

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL NOURISHMENT PROGRAM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF MARANHÃO STATE: ADVANCES AND CHALLENGES

A IMPLEMENTAÇÃO DO PROGRAMA NACIONAL DE ALIMENTAÇÃO ESCOLAR NO SISTEMA PÚBLICO DE ENSINO DO ESTADO DO MARANHÃO: AVANÇOS E DESAFIOS

LA IMPLEMENTACIÓN DEL PROGRAMA NACIONAL DE ALIMENTACIÓN ESCOLAR EN EL SISTEMA DE EDUCACIÓN PÚBLICA DEL ESTADO DE MARANHÃO: AVANCES Y DESAFÍOS

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ABSTRACT: This study analyzes the implementation of the National School Nourishment Program (PNAE) in Maranhão, as a school meals policy funded by the National Education Development Fund (FNDE). The PNAE is one of the main programs of the FNDE, aiming to provide school meals and actions of food and nutrition education to students of all stages of basic education in the country. With theoretical and conceptual support from (BEZERRA, 2003; KIRCH; COPATTI, 2013; FONSECA, 1998), among others, the study analyzed official documents relevant to the program, collected by searches on the portals of the FNDE and the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), as well as the State Department of Education of Maranhão (SEDUC/MA). As a result, the study showed the significant contribution of the actions implemented by the state government of Maranhão in achieving the goals set out in the PNAE.

KEYWORDS: Education financing policy. National School Nourishment Program (PNAE). Implementation of PNAE actions in Maranhão.

RESUMO: O presente estudo analisa a implementação do Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar (PNAE) no Maranhão, enquanto política de alimentação escolar financiada pelo Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação (FNDE). O PNAE constitui-se como um dos principais programas do FNDE, tendo como objetivo oferecer alimentação escolar e ações de educação alimentar e nutricional a estudantes de todas as etapas da educação básica do país. Com suporte teórico-conceitual de (BEZERRA, 2003; KIRCH; COPATTI, 2013; FONSECA, 1998), entre outros, o estudo analisou documentos oficiais pertinentes ao programa, coletados

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por buscas nos portais do FNDE e do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), bem como da Secretaria de Estado da Educação do Maranhão (SEDUC/MA). Como resultado, o estudo evidenciou a significativa contribuição das ações implementadas pelo governo do estado no Maranhão na efetivação dos objetivos instituídos no PNAE.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Política de financiamento da educação. Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar (PNAE). Implementação de ações do PNAE no Maranhão.

RESUMEN: Este estudio analiza la implementación del Programa Nacional de Alimentación Escolar (PNAE) en Maranhão, como una política de alimentación escolar financiada por el Fondo Nacional para el Desarrollo de la Educación (FNDE). El PNAE es uno de los principales programas de la FNDE, con el objetivo de ofrecer acciones de alimentación escolar y educación alimentaria y nutricional a estudiantes de todas las etapas de la educación básica del país. Con el apoyo teórico-conceptual de (BEZERRA, 2003; KIRCH; COPATTI, 2013; FONSECA, 1998), entre otros, el estudio analizó documentos oficiales pertinentes al programa, recopilados por búsquedas en los portales de la FNDE y del Instituto Brasileño de Geografía y Estadística (IBGE), así como en la Secretaría de Estado de Educación de Maranhão (SEDUC/MA). Como resultado, el estudio mostró la contribución significativa de las acciones implementadas por el gobierno del estado de Maranhão en la implementación de los objetivos establecidos en el PNAE.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Política de financiación de la educación. Programa Nacional de Alimentación Escolar (PNAE). Implementación de acciones del PNAE en Maranhão.

Introduction

The present study addresses the National School Meals Program (PNAE in the Portuguese acronym) as a public educational policy that covers all schools in the Brazilian basic education system. The goal was to analyze the implementation of PNAE in public schools of basic education in Maranhão, seeking to apprehend the materiality and effectiveness of the program's objectives. Specifically, the study was dedicated to make a survey of actions relevant to the program in the state of Maranhão, in order to analyze the implementation of PNAE and identify the current situation of this policy.

