

An Overview of the School Feeding Program in Brazil

Brazil has a comprehensive universal school food program called *Programa Nacional De Alimentação Escola* (in English, the *National School Feeding Program*).

Program Overview:

The Brazilian National School Feeding Program (PNAE) is one of the oldest public food supplementation programs. It originated as the National Company for School Feeding (CNAE) to address Brazil's critical child hunger and malnourishment levels.

The PNAE is Brazil's longest-standing public policy initiative for promoting food and nutrition security.¹ Its purpose is to supplement the daily nutritional needs of students to guarantee their Food and Nutrition Security and contribute to the formation of good eating habits.² The program's beneficiaries are students from public schools, philanthropic schools, and some community entities.³

It is a national system that combines an integrated food and nutritional security agenda through local food production, procurement and use, school meals, and nutritional education. They are linked through integrated programs and policies, which help to improve access to healthier foods.⁴ Government leadership, strong legislation, civil participation, and intersectoral decision-making and execution are crucial to success⁵ and the program has been improved many times.⁶ According to Kitaoka (2018),

Transformations in Brazil, due to increasing modernization and urbanization, have led to negative lifestyle changes, including increased intake of ultra-processed foods and decreased consumption of fruit and vegetables. This pattern is associated with excessive intake of sodium, saturated fatty acids, and refined sugars. Furthermore, sedentary habits are on the rise, evidenced by increased television and video game use, combined with decreases in physical activity. Such patterns of inactivity contribute to increased childhood overweight and obesity. Children are a priority target for implementing obesity and resultant disease manifestation prevention strategies. Since lifestyle habits during childhood have not yet been fully established,

¹ Kitaoka, Kaori. *The National School Meal Program in Brazil: A Literature Review*. Department of Welfare and Nutrition, Faculty of Health Welfare, Kansai University of Welfare Sciences. *Jpn. J. Nutr. Diet.*, Vol.76 Supplement 1, 2018. S115-S125. doi:10.5264/eiyogakuzashi.76.S115

² Rocha, Naruna Pereira, Mariana De Santis Filgueiras, Fernanda Martins de Albuquerque, Luana Cupertino Milagres, Ana Paula Pereira Castro, Mariane Alves Silva, Glaucete Dias da Costa, Silvia Eloiza Priore, and Juliana Farias de Novaes. *Analysis of the National School Feeding Program in the Municipality of Viçosa, State of Minas Gerais*. *Revista De Saúde Pública* 52 (February):16, 2018. From: <https://doi.org/10.11606/S1518-8787.2018052007090>

³ Sidaner, E., Balaban, D., Burlandy, L.. *The Brazilian school feeding programme: An example of an integrated programme in support of food and nutrition security*, *Public Health Nutr.*, 16, 2013. 989–994. From: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23218237/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

*children are more malleable to change in comparison to adults. Thus, schools have the opportunity to set initiatives for targeting improved child health.*⁷

Program Management:

The PNAE is managed by the National Fund for the Development of Education (FNDE), which transfers financial resources to the states, the Federal District, and municipalities. In addition to the resources from the FNDE, federal entities must participate with financial consideration, maintenance of the school structures, human resources of the school feeding unit, and actions on food and nutrition education (EAN).⁸

Primary Objectives of the SFP:

The primary objectives of the PNAE are to ensure students' food and nutritional security, improve student performance in school by providing healthy meals, and educate them about food to create healthier long-term eating habits. Another critical component is to strengthen local economies through sustainable procurement from local family farms.

Policy for Local Food

Since 2009, legislation of the National School Feeding Program of Brazil has institutionalized its linkage with family farming⁹ by requiring that at least 30% out of the total financial resources allocated by the federal government to the states and municipalities for school feeding must be used to purchase products directly from local family farms.¹⁰ Procurement from family farming is a far-reaching initiative in terms of the concept, execution, and results. The education, agriculture, planning, procurement, and civil society sectors collaborate at national, state, and local levels to ensure the program's success. Integrating family farming and nutrition into a legal framework develops a link between family farming and diet quality.¹¹ Procedures to comply with local food requirements are well established.¹²

