



POLICY BRIEF #4

SCHOOL FEEDING IN TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES: The indigenous PNAE in Amazonas



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INTRODUCTION

Brazil has one of the largest and most well-established school feeding programmes in the world, covering more than 40 million students daily in all regions of the country. Implementing this programme in a country of continental dimensions and rich ethnic variety requires constant innovation and continuous attention to the specific needs of each community.

This policy brief presents the challenges and solutions in supplying school meals to indigenous populations through the successful experience of adapting the National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) to the needs and context of traditional communities in Amazonas. One of the keys to such success was the public purchase of foodstuffs directly from indigenous producers near schools, in villages and communities, which ensures that these peoples' food culture is reflected in the school menu and, at the same time, supports local smallholder farmers.

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME (PNAE)

The Brazilian National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) offers school feeding and educational activities on food and nutrition to all public school students on all 200 school days per year. This aims to contribute to development, learning, school performance, and the creation of healthy eating habits for schoolchildren in the country.

The PNAE serves students from most stages of Brazilian public basic education through a regime of collaboration and shared administration between the different entities of the Federation. The federal government transfers additional financial values to states, municipalities, and federal schools according to the number of students enrolled in each school network. Local entities are then responsible for purchasing food and implementing the programme on the ground.

Regarding indigenous school feeding, it is important to note that the programme prioritizes traditional indigenous communities when purchasing smallholder farmer foodstuffs, designs menus according to local food culture,

and differentiates the *per capita* amount passed on to students enrolled in indigenous areas.

The prioritization of traditional indigenous communities is present in the school feeding guidelines established by law. In this sense, some determinations within regulations that govern the National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) stand out:

- School menus must meet the cultural specificities of indigenous communities, covering at least 30% of nutritional and energy needs, macronutrients and priority micronutrients with every meal offered. In cases where three meals are offered, at least 70% of the nutritional needs must be met.

- Of the total financial resources the FNDE transfers to the PNAE, at least 30% must be used to acquire foodstuffs directly from smallholder farmers and rural smallholder entrepreneurs or their organizations. It is important to note that traditional indigenous communities are part of the priority groups for

the selection of product suppliers for school feeding.

■ The FNDE recommends that states and municipalities with students enrolled in schools located in indigenous areas should have at least one member representing traditional peoples or communities in their School Feeding Councils (CAE).

■ The PNAE transfers differentiated *per capita* services for students enrolled in indigenous areas. While the *per capita* value to supply school feeding for students enrolled in elementary and middle school is R\$0.36, the *per capita* value for students enrolled in basic education schools located in indigenous areas is R\$0.64.

INDIGENOUS SCHOOL EDUCATION

Brazilian indigenous peoples are the native or original communities, who inhabit the territory since before the Portuguese colonization of Brazil. They are distinct and diverse populations with unique identities and strong ties to their territories and traditions. The indigenous population in the country amounts to almost 1 million people, with more than 300 ethnicities distributed in around 7,000 localities¹. A large part of this population is concentrated in the North and Northeast regions of the country and faces many situations of socioeconomic challenges and social vulnerability.

National legislation provides for the right of indigenous peoples to a specific, differentiated, intercultural, bilingual/multilingual and community-based school education². Indigenous School Education is regulated by Ministry of Education guidelines in order to observe the territoriality of indigenous peoples and respect their needs and specificities. In 2020, the country had around 4,000 indigenous schools and more than 250,000 enrolled students³.



INDIGENOUS SCHOOL FEEDING

One of the cultural factors that characterize indigenous communities is food. Preserving food preparation methods and using foods specific to each population are important practices to maintain the memory, identity, and health of indigenous peoples.

Guidelines of PNAE and indigenous school education establish respect for indigenous peoples' food traditions. **School feeding must respect traditional practices that are part of the community's food preference, integrating menu design and purchase of foodstuffs with local habits.**

In addition to the concern with valuing traditional cultures, the PNAE also considers the history of social vulnerability that indigenous peoples face, which results in higher nutritional deficit rates compared to the general population. The programme determines that the menu prepared for schools in indigenous communities must reach at least 30% of students' daily nutritional needs. This is a higher percentage than the 20% of daily nutritional needs established for other part-time students in the public education system. For these reasons, the federal resource for indigenous students is higher.

PURCHASE OF FOOD PRODUCED BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FOR PNAE

One of the strategies Brazil adopted to ensure the quality of school feeding is the direct acquisition from smallholder farming. And, in the case of indigenous schools, smallholder farming plays an even more central role, contributing directly to the adaptation of menus to food culture.

The PNAE legislation determines that **a minimum of 30% of the federal government's financial resources must be used to purchase**

food from smallholder farming, rural smallholder entrepreneurs or their organizations.

In addition, public procurement must prioritize producers from land reform settlements, **indigenous traditional communities**, and Quilombola communities. These producers must be duly registered with the Declaration of Aptitude to PRONAF (DAP), a tool to identify smallholder farmers so they may access resources from public policies.