The PNAE is one of the oldest and most comprehensive policies in the field of school food and nutrition. With over 60 years of existence, it is a supplementary financial assistance program aimed at ensuring at least one daily meal for students in public schools in the country (BRAZIL, 2021).

The apprehension of the materiality of the PNAE relied on certain bibliographic, documentary, and statistical sources, among other information collected from official sources such as the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (Inep) and

the National Fund for Education Development (FNDE), on the websites of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and the Maranhão state government, through the State Department of Education (SEDUC) (MARANHÃO, 2015, 2017, 2019). In addition to documentary sources and legislation, Albuquerque (2014), Araújo (2013), Fonseca (1998), and Paro (2010), among others, provided support for the understanding and analysis of the theme in question.

The relevance of this text converges to the possibility of expanding knowledge about the implementation of policies aimed at ensuring school attendance, especially because it is a program that seeks in its actions to contribute to improving the quality of education. Despite being one of the oldest Brazilian policies, few studies have dealt with the theme in depth, in such a way that it is possible to make statements regarding the achievement of its objectives. Thus, the study raises as premises the following guiding questions: how is the implementation of PNAE in the state of Maranhão? Has the PNAE achieved its goals? What are its advances and main challenges?

Financing education under the PNAE

In Brazil, the educational reforms that have been implemented since the late 1960s are confirming the need to implement public educational policies capable of creating conditions for the transformation of the school, education, and society. However, this purpose hides objectives such as adapting the educational system to the productive restructuring process, since educational care within the scope of neoliberal educational policies becomes fundamental for education to become a facilitator of capitalist accumulation processes. In this sense, it has increasingly gained strategic importance for the implementation of these reforms in the school and basic education sphere, especially through the promotion of programs and actions aimed at expanding enrollments and guaranteeing school attendance in public school systems.

This relative importance given to educational assistance is constituted by proposals of an eminently ideological nature, aiming at a new strategy of action directly related to the structural crisis of capitalism, which needs to create new means to operate the contradictions of the system. Proposals in this sense, generally coming from the World Bank (WB), become part of the ideological supports of neoliberalism, which attribute to education a decisive importance for economic growth (ALBUQUERQUE, 2014).

In the trajectory of these changes, Brazilian education has been going through enormous challenges since its redemocratization in the early 1980s. In 1988, with the Federal Constitution,

it was established as one of the fundamental principles that education is a right for all, placing on the State the responsibility to provide it, in its broad dimensions, ensuring the quality of public education and democratic management in all education systems, whether municipal, state or federal.

Many factors indicate that education is growing in importance in the face of the competitiveness environment that has been installed, demanding action strategies from the public authorities so that these constitutional principles become effective in the provision of public education. Education thus becomes an important dimension that becomes central in discourses and policies, as a competitiveness factor. For the vast majority of the population, schooling becomes a predominant factor for insertion in the labor market and for increasing income.

Inserted in this discursive scenario, according to Araújo (2013), is the issue of financing education as a factor to ensure the implementation of policies, programs and actions aimed at universal service in basic education. Although with greater visibility since the 1990s, the issue of funding goes back decades, not as one of the main attributions of the State, since it was omitted since the Imperial Constitution of 1824, but as a necessity to ensure, minimally, conditions of access and permanence in public basic education.

Thus, the issue of financing in Brazil is directly associated with the history of public policies, especially in the social and educational spheres. The end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century was a period of marked changes and advances in the issue of funding related to public educational services. The PNAE, dealt with in this study, makes up the scope of Brazilian public policies of broad scope, which even being one of the oldest depends on funding for its actions.

According to Kirch and Copatti (2013), as a precursor of PNAE, the School Meals Campaign, in 1955, already determined that all the charges of the Campaign would be met with specific budgetary resources. An initial step in this direction was Decree No. 37.106, 1955 (BRAZIL, 1955), so that the legislation allowed agreements with international entities, and pointed out that in addition to the specific budgetary resources, the action would also be financed by resources from international entities, as a contribution or as aid. Until 1960 the food distributed was obtained through donations from international institutions, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United States Department of Agriculture, through the Food for Peace Program.

