

THE POLITICS OF THE PLATE: SCHOOL MEALS AS AN AGENT OF FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) and Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) aimed at public education students. It aims to address the rights and guarantees of the public policy of school meals as a correlative factor between education and regional development. The problem questions the legal and practical applicability of an effective relationship between school feeding, permanence and learning where the quality of food within the school environment is, in fact, a national policy of the students' right, as well as pointing out possible improvements in relation to the feeding program.

Methodologically, a qualitative bibliographic research was carried out to apprehend both the phenomenon and the theoretical discussion of the theme. Thus, it was highlighted that the "plate policy" of school meals not only promotes education, health and protection of the social layer that is assisted by the public school, but also plays a fundamental role in the formation of values and habits of life, among them, that of school food and nutrition, based on food practices that respect cultural diversity, environmental and socially sustainable development of Brazilian regional development.

Keywords: School meals, Food and Nutrition Security, Public School, Rights and guarantees, Regional development.

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INTRODUCTION

The delimitation of this article circumscribes the effectiveness of school meals as an instrument of school and nutritional nutrition in the integral development of students, as well as in regional development itself. In addition, it is important to emphasize that the school community critically analyzes the social aspects that involve the correlation of hunger, permanence and quality of the teaching-learning process and, in this way, contributes to this problem being minimized and addressed within public schools in the context of food and nutritional rights and guarantees, and the consequent qualitative permanence of the student in the school unit and, consequently, the permanent exercise of citizens in their social and educational rights.

As a public school teacher, it is perceived daily that the school community and society are participants in national and regional public policies regarding rights and guarantees for free and quality education. In addition, it is academically and scientifically relevant to address Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) as a factor of regional development in the permanence and quality of the teaching-learning-food relationship as an aspect of citizenship.

From a bibliographic review of legislation, books and articles, initially, some laws were highlighted to reflect the issue of food and nutrition education from the perspective of the challenges of school meals to reflect the concept of education as a factor of regional development. Then, school meals are discussed among its legal norms and pedagogical praxis within the Brazilian social reality. And finally, the nutritional quality of school meals is addressed, as well as the actors of the efforts to correlate education and regional development.

In this way, through the eyes of a public school teacher, the theoretical-legal discussion is provided from the experiences of the "classroom floor", that is, from the challenging place of teaching-learning, as well as from a place of speech of those who are in the daily life of the school community. This is the pragmatic approach presented in this article, the place of school meals as a double factor of development: students assisted by food and nutritional security; and education as a preponderant factor of public policies for regional development.

FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

The Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law 9.394/96), in the first article, asserts that education encompasses the formative processes that are developed in family relationships, human coexistence, at work, in school institutions at various levels of education, as well as in movements and other social organizations. Thus, being the duty of the State and the family (CF, 1988, art. 205), organized society is called to participation that goes far beyond only the aspects and ambience of schooling. Thus, it is an aggregating element of the various spheres of life in society, which in this case, promotes the integral development of children, adolescents and young people in curricular and school relationships, but also in the interactions that are part of the development of cities.

It is notorious that regional development goes through the path of education as a human formation for life, citizenship and work in society, principles that were already regulated in the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988. Furthermore, notwithstanding the duty to understand education as a national, state and municipal priority, these powers must also offer and provide "equal conditions for access to and permanence in school" (LdB, 1996, art. 3). Thus, the right to education and the duty of education, as a collaborative exercise between civil society and the State, intersects with the assistance to the student in the aspects of transportation, teaching material and food, among other incentives capable of, on the one hand, facilitating teaching-learning relations, and on the other hand, reducing school dropout rates.

Education and school feeding (FNE) is part of a process of human-national-regional development regulated by legislative force. Law 11.346, of September 15, 2006, defines the principles and objectives of the National Food and Nutrition Security System (SISAN) in order to ensure both the right and adequate food of students, considering that this fundamental right is a basic condition for human dignity.

Food and nutrition security consists of the realization of everyone's right to regular and permanent access to quality food, in sufficient quantity, without compromising access to other essential needs, based on health-promoting food practices that respect cultural diversity and are environmentally, culturally, economically and socially sustainable (Brasil, 2006, art. 3).

