Movement for the National Learning Standards
Movimento pela Base is a non-profit organization conceived to support the development and implementation of Brazil’s first National Learning Standards, the BNCC or Base Nacional Comum Curricular, and of Novo Ensino Médio (Novo EM), a new model for High School.

We’re a non-partisan network of over 80 well-renowned people and institutions that was imagined and is supported by the Lemann Foundation since 2013.

We coordinate a national mobilization of key stakeholders for the implementation of such education policies. We produce studies and research, promote debate and consensus to support decision-making with technical guidelines and political legitimacy, and ensure that fundamental principles are observed so the learning standards truly reach every Brazilian classroom.
Our mission:

To ensure that all Brazilian children and young people fulfill their learning rights, set by Brazil’s National Learning Standards, so they can fully develop and be prepared to be knowledgeable citizens.
Why are National Learning Standards so essential in Brazil?

National Learning Standards are a path to:

- **set high-level expectations for what all Brazilian children, teens, and young people** should be learning, regardless of where they live or study;

- **focus on competencies and skills development,** proposing a paradigm shift in practices to secure a more purposeful and complete learning experience;

- the first step to **structure a more coherent system,** where the BNCC is the primary reference for regional curricula, professional development, learning materials, and assessments;

- **prepare students for life and work.** The BNCC is more connected with today’s challenges and opportunities and contributes to a more just and democratic society.

**CONTEXT:** Inequality is a long-term problem for the Brazilian Educational System. Our country’s regions are diverse. They have a complex configuration, long distances to overcome, and plural and diverse people with multicultural heritage. Brazil also has extreme difficulties in ensuring the continuity of public policies. The country’s democracy is young and still fragile. Structural problems compromise the minimal conditions to ensure learning processes.
BNCC potential impact

46.7 million students
2.2 million teachers
178.4k primary and secondary schools

Source: Censo Escolar 2021
**Key achievements so far**

- Movimento pela Base (MPB) supported the BNCC development and approval: we supported seminars in all **27 states** that engaged over **3,000 municipalities**, prompted the Ministry of Education to run public consultations that received **12 million** contributions from over 300 thousand educators, and conducted critical reviews of the standards led by world-renowned specialists.

- After approval, MPB pivoted to monitoring its implementation quality and has been consistently recognized for building consensus among civil society and governments. Since 2020, MPB has been engaging with and providing guidance to **all 5,568 municipal** departments and the 27 states to advance the adoption of new BNCC-aligned local curricula (currently, **99,9% districts** have their curricula aligned).

- Today, MPB is a well-informed organization that knows the status of the process in every Brazilian municipality. We raise awareness, share information, good practices, and other pertinent aspects in an **Observatory**, which is a national reference.

- A recent 2021 study found that **79% of teachers positively** perceive the BNCC’s impact on their professional behavior. And 87% of principals positively perceive the BNCC’s impact on the schools’ educational management.
1. Turning points
Main challenges

General Discontinuity risks: Numerous changes of ministers since the National Learning Standards began to be discussed (2013), built (2015) and implemented (2018): 14 so far.

Specific discontinuity risk, during the impeachment process.

Withdrawal of themes related to gender and sexual orientation from the BNCC

Bolsonaro’s election and the support for High School NLS

Higher risk of early review and misalignment of inducing policies

Abort 1st version released and submitted to public consultation for 6 months. History chapter widely criticised.

2nd version presented to the National Council of Education. Undime and Consed: protagonists

Consed and Undime held seminars in all states for the analysis of the 2nd version of NLS

Embargoed 3rd version sent to journalists

A different version from the one sent to journalists is published by the MEC, without mentioning gender identity or sexual orientation

Bolsonaro’s election and the decision making process on the support for High School NLS

All 27 States and 5,560 municipalities with curricula aligned to the NLS
2. Lessons learned

Source: Movimento pela Base: Mobilizing stakeholders and ideas for the creation of the National Learning Standards - Crantschaninov, T.; Segatto, Catarina. 2022.
The right focus

1) Framing the project: what was the great good we wanted to achieve
2) Common vision
3) Building a narrative, together
The right stakeholders

Bringing together and engaging with different organizations and stakeholders around a common goal is critical to the success of the cause.