⁷ Kitaoka, Kaori. 2018.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ According to a translation of the LEGISLATIVE DECREE No. 6, OF MARCH 20, 2020. Amendments to Law No. 11,947, the definition of a family farmer and rural family entrepreneur are: the one who practices activities in the rural environment, meeting, simultaneously, the following requirements: I – do not have, in any way, an area greater than 4 (four) fiscal modules; II – predominantly use the family's own workforce in the economic activities of your establishment or enterprise; III – have family income predominantly originated from economic activities linked to the establishment or enterprise itself; IV - direct your establishment or business with your family. From: https://rebrae.com.br/php/biblioteca_virtual/uploads/pdf/01-10-2020-14-35-28_518040_caderno_de_legislacao_2020_-_atualizado.pdf

¹⁰ Of the total financial resources passed on by the FNDE under the PNAE, at least 30% (thirty percent) should be used in the acquisition of foodstuffs directly from family farming and the family entrepreneur rural communities or their organizations, prioritizing the settlements of agrarian reform, traditional indigenous communities and Quilombola communities. Translated from: LEGISLATIVE DECREE No. 6, OF MARCH 20, 2020. Amendments to Law No. 11,947. Art. 14. From: https://rebrae.com.br/php/biblioteca_virtual/uploads/pdf/01-10-2020-14-35-28_518040_caderno_de_legislacao_2020_-_atualizado.pdf

¹¹ Hawkes et. al., 2016. How to engage across sectors: lessons from agriculture and nutrition in the Brazilian School Feeding Program. From: <https://www.scielo.br/j/rsp/a/7qRs7bdtkSNhYbMgSgbrSTv/?lang=en>

¹² Article 14. Of the total financial resources passed on by the FNDE under the PNAE, at least 30% (thirty percent) should be used in the acquisition of foodstuffs directly from family farming and the family entrepreneur rural communities or their organizations, prioritizing the settlements of agrarian reform, traditional indigenous communities and Quilombola communities.

This is part of an essential food and nutrition security strategy, fulfilling the human right to adequate food and promoting long-term sustainable development.¹³

Nutritionists:

Nutritionists are essential to the delivery of meal programs. They provide advice on nutrition for meals and assist individuals and legal entities in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and projects. They also offer advice and solutions for situations related to their specialty.^{14 15} The following articles from the LEGISLATIVE DECREE No. 6, OF MARCH 20, 2020. Amendments to Law No. 11,947 describe the responsibility of nutritionists:¹⁶

Art. 11. The technical responsibility for school feeding in the States, the Federal District, municipalities, and federal schools will be left to the responsible nutritionist, who must comply with the guidelines provided for in this Law and in the relevant legislation, in which it falls, within its specific attributions.

Art. 12. The school meals should be prepared by the nutritionist responsible for using basic foodstuffs, respecting nutritional references, eating habits, culture, and the food tradition of the locality, based on the sustainability and agricultural diversification of the region, healthy and adequate eating. 12.1. For this Law, basic foodstuffs are indispensable to promoting a healthy diet in compliance with the applicable regulations. (Renumbered from the sole paragraph Included by Law No. 12,982, 2014). 12.2. According to regulations, a special menu for students who require individualized nutritional care due to state or specific health conditions will be prepared based on medical and nutritional recommendations, nutritional assessment, and differentiated nutritional demands. (Included in Law No. 12,982, 2014).

Art. 13. Within the scope of the PNAE, the acquisition of foodstuffs must comply with the menu planned by the nutritionist. It will be carried out, whenever possible, in the same federative area in which the schools are located, observing the guidelines that article 2 of this Law is treated.

SCHOOL FEEDING COUNCIL (CAE):

§1. The acquisition of this article can be carried out by disempresive procedure, provided that the prices are compatible with those in force in the local market, observing the principles inscribed in art. 37 of the Federal Constitution, and the foods meet the requirements of quality control established by the rules that regulate the matter. §2. Compliance with the percentage provided for in the caput will be disciplined by the FNDE and may be waived when present one of the following circumstances: I - impossibility of issuing the corresponding tax document; II - unfeasibility of regular and constant supply of foodstuffs; III - inadequate hygienic and sanitary conditions. Translated from LEGISLATIVE DECREE No. 6, OF MARCH 20, 2020. Amendments to Law No. 11,947.

