.714 (2010)</td>
<td>0.727 (2020)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IBGE
SOBRAL: ...THAT WAS ABLE TO SUSTAINABLY TRANSFORM ITS EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

49% of students in Sobral were able to read at appropriate age¹

92% of students in Sobral were able to read at appropriate age¹

Educational quality measured by IDEB, Sobral and Brazil
(Source: World Bank)

#1 IDEB in Brazil in 2015 and 2017, ahead of private schools in São Paulo, the richest city in Brazil

Study on Sobral carried out by the Rise initiative, in Oxford.

Source: External evaluation of reading fluency of students in the city of Sobral

CONTEXT
SOBRAL: MUNICIPAL EDUCATION IN NUMBERS

33,565 students

2,340 teachers

80 schools

IDEB - Basic Education Development Index:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Brazil</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades 1-5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Municipal Department of Education and Q Edu
THE BIRTH OF THE REVOLUTION: A GROUP OF POLITICAL LEADERS WHO WANTED TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE’S LIVES

Cid Gomes: senator, former mayor of Sobral and governor of Ceará State

Ivo Gomes: mayor of Sobral, former secretary of education

Izolda Cela: Vice-Minister of Education, former governor of Ceará State and Sobral’s secretary of education

Veveu Arruda: CEO of non-profit organization Associação Bem Comum, former mayor of Sobral
Reorganization of the network:
- reduction of the number of schools by nearly a third
- elimination of multigrade classes
- more efficiently allocation of resources

Improvement of most visible aspects of education:
- provision of free uniforms, school meals and school transportation
- renovation of 31 schools
- increase of salaries

In 2001, external assessments revealed that 49% of students in Grade 2 were illiterate.
REVOLUTIONARY PHASE (2001-2022): HOW SOBRAL BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE ON FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

Essential Role of Political Leaders:
- public acknowledgment of the problem, reinforcing need of a system transformation
- encourage community participation
- commitment with 2 main goals

Goal 1: 100% literacy for students by the end of Grade 2

Goal 2: Remedial literacy for all older students who had not yet learned to read
REVOLUTIONARY PHASE (2001-2022): HOW SOBRAL BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE ON FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

Serious Investment in School Leadership:
- **merit**: selection based in technical requirements
- **capacity**: in-service training and support for school management teams
- **cohesion**: alignment with municipal secretariat of education
- **empowerment**: increase of autonomy and responsibility to achieve results
REVOLUTIONARY PHASE (2001-2022): HOW SOBRAL BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE ON FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

Consistent Pedagogical Choices:
- *school attendance*: strict control
- *curriculum focused on academic excellence*: clear expectations
- *mixed methods, books and guidelines*: selection based on evidence and fit to local context
- *constant interventions*: in line with regular assessments
Regular Learning Assessments:
- *at the school level:* every week
- *at the municipal level:* every semester
- *at the state level:* every year
- *at the national level:* every 2 years
REVOLUTIONARY PHASE (2001-2022): HOW SOBRAL BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE ON FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

Intensive Investment in Professional Development:

- **external sessions**: organized by Sobral’s Teacher Training School by grades (ECE and grades 1-5) or subjects (grades 6-9)
- **internal sessions**: organized by schools’ pedagogical coordinators
- **substitute teachers**: allow regular teachers to leave their classrooms once a week
REVOLUTIONARY PHASE (2001-2022): HOW SOBRAL BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE ON FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

Recognition:
- *financial incentives*: bonus and prizes according to achievement of learning results
- *public recognition*: increase of teachers’ social status
The beauty of Sobral is that they do the obvious things very well.

Priscila Cruz, director of NGO All for Education.
Following Sobral steps:
- Ceará State
- Associação Bem Comum: 11 states and 50 municipalities
- Centro Lemann: 60 municipalities
- EducationTtours: around 500 visitors per month

Sobral's next steps:
- whole development of the child: socioemotional learning, citizenship education, 21st century skills
- all day school: from 4 to 8 hours per day
**SOBRAL: INSPIRATIONS TO SUPPORT SYSTEM CHANGES IN PAKISTAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building political commitment, trust and understanding</th>
<th>Producing data-driven initial diagnosis.</th>
<th>Creating an evidence-based and effective model: i) pedagogy; ii) leadership; iii) teaching; iv) assessments; v) engagement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating a narrative to raise awareness</td>
<td>Supporting governments in the design and implementation of effective action plans in collaboration with local communities.</td>
<td>Advocating for the scaling, institutionalization and sustainability of the intervention through political support and legal instruments.</td>
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Thanks!

anna.penido@centrolemann.org.br