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The Executing Institutions have autonomy to manage the files coming from the program. The value to be transferred to the Executing Institution is calculated as follows: $TR = \text{Number of students} \times \text{Number of days} \times \text{Per capita value}$, and the TR will be the total resources to be received. Of the amount of the resource sent, 70% of the money must be applied in basic products.

From the Federal Constitution of 1988 (BRAZIL, 1988), school feeding would be financed by resources from social contributions and other budget resources, maintaining the category of financing introduced earlier and separating this financing from the resources for the maintenance and development of education. In this way, attending to the normative rule, PNAE is foreseen in the national budget in the actions of Social Security, which correspond to "an integrated set of actions of initiative of the public powers and of the society, destined to assure the rights related to health, to welfare and to social assistance" (BRAZIL, 2001).

Currently, the Program is financed by two sources of the federal budget, corresponding to ordinary resources and the contribution on lottery revenues. The ordinary resources constitute the main source of the national public budget and gather resources from more than 300 taxes and contributions, such as, for example: income tax, contributions on telecommunications services and commercialization of petroleum and derivatives (BRAZIL, 2001).

The financing of PNAE shows that since the beginning of the program the Brazilian government has managed resources using legal instruments of the executive branch to provide for the allocation of resources to school feeding, even when it still happened in partnership with international organizations. With the Federal Constitution in 1988, school feeding was

recognized as a right for students in Brazilian public schools, culminating in the strengthening of the program until the adoption of Law No. 11.947, of June 16, 2009, which provides for the care of school feeding in the Direct Money at School Program (BRAZIL, 2009).

In some situations, such as lotteries, the legislation indicates that resources must be allocated to school feeding, among other programs. And for other funding sources, school feeding is contemplated because it is part of the set of social security programs. Brazil is an example that demonstrates the importance of a legal forecast of budget allocation for school feeding and, thus, guarantee stability in the financing of the program, even if the sources of resources in the national budget fluctuate over the years and the evolution of the country's fiscal legislation. Besides facilitating the inclusion of the program in the preparation and negotiation of the federal budget with the National Congress, the legal frameworks allow the sustainability of PNAE, even in contexts of budget constraints and the progressive strengthening of the program in its 60-year history.

Historical context and legislation of the National School Feeding Program

Dealing with educational policies implies the understanding and knowledge of the historical context and, above all, the legal bases that gave and support them throughout their trajectory. In this sense, it is important to review its history and legal aspects in order to understand the current state of this policy, both nationally and in the state of Maranhão, the exploratory field of this study.

Created in the 1950s, PNAE portrays different phases of an evolutionary process in its history. According to Bezerra (2003), this process, as a supply, went through different phases, namely: the international (1955 - 1973); the national centralized (1973 - 1993); and the national decentralized (1993 to the present day). The initial period was marked by food donations from international institutions. Currently, the program works with products produced in Brazil.

To fulfill its main goal, PNAE serves more than 40 million students all over Brazil. Aiming to contribute to the biopsychosocial development, learning, school performance and the formation of healthy eating habits, the Program offers school meals and food and nutritional education actions to the students of the public-school network during the 200 school days of the year. In addition, the Program also supports social development and agriculture by purchasing products from family farms.

In the 1940s, in order to provide food for students, some schools began to promote an internal organization to generate income and be able to foster this food, thus emerging the

"school boxes". The government did not subsidize any category of money for schools to allocate to food (FNDE, 2019). Only in the 1950s, effectively, the federal government started offering school meals to all students, however, in a precarious way.

Thus, on March 31, 1955, the then president Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira signed Decree No. 37,106, through which he created the School Meal Campaign (CME in the Portuguese acronym) (BRAZIL, 1955). Its history is marked by changes in different nomenclatures, as well as advances and achievements. In 1956, it was renamed Campanha Nacional da Merenda Escolar (CNME), with the intention of covering the whole country. In 1965, it underwent a new change, changing its name to National School Feeding Campaign (CNAE in the Portuguese abbreviation).

In the Federal Constitution of 1988, Chapter II, Article 6, defining that "everyone is guaranteed the right to health, education and food", is embodied by the right to education, defined in Chapter III, Section I, by Article 205 of the Constitution. This right is also expanded in art. 208, item VII, by defining that in all stages of education it is the duty of the State to provide educational material, transportation, food, and health care (BRAZIL, 1988).