Being a right of all, later, Law No. 11,947, of June 16, 2009, provided for the provision of school meals, as well as by Resolution CD/FNE No. 06, of May 8, 2020, in the establishment of the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) in order to organize the

transfer of financial resources to serve students enrolled in all stages and modalities of basic education.

Contribute to the growth and biopsychosocial development, learning, school performance and the formation of healthy habits of students, through meals guided by the bias of food and nutrition education offered, that is, the full exercise of food security for students in the municipal, district, state, federal and philanthropic entities associated with it, or maintained by them⁸.

From this perspective, according to the BNCC (2017), food and nutrition education can be included as a transversal and integrating curricular component, given its importance. It is understood that food and nutrition education is part of a public policy, as well as a national effort that sees education as a factor for Brazilian development. This also touches on a socioeconomic problem in the various regions of the country: the fight against and eradication of hunger in the Brazilian territory.

Food and Nutrition Education, in the context of the realization of the Human Right to Adequate Food and the guarantee of Food and Nutrition Security, is a field of knowledge and continuous and permanent, transdisciplinary, intersectoral and multiprofessional practice that aims to promote the autonomous and voluntary practice of healthy eating habits. The practice of FNS should make use of problematizing and active educational approaches and resources that favor dialogue with individuals and population groups, considering all stages of the life course, stages of the food system, and the interactions and meanings that make up eating behavior (Brasil, 2012, p. 23).

Thus, an intersectoral agenda is thought of among basic legislative articulations for public policies that guarantee a social state of rights and duties for citizen development, and among them, education and food in the country, that is, a democracy that chooses to serve the less affluent Brazilian population in an equitable way, as well as all those who need it, therefore, the structuring for regional development goes through these legislative and public policies at the national and local levels, local commerce, family farming actions and community gardens that can be participants in this regional human development effort: physical, biological, nutritional, intellectual, social, cultural, school, labor, *etc* (Bezerra, 2018).

⁸ Cf. The supervision of these intended executions of the PNAE is carried out by the School Councils (CAE), the FNDE, the Courts of Accounts and Comptroller's Offices, as well as the Public Prosecutor's Office. *In*: <https://www.gov.br/fnde/pt-br/acesso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/programas/pnae>. Accessed on: 01 May 2024.

Let's do a memory exercise based on the popular songbook, the song sung in early childhood education schools, and by fathers and mothers, in our country: "my snack, my snack, I'm going to eat, I'm going to eat, to get strong, to stay strong, and grow, and grow".⁹ The puerile subtlety of these lyrics reveals an effort of education from the first of schooling with the fashionable objective of children's physical growth. However, it is known that educational development goes beyond this primary dimension, involving such complex aspects of State public policies and the socioeconomic participation of the family and society with a view to the full development of children, adolescents and young people of school age.

If we think about this demand in the light of Paulo Freire, the directive act of a "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (2021) is education as a liberating political praxis for the ragged of the earth and the damned of the world, the poor and excluded Brazilian people, perhaps, the common Brazilian outside our middle-class bubble, the student outside our family bubble. It should be emphasized a reflection here, the PNAE stands out as a program that "fosters food identities that aims to mischaracterize this policy considered as welfare, which ends up reducing school feeding as "food for the poor" (Ferreira *et al.*, 2019, p. 90). The specific emphasis is on the rights and human dignity of citizenship for all Brazilians, less or more favored, in which education enters as an integrating process of human formation.

Therefore, if we think from Demerval Saviani, in "School and Democracy" (2018), in *the theory of the curvature of the rod*, there is a real tension of a Brazilian education between poor and rich for the construction of a democratic order of human development of paradigms and pedagogical practices aware of our land, people, students, families and their challenges that teachers, Like me, they know "sautéed" in everyday school life: hunger and malnutrition do not go together with education. This tension that needs to be faced and resolved that will appear, in fact, the citizen and the free citizen as a worthy synonym of the word Brazilian and Brazilian.

In fact, two relevant terms, education and education, since it highlights this plurality and Brazilian diversity as a hope for construction and human development in a country as continental as ours (Brandão, 2017). So, with the conceptual axis of the term education, in this article, the set of educational actions, inside and outside the school, for human formation in its citizen diversity is asserted from the articulation of knowledge that proposes,

⁹ Cf. <https://www.letras.mus.br/sucessos-da-minha-escolinha/795102/>. Accessed on: 02 May 2024.

in fact, a culture of national and regional development, therefore, school and nutritional feeding are basic parts in this process. Something that we will highlight below, in relation to school meals and their relevance for education and regional development.