Photo: FNDE

Therefore, **the PNAE seeks not only to ensure food security for students from traditional communities, but also to create significant impacts on the socioeconomic advances of rural territories and their productive arrangements.**

Despite the history of success in its implementation, the process of acquiring food from smallholder farming for PNAE can present challenges, particularly in remote areas. In the

state of Amazonas, a successful initiative was implemented in 2017 to better enable public purchases for the indigenous population, which will be presented in the following item. The proposal arose after discovering an inadequate food offer, according to the cultures of indigenous peoples and the difficulty of inserting food from smallholder farmers in the community itself.

THE AMAZONAS CASE: FOOD PURCHASES FOR INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS

Amazonas is a Brazilian state in the northern region of the country, standing out for being the largest federation unit in territorial extension. Most of the state's territory is covered in forests, housing a significant portion of the Amazon rainforest and its wide biodiversity. The population density is extremely low, with most cities concentrated along waterways and accessible only by boat or plane. For these reasons, food transportation and logistics represent constant challenges for school feeding.

According to the provision of accounts sent to the federal government, only 21% of Amazonian municipalities complied with the minimum obligation of purchases from smallholder farming in 2016. Of the 62 municipalities in the state, 55% did not acquire any food from local farmers⁴. In order to investigate the causes of this problem and ensure the rights of indigenous peoples to adequate school feeding, a Commission of Traditional Foods of the Peoples in Amazonas (Catrapoa) was established in 2016.

Catrapoa is an articulation between institutions of the federal, state, and municipal governments, indigenous movements and leaders, traditional communities, and civil society organizations led by the Public Federal Ministry of Amazonas. The Commission seeks appropriate solutions to the challenges of school feeding among indigenous peoples and traditional communities, as well as making public procurement accessible to this public.



The idea of bringing these institutions together arose from a visit of the Public Federal Ministry of Amazonas to the Yanomami indigenous land, where they found that logistics hindered the flow of production and the supply of food to indigenous schools in the state. When food arrived, it was often decontextualized from the culture of these peoples, had a poor quality and was industrialized. On the other hand, there was a strong smallholder agriculture production in indigenous communities that was not being purchased for school feeding, despite offering superior nutritional quality and more affordable prices.

After several meetings throughout 2016 and 2017, the group verified the existence of several difficulties for direct purchase of indigenous food products for their villages. Among them are:

1. National legislation regulating sanitary aspects does not consider traditional forms of production and consumption;
2. Difficulty in issuing the declaration of aptitude for indigenous rural producers for this type of public purchase;
3. Ignorance and omission by public managers on fulfilling the obligation to purchase products from smallholder farming;
4. Lack of knowledge and need for training indigenous farmers on public procurement policies, the requirements to access them and the possibility of claiming compliance with legislation.

To meet this challenge, public entities designed a technical note⁵ that considers the existence of "self-consumption", a process that encompasses production until final consumption in the villages. This process is observed in a family context, where traditional food mechanisms of indigenous peoples' cultures are present, which respects their techniques and allows students to consume these foods in a manner that is consistent with their customs. The document allows institutional purchase of animal products and processed vegetables produced in the community itself or nearby, with no requirement of

sanitary records.

The measure enabled both the sale of community production and reduction of public spending on food transport. In addition, it also sought to recognize that the food produced in the villages should be the first considered when releasing public calls of interest, in compliance with the School Feeding law. This is a direct purchase modality, with approval from regulatory agencies, that respects sanitary norms according to PNAE guidelines.

The issuance of the technical note was accompanied by several other activities to enable public purchases from indigenous farmers between 2017 and 2018, including:

- Training workshops for local actors on indigenous school feeding;
- Agreement on terms of commitment with local decision-makers;
- Implementation of pilot projects with distinguished public calls of interest for indigenous farmers;
- Coordination with rural assistance agencies to issue the necessary documentation for indigenous farmers to be able to participate in public purchases;
- Formal recommendations for the Public Ministry to implement the legislation to municipal managers, highlighting that non-compliance may result in accountability to the municipality or state's executive manager;
- Monitoring of public calls of interest and elaboration of a specific notice model for indigenous peoples;
- Continuous monitoring and support of municipal public managers.

The consolidation of this initiative was only possible due to the network action of various institutions involved and the intense work that generated quick results. In 2019 and 2020, more than a third of the state's municipalities made product purchases and deliveries in indigenous villages and communities, moving around R\$3 million and benefiting at least 350 indigenous producers, 200 schools, and

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20,000 students⁶. In São Gabriel da Cachoeira, the municipality with the largest indigenous population in the country, sale propositions from local smallholder farmers reached 100% of the amount the FNDE transferred to the municipality to execute the PNAE in 2020.

The indigenous PNAE experience in Amazonas, implemented by Catrapoa, showed several benefits of widely inserting these peoples'

traditional food products in school feeding, including animal products and processed vegetables, adapting sanitary standards to the culture and tradition of these peoples.

Income generation, enhancement of biodiversity and local ethno-knowledge, and improvement of the quality of food in schools are among these benefits. They contribute to food and nutrition sovereignty and security, ensure the human right to adequate food for communities, stimulate local economy, and reduce public spending and environmental impact.