In 1994, the process of decentralization of resources to implement the program took place through agreements with municipalities and the involvement of the education secretariats of the states and the Federal District (FNDE, 2019). Since 1998, PNAE has been managed by FNDE, which is responsible for transferring the funds allocated by the Union for school meals. The resources passed by the Union must be added by the states and municipalities, in addition to ensuring the guideline, coordination, supervision, and execution of the program. The execution of this program is done through the State Education Departments in the Brazilian states and also in the Federal District. The municipalities, on the other hand, are in charge of the municipal governments, as well as the federal schools.

An important achievement of the program was the institution, in each Brazilian municipality, of the CAE as a deliberative, supervising and advisory body for the execution of the Program, based on another re-edition of the Provisional Measure (MP) No. 1.784/98, issued to regulate the issue. It is important to take into account the importance and relevance of the social control agencies, considering the role they play in the follow-up and evaluation of public policies that involve financing with public resources. Therefore, FNDE's programs and, in particular, PNAE, need to be known and monitored by civil society representative bodies directly related to the school community. In this sense, it is up to the bodies responsible for monitoring and supervising funding policies to know the goals and the historical context of each policy to fully exercise the role they should play.

In the trajectory of PNAE, the 21st century is marked by a series of advances and achievements. Among the main advances, we highlight the Provisional Measure No. 2.178, of 6/28/2001, which guaranteed the mandatory requirement that 70% of the resources transferred by the federal government be applied exclusively in basic products, considering the regional eating habits and the agricultural vocation of the municipality, fostering the development of local economy. Another aspect that deserves to be highlighted is the presence of a nutritionist as the technical person responsible for the Program, as well as the technical staff composed of these professionals in all the Executing Entities, which allowed for a significant improvement in the quality of PNAE in terms of reaching its goal, in addition to the partnership between FNDE and the Federal Institutions of Higher Education.

In 2009, the sanction of Law No. 11,947, of June 16, brought new advances for PNAE, such as the extension of the Program to the entire basic education public network, including students participating in the Mais Educação Program and Youth and Adult Education (YAE), including the guarantee that at least 30% of FNDE transfers are invested in the acquisition of family farming products (FNDE, 2019).

In addition to the Program's achievements, in 2013, the inclusion of services for students attending Specialized Education Services (SES), for students in semi-attendance Youth and Adult Education (YAE), and for those enrolled in full-time schools, as well as the increase in the amount transferred to students enrolled in daycare centers and preschools, in line with the government's policy of prioritizing early childhood education.

In 2013, there is the publication of FNDE Resolution No. 26, which strengthens one of the axes of the Program, Food and Nutrition Education (EAN): this measure meets the current public policies related to Food and Nutrition Security (SAN in the Portuguese acronym). Finally, in 2015, Resolution no. 4/FNDE stands out, which considers the strengthening of Family Farming and its contribution to local social and economic development (FNDE, 2019).

Fulfillment of the National School Meals Program

PNAE is a federal program that provides school meals and food and nutrition education to students at all stages of public basic education. The federal government transfers to states, municipalities and federal schools supplementary financial amounts made in 10 monthly installments (February-November) to cover 200 school days, according to the number of enrolled students in each school network. It is monitored and inspected directly by society, through the CAE, and also by the FNDE, the Federal Audit Court (TCU in the Portuguese

acronym), the Office of the Comptroller General (CGU in Portuguese), and the Public Prosecutor's Office (FNDE, 2019).

