



**CENTRO  
LEMMANN**

DE LIDERANÇA PARA  
EQUIDADE NA EDUCAÇÃO

The Sobral Education Revolution:  
Providing foundational learning for all students in a disadvantage context



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**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 LESOTO
- 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.



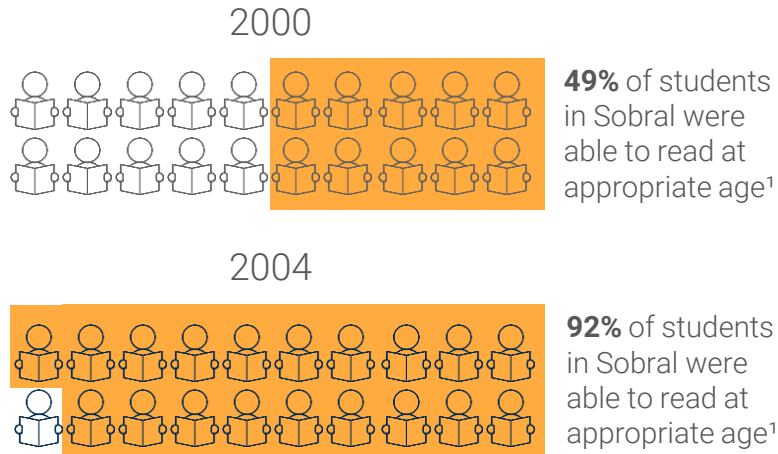
**SOBRAL: A CITY WITH LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVELS...**

**Location:** Ceará, the **5th poorest** state in Brazil

	<b>Sobral</b>	<b>Brazil</b>
<b>Area</b>	<b>2,068 km<sup>2</sup></b> (2021)	<b>8.5 million km<sup>2</sup></b> (2021)
<b>Population</b>	<b>212,437</b> (2021)	<b>213 million</b> (2021)
<b>GDP per capita</b>	<b>US\$ 4,232</b> (2019)	<b>US\$ 6,937</b> (2020)
<b>HDI (Human Development Index)</b>	<b>0.714</b> (2010)	<b>0.727</b> (2020)



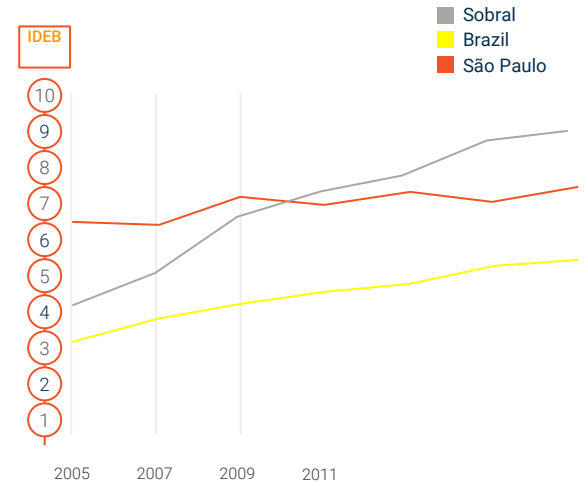
## SOBRAL: ...THAT WAS ABLE TO SUSTAINABLY TRANSFORM ITS EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE



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

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.](#)



**SOBRAL: MUNICIPAL EDUCATION IN NUMBERS**

**33,565** students

**2,340** teachers

**80** schools

**IDEB - Basic Education  
Development Index:**

	<b>Sobral</b>	<b>Brazil</b>
Grades 1-5	8.4	5.8
Grades 6-9	6.9	5.1



**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





**INCREMENTAL PHASE (1997-2000): INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ALONE COULD NOT CHANGE LEARNING RESULTS**



**In 2001, external assessments revealed that 49% of students in Grade 2 were illiterate.**

**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



## **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



**REVOLUTIONARY PHASE (2001-2022): HOW SOBRAL BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE ON  
FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING**

**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.*





## SOBRAL: EXAMPLE THAT INSPIRED OTHER EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

### Following Sobral steps:

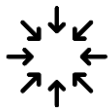
- Ceará State
- Associação Bem Comum: 11 states and 50 municipalities
- Centro Lemann: 60 municipalities
- EducationTtours: around 500 visitors per month

### 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



Building **political commitment, trust and understanding**



Producing data-driven **initial diagnosis.**



**Creating an evidence-based and effective model:** i) pedagogy; ii) leadership; iii) teaching; iv) assessments; v) engagement.



Creating a **narrative** to raise awareness



Supporting governments in the **design and implementation of effective action plans in collaboration with local communities.**



Advocating for the **scaling, institutionalization and sustainability** of the intervention through political support and legal instruments.





Thanks!

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