SCHOOL MEALS AS A FACTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

School meals, as the material purpose of school meals in basic education, are a right guaranteed by law. As we said at the beginning of this article, the School Feeding Program (PNAE) instituted by Law 11.947 (2009), and regulated by Resolution CD/FNDE n. 06 (2020), reiterate that school meals are a right of public basic education students, being a duty of the State, based on the human right to healthy and adequate food in the school environment throughout Brazil. Of course, the various national and regional peculiarities are kept, however, the application and enforcement of the law has been a challenge for education managers at the Union, State and Municipal levels (Brasil, 2009; Brazil, 2020). Thus, the guidelines for Brazilian school feeding are:

Art. 2. I - the use of healthy and adequate food, including the use of varied, safe foods that respect the culture, traditions and healthy eating habits, contributing to the growth and development of students and to the improvement of school performance, in accordance with their age group and health status, including those who need specific attention; II - the inclusion of food and nutrition education in the teaching and learning process, which permeates the school curriculum, addressing the theme of food and nutrition and the development of healthy life practices, from the perspective of food and nutrition security (Brasil, 2009).

In a country whose hunger and malnutrition are serious social problems, the theme of this article raises the discussion of the school as an agent of formative development of teaching-learning relations at school age, including food and nutritional actions as a participant in an effort and system of public policies in the various Brazilian regions. Thus

Figure 1 – School lunch attendance.

School	Daily nutritional needs	No. of meals
Daycare (part-time)	30%	2
Nursery (full-time)	70%	3
Indigenous/quilombola communities	30% per meal	
Other students - part-time	20% 30%	1 2 or +
Other students - full time	70%	3

Source: FNDE data.

Thus, the close relationship of school feeding of nutritional quality as an extension of learning is perceived. In addition, the school community sees itself within the responsibility for the orientation and formation of eating habits, adding efforts for the integral development of students (Brasil, 2009; Brazil, 2020). The numerous personal and real cases in which the lunch lady herself plays the educational role in the daily reception and daily contact with the students are highlighted. From this perspective, in addition to this micro-school sphere, for the School Feeding Observatory (2023), an agency resulting from joint action between civil society organizations and social movements, to monitor and mobilize Brazilian society about the PNAE:

The National School Feeding Program (PNAE) is responsible for offering school meals to all students in public basic education. Considered as one of the most relevant policies aimed at guaranteeing the Human Right to Adequate Food and Nutrition (DHANA), the program serves about 41 million students, with an annual transfer of R\$ 4 billion to the 27 states and 5,570 municipalities, whose amount is complemented with the budget of the states and municipalities. For many of these students, it is at school that the only or main meal of the day is eaten (Observatório, 2023, n.p.).

Since the 1940s and 1950s, the efforts to build the PNAE, within the Brazilian realities, have been part of a public policy that guarantees the transfer of financial resources to the States and Municipalities, that is, a kind of "school plate policy" that reaches the 27 States and the Federal District. School meals are part of a food and educational ecosystem, based on a multidisciplinary team, with a view to promoting health, as well as the performance of teaching-learning relationships for children and adolescents.

According to Kassaoka *et al.* (2018), the school feeding actors (nutritionist, lunch lady, principal) must act in an integrated manner in order to ensure:

The provision of safe food to schoolchildren; The formation of an environment conducive to healthy food choices; The promotion of food and nutrition education for the entire school community (Kassaoka, 2018, p. 13).

In this way, the nutritionist plans, prepares and monitors the menu and food culture of the school kitchen through the guidelines of current legislation and the school board. The lunch cooks, on the other hand, are responsible for the safe preparation of food and the proper handling of food for schoolchildren within the daily life of the community. Consequently, these overlaps of the actors of school meals play a relevant role in the constant development of information in the close relationship between family, school and community. In other words, food and nutrition education becomes a set of strategies and practices for healthy eating and instrumentalized for educational purposes, something that contributes significantly to education as an entity of national and regional development.