The consolidation of this initiative was possible due to the network action of various institutions that make up the Commission. These partnerships are essential to overcome and seek joint solutions to challenges and obstacles, especially in the Amazon region, such as logistics, training and technical advice to indigenous peoples and traditional communities, and issuance of documents.

In 2020, a new National Technical Note (No. 3/2020/6^aCCR/MPF⁷), extended the Amazonas guarantees to the whole country. This makes it possible to scale up and replicate good practices in other states, expanding the right to self-consumption to the traditional peoples and communities of Brazil and facilitating the supply of healthy food to all Brazilian elementary school students.

However, it is important for actors who wish to implement this practice in a territory to keep an articulation with local regulatory entities and executors of procurement policies (such as Secretariats of Production and Education), as well as to seek awareness when applying the technical note. Thus, income generation, adequate food, and respect for these peoples' culture and way of life are guaranteed, and also fulfill the legal obligation to use at least 30% (which can reach 100%) of PNAE resources to purchase from smallholder farming, prioritizing these groups.



THE PANDEMIC AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK EXTENSION

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the need for social isolation measures arose, especially for indigenous and traditional peoples. Faced with the World Health Organization (WHO) declaration of public health emergency and considering the suspension of classes in states due to the pandemic, the PNAE underwent temporary changes in its implementation. The agency authorized distribution of foodstuffs purchased with programme resources to parents or guardians of basic education public school students, an exception made during the period of class suspension due to emergency or public calamity.

Indigenous peoples, who isolate themselves in their communities, had the flow and commer-

cialization of their products hindered, which compromised the school feeding supply in this context. However, due to existing legal provisions in the technical notes, the PNAE adapted: farmers were able to sell their production locally and school managers offered school feeding to students in the form of take-home kits, according to new regulations for times of public health emergency.

This situation further highlighted the importance of acquiring products from the community itself and the key role of school feeding, contributing to ensure food sovereignty and security for these peoples even in times of crisis and extreme uncertainty.

1 Information Base on Indigenous Peoples and Quilombolas | Indigenous and Quilombolas 2019, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística - IBGE). Available in Portuguese at <https://dadosgeociencias.ibge.gov.br/portal/apps/sites/#/indigenas-e-quilombolas>.

2 Federal Constitution of 1988, articles 231 and 232. Available in Portuguese at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/constituicaocompilado.htm

Law No. 9,394/1996 - Law on Guidelines and Bases of National Education, articles 78 and 79. Available in Portuguese at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/19394.htm

Resolution CNE/CEB No. 3/1999 - National Guidelines for the functioning of indigenous schools. Available in Portuguese at:

http://portal.mec.gov.br/cne/arquivos/pdf/rceb03_99.pdf

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3 Ministry of Education, 2019. Available in Portuguese at <http://portal.mec.gov.br/busca-geral/206-noticias/1084311476/75261-mec-trabalha-por-avancos-na-educacao-escolar-indigena>.

4 "Practical guide: Indigenous school feeding and traditional communities", chap.1, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA), 2020.

Available in Portuguese at: <https://www.fn.de.gov.br/index.php/centrais-de-conteudos/publicacoes/category/116-alimentacao-escolar?download=14172:guia-alimenta%C3%A7%C3%A3o-ind%C3%ADgena-vfinal-sem-fichacatalografica-web>

5 Technical Note No. 01/2017/ADAF/SFA-AM/MPF-AM. Available in Portuguese at <http://www.mpf.mp.br/atuacao-tematica/ccr6/grupos-de-trabalho-1/educacao-indigena/documentos/nota-tecnica-nota-publica/NTMERENDA21092017.pdf>.

6 "Practical guide: Indigenous school feeding and traditional communities", chap.2, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA), 2020.

Available in Portuguese at: <https://www.fn.de.gov.br/index.php/centrais-de-conteudos/publicacoes/category/116-alimentacao-escolar?download=14172:guia-alimenta%C3%A7%C3%A3o-ind%C3%ADgena-vfinal-sem-fichacatalografica-web>

7 Technical Note No. 3/2020/6ªCCR/MPF. Available in Portuguese at <http://www.mpf.mp.br/atuacao-tematica/ccr6/documentos-e-publicacoes/publicacoes/nota-tecnica/2020/nota-tecnica-no-3-2020-6ccr-mpf.pdf>

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7 Technical Note No. 3/2020/6ªCCR/MPF. Available in Portuguese at <http://www.mpf.mp.br/atuacao-tematica/ccr6/documentos-e-publicacoes/publicacoes/nota-tecnica/2020/nota-tecnica-no-3-2020-6ccr-mpf.pdf>

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7 Technical Note No. 3/2020/6ªCCR/MPF. Available in Portuguese at <http://www.mpf.mp.br/atuacao-tematica/ccr6/documentos-e-publicacoes/publicacoes/nota-tecnica/2020/nota-tecnica-no-3-2020-6ccr-mpf.pdf>

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