Currently, the amount transferred by the Union to states and municipalities per school day for each student is defined according to the stage and type of education, as shown in the table below:

Table 1 – Transfer values by educational levels and modalities (R\$/per capita)

LEVELS AND MODALITIES OF EDUCATION VALUE	
Day care centers:	1,07
Preschooling:	0,53
Indigenous and quilombola schools:	0,64
Elementary and high school:	0,36
Youth and adult education:	0,32
Comprehensive education:	1,07
Full-time High School Support Program:	2,00
Students who attend Specialized Educational Services after school hours:	0,53

Source: FNDE/MEC Portal (2021)

As for the financing of the program, according to the FNDE's Portal, the transfer is made directly to the states and municipalities, based on the School Census of the year prior to the year of service. The program is monitored and inspected directly by the society, through the CAE, by the FNDE, and by the Federal Audit Court (TCU in the Portuguese acronym). PNAE is an action recognized worldwide, especially in Latin America, given its assumptions and objectives aimed at school meals, as provided in its legislation:

Art. 4 The National School Meals Program PNAE has the objective of contributing to the biopsychosocial growth and development, learning, school performance and the formation of healthy eating habits of the students, through food and nutritional education actions and the supply of meals that cover their nutritional needs during the school term (BRAZIL, 2009, our translation).

The program covers students of all basic education (early childhood education, elementary school, high school, and Youth and Adult Education) enrolled in public, philanthropic, and community schools (under agreements with the government). It is worth noting that the PNAE budget benefits millions of Brazilian students, as provided for in article 208, items IV and VII, of the Federal Constitution (BRAZIL, 1988).

The program's path has been marked by conquests, also in the legal aspect. There have been many changes until it reached its current version. The legal basis that regulates the program is the following:

- Law no. 11,947, of June 16, 2009 (BRASIL, 2009);
- CFN Resolution no. 465/2010 (CFN, 2010);
- Technical Note no. 01/2011 - COTAN/CGPAE/DIRAE/FNDE;
- Resolution no. 26 of June 17, 2013 (FNDE, 2013);
- Technical Note No. 01/2014 - COSAN/CGPAE/DIRAE/FNDE (FNDE, 2014).

It was with the enactment of the Organic Law of Food and Nutritional Security in Brazil (LOSAN), Law nº. 11.346, of September 15th 2006, that it became possible to create the National System of Food and Nutritional Security (SISAN in the Portuguese acronym). In this sense, the Law establishes the principles, guidelines, objectives, and composition of SISAN, through which the public authorities and the participation of organized civil society will formulate and implement policies, plans, programs, and actions to ensure the human right to adequate food (BRAZIL, 2006, art. 1).

Another determination of this law is regarding the responsibilities of the State in promoting policies that favor the guarantee of food and nutritional security of the population, taking into account the constitutional provision, being defined that:

Adequate food is a fundamental human right, inherent to human dignity and indispensable to the realization of the rights enshrined in the Federal Constitution, and the government should adopt the policies and actions that are necessary to promote and ensure food and nutritional security of the population (BRAZIL, 2006, art. 2, our translation).

An important factor of this law is its scope in the scope of public education services of the Union, the states, the Federal District and the municipalities, through the school networks that make up these education systems. In the case of Maranhão, a state that still lives with unfavorable social indicators, the PNAE is a program of great relevance to minimize high dropout rates and academic performance of students served by public schools.

The PNAE in the state of Maranhão: evidence revealed by documents

The school feeding policy implemented in Brazil through the PNAE, as well as the other federal units, also covers the state of Maranhão. Given the intrinsic relationship between the program and education, it is relevant to present some aspects that corroborate for understanding the PNAE in Maranhão. According to information from the IBGE (2021), the state of Maranhão, located in northeastern Brazil, is formed in part by the Amazon Rainforest and beaches along the Atlantic Ocean, and has São Luís as its capital. It is bordered by the states of Piauí, Tocantins, and Pará. It has a territorial area of 329,642.182 km², with an estimated population (2020) of 7,114,598 people, with a demographic density (2010) of 19.81 hab/km². The state has the second to last Human Development Index (HDI) in the country, 0.639, ahead only of the state of Alagoas. The per capita monthly household income in 2021 was R\$ 636.00 (six hundred and thirty-six reais) (IBGE, 2021).