Article 12. The school feeding menus should be prepared by the nutritionist in charge using basic foodstuffs, respecting the nutritional references, eating habits, culture and food tradition of the locality, based on the sustainability and agricultural diversification of the region, on healthy and adequate food (Brasil, 2009).

According to the Cora Coralina Agency (2023), the State of Goiás offers 800 thousand meals a day to students daily, which in this case, in 998 school units, to 476 thousand students in the State Network in elementary, secondary and Youth and Adult Education, and 30% of the food purchased for the preparation of meals comes from family farming, soon:

The National Fund for the Development of Education (FNDE) transferred R\$ 55.1 million reais for school meals. The resource is complemented by the State, which invested R\$ 31.4 million via the Protege Fund. The Fund, established by State Law 14,469, of July 16, 2003, aims to combat hunger and poverty through nutrition, education, health, housing, family income reinforcement and other social interest programs (Jornal Option, 2023, n.p.).

In the local environment, school meals are also monitored by the local School Feeding Council, which makes the necessary checks on the quality of the meal as well as the use of the allocated funds. It is part of this discussion that it is fundamental for the food and nutritional security of students in the school environment. Something that, in the Brazilian case, for poor students who are in social vulnerability, meals at school are an

important part of the daily diet. Therefore, the act of eating, despite the satisfaction of a biological need, in the school environment fosters socialization and the transmission of a food culture from childhood and adolescence. Like this

The social representations about school meals elaborated by school professionals with the predisposition of the conception of a needy student, in need of a plate of food and who eats anything, generate a corresponding *habitus* that tends to guide the practical dispositions related to eating at school (repeatedly serving full-bodied foods), to the organization of pedagogical work (elaborated according to the lunch) and to the school day (reduced in periods of lack of food). Furthermore, the practices related to school meals, which, in the case studied, are guided only by the representations of school professionals, act as a curricular element to reinforce the submission of students and tend to naturalize the situation of exclusion in which most of them find themselves (Bezerra, 2009, p. 115).

It is perceived that the actors of school meals, namely, nutritionists, lunch cooks and school directors, become participants in this effort of a kind of plate policy, that is, the participation of the school community in this Brazilian public policy in the correlation between education and social rights for the social inclusion of Brazilian children and adolescents. Which, in fact, is a relevant factor for the development of the teaching-learning relationship, as well as the actions that include education in the context of public policies active in regional development. In this way, guaranteed by the National Fund for the Development of Education (FNDE) and the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), school meals are offered daily to students in public schools in Brazil and in its various states and municipalities.

NUTRITIONAL QUALITY OF SCHOOL MEALS AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Is there a direct correlation between hunger, impermanence and inadequacy? The performance in public schools allows us to observe some points that are intrinsic to the government programs offered and the due applicability to students in the school unit. As I work in a public school that offers students snacks and lunch, interspersed during the week, it is possible to see that many parents are in favor of the program since the food offered at school is the one that offers a more balanced diet to their children, with vitamins and proteins necessary for their physiological development, since at home, In the harsh Brazilian reality, food is more precarious.

There are legal problematizations regarding the pedagogical praxis in school meals. For example, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) highlights and defends the right

to quality food in Brazilian public schools. Despite being a right, it is also a pillar for basic, public and quality education.

The National School Feeding Program (PNAE) offers school feeding and food and nutrition education actions 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 (from February to November) to cover 200 school days, according to the number of students enrolled in each school system (Brasil, 2009, n.p.¹⁰).

Food and Nutrition Security (FNS)¹¹ should be understood as the protection of the most essential guarantees of an individual at school age, encompassing a set of rights that are expanded over time according to the social challenges of each time and generation. Brazil remains a country of immense inequalities. Therefore, human dignity comes to constitute the constitutional principles that embody the requirements of education, justice and ethical values. Soon:

At recess time, no Brazilian public school child plays on an empty stomach anymore. Even better, the meal is balanced, prepared by nutritionists to meet the student's daily needs. Quality school meals are already reaching the public school system throughout the country. There are 36 million students in early childhood and basic education served by the National School Feeding Program (Brasil, 2022, n.p.).¹²

Regarding the foundations of human rights, the problem is that it is presented within the dialectic of a right and guarantee that one has and/or a right that one would like to have. In the first question, it is concerned with the positive legal system, in the second, reasons and ways of defense are attempted to legitimize the right in question in convincing a large number of people to recognize it (Bobbio, 2004). In any case, the expression "rights of man" in every culture, epoch and society will bring great debates about the reality and the illusion

¹⁰ Cf. Available at: <https://www.fnade.gov.br/programas/pnae>. Accessed on: 10 May 2024.