Art. 14. From:

https://rebrae.com.br/php/biblioteca_virtual/uploads/pdf/01-10-2020-14-35-28_518040_caderno_de_legislacao_2020_-_atualizado.pdf

¹³ Schwartzman, Flavia, Mora, Claudia Andrea Rodriguez, Bogus, Claudia Maria, Villar, Betzabeth Slater. *Background and elements of the linkage between the Brazilian school feeding program and family farming*. Cadernos de saúde pública, 2017. From: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/192698885.pdf>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Guide to Support Technical Activities of PNAE Nutritionists (2018). National Fund for the Development of Education. Ministry of Education. From: <https://centrodeexcelencia.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Guide-to-Support-Technical-Activities-of-PNAE-Nutritionists.pdf>

¹⁶ Translated from: LEGISLATIVE DECREE No. 6, OF MARCH 20, 2020. Amendments to Law No. 11,947. Art. 14.

The CAE is a local collegiate body of a supervisory, permanent, deliberative, and advisory nature that is responsible for monitoring the use of resources passed on by the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), ensuring the quality of school feeding at all stages of the program's implementation process.¹⁷

Food Literacy Education:

According to Article. 15. it is up to the Ministry of Education to propose educational actions that permeate the school curriculum, addressing the theme of food and nutrition and developing healthy life practices from the perspective of food and nutrition security.¹⁸

Organic Food Defined:

For PNAE, organic food is defined as a product produced in an organic production environment, where agroecological principles guide the responsible use of soil, water, air, and other natural resources as the basis of the production process, respecting social and cultural principles.¹⁹

Program Management & Implementation

A governing/'intersectoral collaborative' body manages the PNAE due to the integration of linked federal, state, and local laws, policies, and programs.

The following is a list of managing bodies that have been copied directly from the [official website of the Ministry of Education](#) (n.d.) and translated into English with Google Translate (accessed June 15, 2021).

Managing Bodies / Management Areas:

Federal - The National Fund for Educational Development (FNDE) is a federal agency under the Ministry of Education, responsible for implementing programs nationwide, including the National School Nutrition Program – PNAE, which serves 47 million students throughout the country offering adequate and safe food in schools. They are responsible for complementary financial assistance, standardization, coordination, follow-up, monitoring, and inspection of the program's execution, in addition to evaluating its effectiveness and efficiency.

According to the *Cooperação Técnica Brasileira* (n.d.): *Since its establishment, the FNDE had undergone several changes, which became more intense when the Brazilian government laid the groundwork for forming a substantive conception of education that permeates all levels of education and procedures.*

Thus, the agency was strengthened, especially concerning the ongoing management of activities, projects, and educational programs to promote educational quality.

Nowadays, besides the National School Nutrition Program - PNAE, the FNDE is responsible for implementing the Programs of School Transportation, National Textbook, School Direct

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Money, Brazil Literate, Pro-Youth, Joint Action Plan, Pro-Child, Decentralization, and Open University Credits.²⁰

Executing Entities (EEx) – Executing entities are not-for-profit, civil society organizations with legal status linked to a school. They can be created by the initiative of the school, the community, or both. EEx can be called “School Box,” “Parent-Teacher Association,” “Parent-Teacher Circle,” or “Executing Unit.” They represent the educational community.

School Meals Councils – Are responsible for the social control of the PNAE by monitoring the purchase of products, the quality of the food offered to students, the hygienic and sanitary conditions in which food is stored, prepared, and served, the distribution and the consumption, financial execution, and the task of evaluating the rendering of accounts of the EEx.

Other institutions supporting the PNAE include:

Federal Court of Accounts and Ministry of Transparency, Inspection and General Comptroller of the Union – Federal government inspection bodies.

Federal Public Ministry – In partnership with FNDE, it receives and investigates allegations of poor program management.

Departments of Health and Agriculture of the States, Federal District, and Municipalities – Is responsible for sanitary inspection, attesting the quality of the products used in the food offered, and articulating family farming production with the PNAE.

Federal Council and Regional Councils of Nutritionists – Oversee the performance of nutritionists.

Where/ how is the program managed/implemented? How are decisions made? For example, how is the program set up, and how does the program work?