As for educational attendance, according to the same IBGE data, Maranhão presented the following panorama:

Figure 1 – Overview of educational attendance in Maranhão State⁴

ASPECTOS EDUCACIONAIS	QT
Matrículas no ensino fundamental [2018]	1.178.949 matrículas
IDEB — Anos iniciais do ensino fundamental (Rede pública) [2017]	4,5
IDEB – Anos finais do ensino fundamental (Rede pública) [2017]	3,7
Matrículas no ensino médio [2018]	311.830 matrículas
Docentes no ensino fundamental [2018]	66.762 docentes
Docentes no ensino médio [2018]	18.107 docentes
Número de estabelecimento de ensino fundamental [2018]	9.690 escolas
Número de estabelecimento de ensino médio [2018]	1.051 escolas

Source: IBGE (2021)

The position that Maranhão occupies reveals a worrisome reality, which exposes the precarious socioeconomic levels that affect most of the state's population. The situation presented above regarding economic and educational indicators justifies the relevance of

⁴ ASPECTOS EDUCACIONAIS = EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS; Matrículas no ensino fundamental = Elementary school enrollment; Anos iniciais do ensino fundamental = Early years of elementary school; Anos finais do ensino fundamental = Final years of elementary school; Matrículas no ensino médio = High School Enrollment; Docentes no ensino fundamental = Teachers in elementary education; Docentes no ensino médio = Teachers in high school; Número de estabelecimentos de ensino fundamental = Number of elementary schools; Número de estabelecimentos de ensino médio = Number of high school establishments.

PNAE, considering its coverage, which ensures at least one meal a day for public school students, mostly from poor families that depend on the State's attention.

National School Meals Program: the implementation in the public school system of the state of Maranhão

There are two ways of operating the PNAE: centralized and schooling. Maranhão adopted the schooling modality. Among the actions identified and implemented by SEDUC/MA (MARANHÃO, 2017), in order to fulfill its objectives, the following are highlighted: preparation of school feeding menus, prepared by nutritionists since 2017, based on the guidelines of Resolution/CD/FNDE No. 26 of June 17, 2013 (FNDE, 2013); and school meals from Family Farming.

The current scenario in the state of Maranhão shows significant changes regarding the school feeding policy in the first decade of the 21st century, both in relation to compliance with the legislation on school feeding and in relation to financing. As the document highlights:

Since 2009, the National School Meals Program (PNAE) has made it mandatory for 30% of the funds to be used to purchase foodstuffs from family farms. The state public network of Maranhão for the first time was able to meet this requirement. In 2019, more than R\$9 million was spent on the purchase of inputs produced by local growers. PNAE is a program of the Federal Government responsible for the transfer of resources for the purchase of school meals for students in public schools. [...]. We went from 1.28% (in 2011) to 30.70% (in 2019) (PINHEIRO, 2020, our translation).

The government of Maranhão celebrated the achievement of this goal in 2019, as it represented the generation of income for the 217 municipalities of Maranhão and consequent improvement in the quality of life of suppliers.

Public Call for the Acquisition of Foodstuffs from Family Agriculture

PNAE, as a public policy for financing school meals, has gone through a long trajectory, from its implementation to the present time. This process has enabled greater organization in the processes of transferring financial resources and the access of suppliers in a decentralized and increasingly less bureaucratic way. According to the document (2017):

The State Department of Education - SEDUC, in the use of its legal powers, transfers funds to the Executive Units of the State Public Schools Network, from the National Fund for Education Development - FNDE, through the National School Meals Program - PNAE, for students of Basic Education with

its Modalities and Diversity for the purchase of foodstuffs, including family farming for school meals. With the exemption of the bidding process, the purchase can be made through prior Public Call, according to § 1 of Article 20 of Resolution CD/FNDE No. 26/2013 and under the terms of Article 14 of Law No. 11,947/2009 (MARANHÃO, 2017, our translation).

According to the SEDUC website, in compliance with Resolution CD/FNDE no. 26/2013 (FNDE, 2013), Public Calls were held for the purpose of acquiring foodstuffs from family farming for PNAE in the following years: 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020 and 2021.

The inclusion of fish from family farming as part of school meals in Maranhão is noteworthy. In this sense, measures taken by the government of the state of Maranhão in relation to the PNAE have been translated into actions to strengthen the program in terms of reaching its goal, thus contributing both to improving the quality of the menu of the food offered by the program and to strengthening the local economy. About this aspect, it reiterates:

Maranhão students from public educational institutions will have food richer in protein and nutrients, with the consumption of fish that will be inserted in the menu of school meals. This measure is the result of a decree signed by Governor Flávio Dino that determines the mandatory inclusion of fish from family farming in the diet of students from Maranhão. The objective of the decision is to improve the feeding of children and young people, in the perspective of food and nutritional security, as well as to stimulate the sustainable and productive development of small rural producers (MARANHÃO, 2020a, our translation).