¹¹ According to the Federal Council of Nutritionists: "According to the Organic Law of Food and Nutrition Security – LOSAN (Law No. 11,346, of September 15, 2006), Food and Nutrition Security – FNS is understood as the realization of everyone's right to regular and permanent access to quality food, in sufficient quantity, without compromising access to other essential needs, based on health-promoting food practices that respect cultural diversity and that are environmentally, culturally, economically and socially sustainable. The commitments assumed by the Federal Government since 2003, aimed at combating hunger and misery in the country, have led to the construction of the Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) agenda as a State policy, in a broad intersectoral process and with the participation of civil society, defining the legal and institutional frameworks of this agenda – such as the creation of the National Food and Nutrition Security System (SISAN); the recreation of the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA); the installation of the Intersectoral Chamber of Food and Nutrition Security (CAISAN); and the preparation of the National Plan for Food and Nutrition Security (PLANSAN 2012/2015)". Available at: <https://www.cfn.org.br/index.php/seguranca-alimentar-e-nutricional/>. Accessed on: 20 May 2024.

¹² Cf. Available at: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/component/tags/tag/direito-a-alimentacao-de-qualidadedireito-alimentacao-merenda>. Accessed on: 20 May 2024.

of the factuality of the right to all, or almost all, or a few. Therefore, it is this concept of Food and Nutritional Security in the school environment that becomes a relevant theme to be rediscussed under the sign of the *Kantian* *sapere aude*, a *dare to know*, the principle for clarification and autonomy for the quality of Brazilian education (Adorno, 1995).

According to the Law of Basic Guidelines of National Education No. 9,394/96, article 1 states that: "[...] education, a duty of the family and the State, inspired by the principles of freedom and the ideals of human solidarity, aims at the full development of the student, his preparation for the exercise of citizenship and his qualification for work [...]" (Brazil, 1996). This Law establishes that the school must offer the student a quality education that can put into practice all its principles and that everyone is responsible for developing their citizenship with society. In addition, the family, as a partner in the training process, is responsible for placing this student within the school and it must receive him in order to offer all the opportunities so that he has the freedom to learn with quality teaching and learning in which education is a social right and everyone must fight for an education that is of quality, without inequality, because it makes us human and makes us social beings.

In order to have a good learning, the student needs to be well fed with all possible nutrients, so that the body can function in all senses, in this way, Valente (2002) states that:

[...] categorically that school failure would be the result of irreversible sequelae produced in the central nervous system of children subjected to malnutrition in the first two years of life. Others, at the other extreme, claim that school failure is largely a reflection of the inadequacy of public schools. Still others seek the social context of children's lives as their main determination (2002, p. 29, 30).

A well-fed child, with all the nutrients that the body needs, has a more evolved learning, as one can think of solving math problems if his mind cannot because hunger at a certain time affects the nervous system and makes the child not relate to learning. According to Valente (2002, p. 32), an adult or child who is 'hungry for the day' "is disconnected from the world, cannot pay attention to what he is doing and much less to what the other person may be doing, such as, for example, a teacher in the classroom".

For an adult it is already difficult, imagine now a child who has to learn on an empty stomach. And school feeding is one of the ways for the child to ingest this snack full of nutrients that will value learning with the school and the child who is the most important in this environment, and so, Valente highlights: "hunger of the day", is another aspect of the life of the popular classes that hinders the learning process. The reality of many Brazilian

children who only eat at school and attend it exclusively for this purpose is known to all (Valente, 2002).

For many children, school is the only way to have food, as many do not have this food at home, and therefore it is more incentive to go to school, and it is the only food of the day. Just as learning is important in a child's life, so is their diet, the two go together and food in my view can be considered as one of the foundations for quality education. The well-fed child will certainly acquire his knowledge with more willingness, will think to solve mathematical problems with more logic, will have more chance of absolving and evolving in this globalized world teaching and learning with more quality. Proper nutrition in childhood brings visible results in the growth and development of children, reflecting better learning and better health qualities, because a well-nourished child gets sick less and learns more.