As mentioned, the program is managed and implemented at many different levels, including the federal government, individual states, and municipalities (Ministry of Education, 2021). Below are some critical components of the operation of the program:

- Nutritionists must prepare school meals and respect nutritional requirements, eating habits, and local culture and food traditions (Ministry of Education, 2021).
 - Special menus will be designed for students with specific health conditions (Ministry of Education, 2021).
- The application of resources under the PNAE:
 - At least 75% must be allocated for the purchase of fresh or minimally processed foods;
 - A maximum of 20% may be assigned to the acquisition of processed and ultra-processed foods;

²⁰ Cooperação Técnica Brasileira. *National Fund for Educational Development*, n.d.. From: http://www.abc.gov.br/training/informacoes/InstituicaoFNDE_en.aspx

- A maximum of 5% may be allocated to the purchase of processed culinary ingredients;
- 30% of the financial resources transferred from the federal government must be used to acquire foodstuffs directly from family farming operations, “prioritizing agrarian reform settlements, traditional indigenous and Quilombola communities” (Ministry of Education, 2021).
- The states and municipalities must establish School Feeding Councils (CAE) in their jurisdictions (Ministry of Education, 2021). The CAE is a “body of supervisory, permanent, deliberative and advisory, established within the States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities, composed of at least 7 (seven) full members and their alternates: representatives of the Executive Branch, education workers and students, civil entities and parents of students” (Ministry of Education, 2015).
- The CAE is responsible for:
 - Monitoring compliance with the guidelines;
 - Monitoring the application of resources for school feeding;
 - Ensuring the quality of food, especially hygienic conditions, as well as the acceptability of the menus offered;
 - Receiving the annual management report of the PNAE and issuing a conclusive opinion on this, approving or disapproving the implementation of the Program. (Ministry of Education, 2021).
- “The supervision of the management and application of financial resources from the PNAE is the responsibility of the FNDE and the CAE” (Ministry of Education, 2021).

Funding for School Food Programs:

The federal government provides the funding for the program. As stated on the [official website of the Ministry of Education](#) (n.d.), they transfer funds to states, municipalities, and federal schools in 10 monthly instalments (from February to November). This money covers 200 school days and depends on the number of students enrolled in each school system.

The following is a list of the current amounts transferred, broken down into per student and per day amounts (Ministry of Education, n.d.). (At the time of writing, the Brazilian Real was worth 0.25 Canadian dollars):

- Day-care centres: BRL 1.07
- Preschool: BRL 0.53
- Indigenous and Quilombola schools: BRL 0.64
- Elementary and High Schools: BRL 0.36
- Youth and Adult Education programs: BRL 0.32
- Full-Time High School Support Programs: BRL 2.00
- Students who attend the Specialized Educational Service after school: BRL 0.53

“The number of financial resources allocated ... is calculated using the following formula: $VT = A \times D \times C$ (being: VT = value to be transferred; A = number of students; D = number of days of service; C = per capita value for the acquisition of food for the student).”²¹

²¹ Ministry of Education. *Caderno de Legislação 2021*. 2021. From: https://rebrae.com.br/php/biblioteca_virtual/uploads/pdf/08-01-2021-09-36-50_578055_caderno_de_legislacao_2021.pdf

Local government contribution:

The money from the federal government is for foodstuffs only, so any other operational cost must be covered by other means, primarily state and municipal funding.²²

Who is eligible:

The program is offered to all students in the public education network.²³

Is the cost shared by parents?

The program is provided at no cost to parents.

Are there separate policies/standards for states/municipalities?

State and Municipal laws must follow federal legislation. A revision of the PNAE in 2009 ([Law No. 11.947](#)) established the [School Feeding Programme in primary schools of Brazil](#).

This Law, consisting of 35 articles, establishes the School Feeding Programme in primary schools of Brazil (PNAE) and has been updated three times. Art. 2 of this Law confirms that school food guidelines are: the use of healthy and adequate food, including the use of a variety of food, safe, in the respect of different culture, traditions and healthy eating habits, contributing to the growth and development of students and improving school performance in accordance with age and health, including those that require specific attention (I); the inclusion of food and nutrition education in the teaching and learning process that moves through the school curriculum, addressing themes of nutrition and development of healthy lifestyle practices from the perspective of food security and nutrition (II); the universality of care to students enrolled in public primary education (III); community participation in social control, monitoring of actions taken by States, the Federal District and municipalities to ensure the provision of school feeding in a healthy and adequate way (IV); support to sustainable development, with incentives for the acquisition of diverse foodstuffs produced locally and preferably by family farmers and the rural household entrepreneurs context, prioritizing Indigenous and Quilombo traditional communities (V); the right to school feeding aiming at ensuring food and nutritional security of the students, with equal access, in the respect of biological differences between ages and health conditions of students who need special attention and those who are socially vulnerable (VI). Art. 3 states that School feeding is a students' right of public primary education, a duty of the State, and will be promoted and encouraged to meet the guidelines established by this law. Art. 4 specifies that the National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) will contribute to (children's) growth and bio-psychosocial development, learning, and academic performance. It is intended to assist in developing healthier eating habits of students through actions of food and nutrition education and provision of meals that cover their nutritional needs during the school period.²⁴

²² Gov.Br. Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação. n.d.