This initiative is part of a Maranhão state government action, through the "*Mais IDH*" Action Plan, disciplined by Decree No. 35,849, May 25, 2020 (MARANHÃO, 2020b), which aims in the first stage to strengthen the small producer in seven municipalities of Maranhão with the lowest HDI.

The effectiveness of a public policy like the PNAE demands not only political commitment to its materialization, but also the implementation of strategies to overcome any difficulties detected in its implementation (FONSECA, 1998). In this aspect, the partnership signed between the Maranhão state government and the Maranhão State University (UEMA) was relevant for the program, through the participation of family farmers in the PNAE, in an articulated action between the city government managers and other government agencies with family farmers' organizations. In the case of the partnership with UEMA, a university extension project carried out at the Timon Campus stands out. The Purchasing from Family Farming project started in the municipality of São João do Sóter in 2018, and will last until the end of 2020.

The experience of the project allowed to develop actions aimed at offering local products to the PNAE, considering the fact that this municipality does not participate in the program, despite the legal coverage to guarantee the products in the years 2016 and 2017. The products in this period were purchased in another city, due to the fact that there were not enough products in that municipality to meet the demand of the program.

While recognizing the support offered by PNAE in the context of educational care that takes place at school, with a view to reducing school dropouts and, similarly, contributing to the production chain in rural family farming, the Program does not guarantee effectiveness in the relationship between public educational care and quality of education. The data shown here serve as pointers to reflect that the guarantee of minimum standards of quality of education, as determined by the 1988 Constitution (BRAZIL, 1988) and the 1996 LDBEN (BRAZIL, 1996), will not be given by topical programs that only mask the precariousness of school attendance.

Moreover, policies with this purpose only express the "medicines" indicated by the World Bank (WB) for poverty alleviation and for balancing tensions that can compromise economic development and capitalist accumulation. Although the PNAE is part of a set of programs focused on access and permanence in school, the quality of education depends on investment policies beyond educational welfarism, such as the expansion of education networks, facilities and resources appropriate to the needs of students and teachers, as well as ensuring continued training, remuneration, and career for education professionals. FNDE's programs help, but cannot contribute to transform the precarious conditions of public education in most Brazilian municipalities.

Final remarks

The analysis of the PNAE allowed the perception that the program brings, in its trajectory, remarkable changes that contributed significantly temporally to its structural and operational improvement. In this aspect, the presence of the funding agency FNDE is of fundamental importance.

The analysis of the documents related to the implementation of PNAE in the state of Maranhão shows that the program faces challenges, but has also experienced advances. As a school feeding policy, it has conquered a privileged space within the State Secretariat of Education, with a status of government policy, with emphasis on the specific sector, the Supervision of School Feeding.

In face of the information revealed through the survey, it was verified that the set of actions implemented by the government of the state of Maranhão (presented in this study), specifically by SEDUC, referring to PNAE, such as the preparation of specific menus for the teaching units; the achievement of the goal regarding the acquisition of products from Family Agriculture; guarantee of the Public Call for the acquisition of the local purchase of small suppliers of the program (in accordance with what determines the legislation of the program); regulation of technical criteria of execution of the policy; improve school meals for students through the adoption of fish as part of the menu; in addition to establishing partnerships with UEMA, as well as other governmental technical assistance agencies, have converged to reach the objectives proposed by the program, both in the sense of promoting access to food, and sustainability in the program in the state of Maranhão, through actions that strengthen small business in the Maranhão region and that impact the quality of life of the communities.

It is noteworthy that the results obtained through the study also made it possible to answer the assumptions raised at the beginning of this text. The relevance of the study is also noteworthy, as it appears to be an academic production that will contribute to the expansion of the debate on the program, given the low production in the area. It is suggested, therefore, other studies that seek evidence on possible contributions of the PNAE for the quality of education, taking into account that this is one of its main objectives.

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