Taking into account that the school environment provides a learning space, where the student can spend up to two decades of his life in it, it is extremely important that we present to this student social and economic aspects in which we are inserted, in addition to content relevant to each subject of the curriculum presented as a basis through the BNCC (National Common Curricular Base) that addresses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including an item on the eradication of hunger in the world. In addition to valuing school meals, it is necessary for students to be able to reflect on the importance of avoiding food waste offered in schools and to reflect on the chaos of world hunger. It is also not only useful to raise awareness among students, but also for everyone who is directly or indirectly involved in student development within the school space (PNAE).¹³

This public policy, by being inscribed as part of the set of structuring social public policies. In this way, the Program becomes a public policy action aimed at building sustainability, respect for human rights and citizenship. The PNAE is monitored and inspected directly by society, through the School Feeding Councils (CAE), and also by the National Fund for the Development of Education (FNDE), the Federal Court of Accounts (TCU), the Office of the Comptroller General of the Union (CGU) and the Public Prosecutor's Office. It is necessary to know that the beneficiary school must be registered in the School Census carried out by the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP/MEC). Philanthropic, community and confessional non-

¹³ The National School Feeding Program (PNAE), governed by Law No. 11,947/2009/FNDE and Resolution No. 26/2013/FNDE, considers important educational actions that permeate the school curriculum and that address the theme of food and nutrition. It also encourages the inclusion of food and nutrition education in the teaching and learning process, through healthy life practices and food and nutritional security.

profit schools that meet the criteria established in FNDE Resolution No. 26, of 2013, are considered part of the public education network. The school menu must be prepared by a nutritionist, respecting local and cultural eating habits, meeting specific nutritional needs, according to the minimum percentages established in article 14 of Resolution No. 26, of 2013.

The proposition of collective actions has as its main objective the pointing out of problems related to school feeding as well as the proposition of solutions that can actually be put into practice. This public policy, by being inscribed as part of the set of structuring social public policies, acting specifically on the food issue, has been strengthening sustainability when it incorporates in its defenses and principles: the discussion of family agricultural production without the use of aggressors to the environment; the construction of healthy and citizenship through the care promoted by the practices of producing adequate and safe meals from the nutritional and sanitary point of view and the full realization of the human right to food, through the provision of meals to all schoolchildren. Thus, the Program becomes a public policy action aimed at building sustainability, respect for human rights and citizenship.

The problematization highlighted in this article is based on the transformative practice of the school based on updated critical theories in the context of education. The concepts of *habitus* and *social distinction* in the terms of Bourdieu (2009; 2011a) regarding the right to school meals are operationalized in the context of food and nutrition education based on two initial questions: What does a dietary recommendation or guidance mean? What are the spaces/fields of imposition of "healthy and safe eating"? The school community as a *field* and *habitus* conducive to the process of education is a social fact of tensions and clashes that are essential to the research of the relationship between education and socio-regional development.

Food Security is guided by a *habitus* in which the product and producer of a social reality adjust the body to consumption through a concrete existence (Bourdieu, 2011b). This process and mechanism by which we react in certain circumstances concerns the cognitive, bodily and affective references that we use, even if in a non-conscious state, at the time of acting.

In this sense, it is observed that autonomy almost always appears in the academic literature linked to the idea of social participation and to the expansion of this participation in social and educational policies. The idea that access to real alternatives makes up the

range of conditions for an effective democracy is extremely relevant in the debate on autonomy. In other words, it is not enough to participate, it is necessary to guarantee conditions of choice, and also options and paths for it. However, in order to better understand oneself as a subject in this process, it is necessary for the individual to know his reality, the alternatives he has, the rights that have been conquered in each field of his activity and the social interventions necessary to ensure that his rights are objectified and expanded. In this sense, the educational process constitutes a favorable dynamic for the construction of this profile of citizen who knows, lives, thinks, transforms his reality and reacts to the manifestations arising from it.

In this way, food, education and regional development, within the human formative process, have a direct relationship with performance (Benevides, 2018), because what is at stake in the "politics of the plate" directly permeates the production of nutritional energy for effective teaching-learning, as well as the full integral and educational development of the child.