From: <https://www.gov.br/fnde/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/programas/pnae>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. FAOLEX Database. n.d. From: <http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC132080/>

PNAE Resources:

<https://www.gov.br/fnde/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/programas/pnae>

<https://novoportal.crn1.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/pnae-legislacao.pdf>

<https://www.fnde.gov.br/index.php/programas/pnae/pnae-area-gestores/pnae-manuais-cartilhas/item/12094-caderno-de-legisla%C3%A7%C3%A3o-2021>

<https://novoportal.crn1.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/pnae-legislacao.pdf>

<https://www.fnde.gov.br/index.php/programas/pnae/pnae-area-gestores/pnae-manuais-cartilhas/item/6820-cartilha-pnae-2015>

https://files.cercomp.ufg.br/weby/up/128/o/CADERNO_DE_LEGISLACAO_2020.pdf

Laws:

http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2007/lei/l11445.htm

<https://www.fnde.gov.br/index.php/programas/pnae/pnae-sobre-o-programa/pnae-legislacao>

Manuals & Booklets:

https://www.gov.br/fnde/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/programas/pnae/manuais-e-cartilhas?b_start:int=0

Reports:

<https://www.gov.br/fnde/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/programas/pnae/pnae-informe-pnae>

https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/rr-brazil-experience-food-nutrition-security-190214-en_1_0.pdf

Procurement:

<https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/research/wfp286647.pdf>

Financials:

<https://www.gov.br/fnde/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/programas/pnae/consultas/pnae-repasses-financeiros>

<https://www.gov.br/fnde/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/programas/pnae/consultas/pnae-dados-fisicos-e-financeiros-do-pnae>

http://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/dspace/bitstream/handle/10438/17933/School_Feeding_in_Brazil_A_Cost_Assessment_of_the_National_Program.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Also, see: Sidaner E, Balaban D, Burlandy L. 2013. The Brazilian school feeding programme: an example of an integrated programme in support of food and nutrition security. Public Health Nutr. 2013 Jun;16(6):989-94. doi: 10.1017/S1368980012005101.

Contacts:²⁵

- Fale Conosco
- Central de Atendimento ao Cidadão (ligação gratuita)
 - 0800-616161
 - de segunda a sexta-feira, das 8h às 20h.
- Atendimento Institucional (presencial)
 - Setor Bancário Sul, Quadra 2, Bloco F, Edifício FNDE – Térreo, Sala 1, Brasília/DF,
 - de segunda a sexta-feira, das 8h às 12h e das 14h às 18h.
- E-mail para contato
 - cgpae@fnde.gov.br – dúvidas, sugestões, informações referentes à execução do Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar de modo geral;
 - coefa@fnde.gov.br - dúvidas, sugestões, informações referentes ao repasse financeiro no âmbito do PNAE;
 - cosan@fnde.gov.br - dúvidas, sugestões, informações sobre alimentação e nutrição no âmbito da alimentação escolar;
 - didaf@fnde.gov.br - dúvidas, sugestões, informações sobre aquisição de gêneros alimentícios oriundos da agricultura familiar no âmbito do PNAE;
 - cae@fnde.gov.br - dúvidas, sugestões, informações referentes ao controle social do PNAE;
 - sigecon@fnde.gov.br – dúvidas, sugestões, informações referentes à prestação de contas realizadas pelos Conselhos de Alimentação Escolar;
 - contasonline.projetos@fnde.gov.br - dúvidas, sugestões, informações sobre o Sistema de Gestão de Prestação de Contas OnLine (SigPC);
 - senha.institucional@fnde.gov.br - para solicitar senha de acesso ao CAE Virtual (A senha só será fornecida a um e-mail da Secretaria de Educação local);
 - COMAV@fnde.gov.brReferences:

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²⁵ Gov.Br. Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação. n.d. From: <https://www.gov.br/fnde/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/programas/pnae>

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