



# Public infrastructure for food and nutrition security in Brazil: fulfilling the constitutional commitment to the human right to adequate food

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## Abstract

Food insecurity is a critical global problem with social and public health consequences. In Brazil, access to adequate food is a fundamental human right guaranteed under the country's Constitution since 2010. As such, the State assumes the distinct and complementary obligations to respect, protect, promote and provide the Right to Adequate Food. The aim of this study is to present actions related to the “provision” dimension that have been developed as part of a network of public infrastructure strategies for food and nutrition security in Brazil. Through an exploratory, analytical literature review, the paper focuses on the operational designs and logistics of three main strategies: Food Banks, Community Kitchens, and Popular Restaurants. The Brazilian experience indicates that public actions are necessary, especially considering the urgency for those groups living with hunger and poverty. While similar programs can be found in other countries in South and North America, they are mostly offered by civil society organizations, and have not advanced toward public institutionalization. In fact, private programs are criticized for negating governments' obligation and responsibility in this area. Brazil's experience sheds light on public initiatives in meeting the State's obligations towards the Right to Adequate Food.

**Keywords** Human rights · Food and nutrition security · Public policy · Nutrition and food programs and policies · Food assistance · Food banks · Community kitchens · Popular restaurant

## 1 Introduction

Food and nutrition insecurity (FNI), understood as an inadequate quantitative and/or qualitative access to food (Brasil, 2014), is a critical global problem with both social and public

health implications. Given the multiple determinants of this problem, FNI is one of the major challenges that governments must address (Haug, 2018; IFPRI, 2018). A report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (FAO, 2021) points out that, worldwide, 2.3 billion people did not have sufficient access to food in 2020. In Brazil, the household budget survey of 2017–2018 showed that 36.7% of households in the country presented some level of food insecurity (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2019). The most recent data indicate that the situation is even worse, with more than half of the Brazilian population (55.2%) presenting some level of food insecurity, and approximately 19 million people (9%) suffering severe food insecurity (hunger) (Rede, 2021).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed in 1948, includes food as a fundamental social right. It also declares that access to food in quantity, quality and regularity must be a constitutional human right (ONU, 1948). In this conception, the State has the obligation to respect, protect, promote and fulfill this and other human rights (Abrandh, 2013; Brasil, 2006; ONU, 1999). The fulfillment of these maxims is secured via public policies, programs and

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projects designed for their progressive realization (Conti, 2009).

“Every man, woman and child have the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition in order to develop fully and maintain their physical and mental faculties. Society today already possesses sufficient resources, organizational ability and technology and hence the competence to achieve this objective. Accordingly, the eradication of hunger is a common objective of all the countries of the international community, especially of the developed countries and others in a position to help.” (ONU, 1975)

Brazil is not only a State Party of this Declaration by signing the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, but the country also included the Right to Adequate Food in its Constitution in 2010 (Brasil, 2010). Even earlier, in 2006, with the enactment of the Food and Nutrition Security Law, a National System for Food and Nutrition Security (*Sistema Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*—SISAN) was created to ensure the Human Right to Adequate Food (HRAF) (Brasil, 2006). SISAN encompasses all policies related to the production, supply, distribution, and marketing of food, as well as the promotion of programs and actions to facilitate regular and permanent access to quality food and healthy and environmentally sustainable eating practices (Brasil, 2006, 2010).

According to General Comment 12 of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the HRAF takes place when every human being, woman and child, alone or with others, has uninterrupted physical and economic access to food or available means of obtaining it (UN Committee on Economic S and CR (CESCR), 1999). International Human Rights treaties define that there are two indivisible dimensions of the HRAF: the right to be free from hunger and malnutrition and the right to adequate food (Abrandh, 2013). The HRAF should not be interpreted in a restrictive sense, which regards it as assigning minimum recommendations for energy or nutrients. It must be understood as a process of transformation of people, considering health and citizenship (CONSEA, 2010), intrinsically linked to the dignity of the human person, in addition to being fundamental for the fulfillment of other human rights.

The ICESCR’s General Comment 12 defines the obligations of the State and responsibility of the society to respect, protect, promote and provide: physical and economic access to healthy and sustainable food; as well as conditions that provide adequate care in the choice, preparation and administration of food (hygiene, food preparation, day care, etc.), living conditions that promote health; and comprehensive health care.

The causes of the violation of the HRAF are not solely concentrated in the lack of food, but in large part, in the difficulty of access to available food due to the poverty of segments of

the world population (Soares, 2018). The General Comment 12 admits that the main obligation of the State is to adopt measures to achieve, in a progressive way, the full realization of the right to adequate food. This imposes the obligation that this be done as quickly as possible. Given that the HRAF comprises two inseparable dimensions – freedom from hunger and accessibility to adequate food – one of its essential principles is equity in the promotion of actions. Thus, while Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) policies and programs contemplate the population as a whole, priority must be given to the most vulnerable groups and individuals in society.

In the scope of actions that have contributed to the promotion of HRAF in the Brazilian experience over the years, Public Infrastructure for Food and Nutrition Security (*Equipamentos Públicos para Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*—EPSAN) gained prominence since 2003 under the Zero Hunger strategy announced by the federal government. This infrastructure consists of public spaces designed to promote integrated services for food and nutrition security through a strategy of strengthening local circuits of food production, supply and distribution (Brasil, 2019).