The theme of regional development or, in other words, of the regional question is one of those themes that find little resonance in the affairs of the economic and political conjuncture of a nation. They are, therefore, problems that are constituted, as a rule, in the long-term horizon of a nation or region. They refer to structural issues to be addressed, removed or overcome. They are in the field of the need to undertake a structural change, a reorientation of direction and trajectory in the guiding beams of regional (sub)development. This perspective of understanding the regional challenges us, therefore, to reflect on how each step taken in a given conjuncture adds or subtracts necessary steps to the arduous long-term journey (Monteiro Neto *et al.*, 2017, p. 21).

Education, food and nutrition should be considered and inserted in the discussions of the educational process and regional development, not only in disciplines related to the sciences of biology, health and pedagogy, but in all areas of knowledge, such as economics, politics, *etc.*, and in this way, stimulate the consumption of healthy foods at school and in the child's daily life. Educators, parents, students, lunch cooks, and the community have an important role in building a school environment that promotes healthy lifestyles, especially regarding the quality of nutritional food.

The Department of Education of the Government of Goiás (2022) advocates the right and quality of healthy eating during the school term with the aim of ensuring nutritional security and the biological, psychological and social development of students, in addition to

promoting food education¹⁴. Thus, the management of school feeding is a policy that involves government articulations at the level of the Union, States and Municipalities through the PNAE. According to Jornal Popular, in an article from June 17, 2022¹⁵, hunger among students increases the demand for food in public schools in Goiás. In other words, schools have to increase the volume of meals offered, and the State and City Halls have expanded the counterpart of school meals to meet the demand.

It is considered essential to resume theoretical and empirical assumptions as a methodological strategy to naturalize concepts such as autonomy and the right to food and, reflecting on their usefulness in institutional pedagogical practice, to reinsert them in a systematic way in the context of school feeding in order to identify strategies for coping with and managing problems.

The importance of nutritional food for school and regional development reaches some spheres of the economic, political, educational and social conjuncture. The acquisition of food from a local family farming production chain, purchases from local suppliers for school meals, the daily implementation of a culture of food information in the school environment for healthy eating that also acts to control childhood obesity. And consequently, in the budget of the families in the region, that is, the lunch within the daily expenditure of family food is reduced by the permanence of the student in the school part-time or full-time.

CONCLUSION

It is important to consider that not every educational process contributes to the formation of this food and nutritional security profile. The CAE's (School Feeding Councils) should be valued in the full exercise of inspection and propositions of actions aimed at effective compliance with the rules, regulations and laws on school meals as a Brazilian public policy.

Furthermore, it is worth resuming the idea that we defend that social relations will be so much more humane and constructive of a more equitable and dignified society when efforts are invested in the formation of a student and citizen more capable of reflecting on

¹⁴ Cf. Food education. Available at: <https://site.educacao.go.gov.br/programas-institucionais/alimentacao-escolar.html>. Accessed on: 22 May 2024.

¹⁵ Cf. Jornal O Popular (2022). Hunger of students increases demand for food in public schools in Goiás. Available at: <https://opopular.com.br/noticias/cidades/fome-de-alunos-faz-aumentar-demanda-de-comida-nas-escolas-p%C3%BAblicas-de-goi%C3%A1s-1.2475424>. Accessed on: 21 May 2024.

their condition as a subject in social reality. In other words, it was stated that the degree of search of the school and the teacher for the autonomy of the students determines the school work and the educational process offered to them and the pedagogical activities that consolidate this educational practice through the "politics of the plate" in the face of the challenge of teaching-learning in the daily life of the school community and the place of school meals as a factor in the development of students assisted by food and nutritional security, and education as a preponderant factor of public policies for regional development.

Another important factor is that food is reflected in health, provides greater resistance to diseases and contributes to a dignified disposition to study. Thus, the constitution and implementation of a National Policy for Food and Nutrition Education, from the perspective of the realization of the Human Right to Adequate and Healthy Food, permeates the Brazilian public school day by day.

It is also necessary to continue building spaces for permanent reflection and action in order to enable the continuous discussion between the various actors involved to qualify the issue of school meals and food and nutritional security, and that this translates into an effective and citizen quality education for all, as well as the agency of regional development in the face of the challenges of the various realities in each corner of Brazil.

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