Bringing in all kinds of organizations within the field of education to work toward a common priority gave voice to stakeholders that still had not had the chance or time to focus on a specific goal and find ways to achieve them. The creation of MPB was critical in keeping focus and producing robust, high-quality, reliable information.
Confidence building

Creating safe spaces for people to talk, trust each other and find common ground is the starting point

Rarely do people with different backgrounds, political stances and world views meet and identify what they agree on, building minimal consensus. This process takes hard work and intention. All MPB meetings and gatherings were carefully planned and included activities designed to give people an opportunity to speak and interact with each other. According to one interviewee, “we didn’t just put the whole group in a room and open the microphone.” MPB learned that it was important for the entire group that was working toward the same goals to build trust-based relationships by learning more about each other’s background. This was the starting point to find respect and ways to continue our joint efforts aiming at shared, higher objectives even amid disagreement.
Clear strategy

Presenting evidence and concrete data helps to bridge gaps and establish a common vocabulary for the discussion of conflicting ideas.

When the discussion about the Standards was abstract, ideological barriers were more difficult to overcome. When MPB brought data, research and studies to the debate, the discussions became more concrete and advanced from the group’s shared knowledge of the true state of affairs. Learning more about other countries’ experiences was of great importance at that time. MPB brought to Brazil experts from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Chile and Portugal to talk about their experience in creating nationwide curricula in their countries. The search for concrete solutions was also critical to support implementation and help states and municipalities make headway in their efforts.
Communication

Constantly sharing messages on which all stakeholders agree is an important strategy to ensure cohesion and continuity of actions.

MPB used a wide range of communication strategies to make sure that all messages conveyed by the group of stakeholders working together around the Standards were cohesive and aligned with each other and the concepts and principles agreed upon by the group. These stakeholders performed and are still performing a central role in ensuring continuity and progress throughout the Standards’ journey, from making them a priority, to their design, to implementation, which is still ongoing.
Flexibility and resilience

Being prepared and flexible to provide the necessary support to decision makers is more important than simply sticking to the plan.

Many civil society actors want to collaborate with government agencies but expect to do so on their own terms. Since its inception, MPB listened to government stakeholders and did everything in its power to be ready and flexible to meet Standards-related needs coming from the federal, state and municipal governments. This posed challenges to MPB’s strategy planning and execution actions. On many occasions, however, it was necessary to give priority to providing quick responses to last-minute requests, as they signaled actual issues that decision makers were facing along the process.
Monitoring

Raising visibility of information helps to recognize progress and avoid setbacks

MPB is always trying to anticipate potential difficulties and build consensus among key actors to find solutions. By anticipating the needs of the school districts, MPB finds alternative ways for more progress to be made on the Standards. Therefore, monitoring means not only checking what is being accomplished or not, but also anticipating future issues. Ensuring transparency in the monitoring process also gave the whole country visibility of the advances the Standards are making. By showing that school districts were prepared for implementation, a sense of “no turning back” was created, that is, the Standards could not be easily undone. This has helped avoid setbacks, despite criticism.
Organization dedicated to the cause

Building legitimacy around the subject and the whole field is essential for continuity

MPB developed several strategies along the way in order to establish itself as a legitimate actor in the Standards debate. These strategies included the production and dissemination of knowledge, engagement with Brazilian and foreign experts and key stakeholders within the Brazilian education system, such as teachers, former and in-service federal agency officials, as well as state and municipal school districts’ staff. Building legitimacy was one of the key elements in allowing MPB to continue its work toward raising awareness on the importance of the Standards for Brazilian education.
Paying it forward...
Questions? Comments?
Thank you!

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