This paper aims to present key actions related to the dimension of provision of food developed through a network of facilities under the EPSAN program, addressing their respective designs, arrangements and operational logistics. In our analysis we look in particular at how this network was proposed as supporting the Human Right to Adequate Food and to what extent it has succeeded in this goal, given the premise that *adequate food* goes beyond the strict or restrictive sense of food representing simply a minimum package of calories, proteins, and other specific nutrients that meet people’s dietary needs. The concept of adequacy emphasizes a series of factors that must be taken into account, such as social, economic, cultural, climatic, and ecological conditions related to the production and consumption of food. Adequacy is also linked to the idea of long-term accessibility and availability of food (Paiva et al., 2019; United Nations, 2010).

## 2 Methodology

We used an exploratory and analytical literature review of the Public Infrastructure for Food and Nutrition Security. The cut-off points of the research were defined as the three more widespread initiatives in Brazil in the past few years (Brasil, 2010): Food Banks, Community Kitchens, and Popular Restaurants.

The literature review (covering publications from 2009 to 2021) was carried out from October 20, 2018 to October 30, 2021, through searches on the databases of Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO)

and National Library of Medicine (PubMed), with preference for scientific articles published in the last five years, in addition to searches in official databases published by the government of Brazil. The descriptors used were: *Equipamentos Públicos*; *Equipamentos Sociais*; *Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*; *Banco de Alimentos*; *Cozinha Comunitária*; *Restaurante Popular*; *Assistência Alimentar*, in addition to their combinations and translations into English and Spanish (in English: Public Infrastructure/Equipment; Social Infrastructure/ Equipment; Food and Nutrition Security; Food Bank; Community Kitchen, Popular Restaurant; Food Assistance).

All articles that addressed Public Infrastructure as a social policy were considered eligible. The publication period was comprised between 2009 and 2021, including official publications and studies, with the highest volume of publications concentrated between 2014 and 2019. The studies that used those structures as a *locus*, and not as a topic of research were excluded. Considering that the present study aims to analyze public programs, the kind of research was not a criterion of eligibility.

The titles and abstracts of all articles were read and those that met the eligibility criteria were selected to be read in full. The articles that did not correspond to the primary objective of the research were excluded. The references cited in the eligible articles were also examined in order to assess inclusion of other publications, and complementary searches were performed on official webpages of the institutions connected with the topic, particularly the homepage of the former Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS) (RedeSAN, FAURGS, UFRGS & MDS, 2011), today Ministry of Citizenship, and similar institutions in Brazilian states and cities.

The following steps were then followed: exploratory and selective reading (selection of material); analytical and interpretative reading and writing, according to the infrastructure previously defined (Food Bank; Community Kitchen; Popular Restaurant) seeking information on current scenario and challenges, definition, operation and logistics, in addition to a brief history and evaluation studies on the respective infrastructure.

More current articles were the primary aim; however, the period of the references used was extended, considering that they referred to public programs, institutionalized at different moments.

### 3 Public infrastructure for food and nutrition security in Brazil

The Brazilian experience in the field of social public policies gained momentum with the proclamation of a new Federal Constitution in 1988 and advanced more significantly, in

extension and scope, in the 2003–2014 period (Machado et al., 2018; Vasconcelos et al., 2019), especially with the implementation of the Zero Hunger Strategy, conducted by the Federal Government. Many programs and actions to reduce inequalities were developed with broad civil society participation and government commitment. In this period, the *Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional* (CONSEA, National Council of Food and Nutrition Security) was reconstituted as an advisory agency to the Presidency of the Republic. The *Lei Orgânica de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional* (LOSAN, Organic Law of Food and Nutrition Security) was sanctioned, bringing together all levels of government, civil society organizations, entities and private sector to the debate of food and nutrition security policies. Actions on Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) originated in the health and social assistance areas but have evolved into more complex programs with intersectoral coordination and objectives of promoting a sense of citizenship (Silva et al., 2018).

Social Public Infrastructure in Brazil is defined as the facilities and urban infrastructure spaces designed to provide public services such as in education, health, culture, and social assistance (Brasil, 2010). The Public Infrastructure for Food and Nutrition Security (*Equipamentos Públicos para Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*—EPSAN) was created with the objective of providing services to support the Human Right to Adequate Food (HRAF).

Comprising physical structures and spaces designed for the distribution of food and meals free of charge or at affordable prices (RedeSAN, FAURGS, UFRGS & MDS, 2011; Brasil, 2005), the EPSAN program aims to contribute to the reduction of food and nutrition insecurity. To achieve this goal, EPSAN facilities are classified into two main types (Table 1): (1) consumption support, through the provision of affordable food, and (2) supporting food supply and reducing food waste by building local food donation networks for social care institutions and vulnerable populations.

In addition, these public physical spaces often also house programs in nutrition and health education, professionalizing courses and workshops, cultural events, and other social services (Carrijo et al., 2018). The use of these facilities is thus a promising arrangement to enhancing communication/joint efforts of the Food and Nutrition Security System (SISAN), the Social Assistance Unified System (SUAS), and the Unified Healthcare System (SUS).

Since 2003 and the launching of the national Zero Hunger strategy, there has been an expansion of EPSAN facilities, prompted by an annual bidding process promoted by the Federal Government (RedeSAN, FAURGS, UFRGS & MDS, 2011). Community Kitchens (CK), Popular Restaurants (PR), and Food Banks (FB) are the most prominent components of this public network. According to the Ministry of Citizenship, there were 87 public Food Banks, 104

**Table 1** Classification of Public Infrastructure for Food and Nutrition Security

Public Infrastructure for Food and Nutrition Security		
Type:	(1)Support to consumption	(2)Supply of food and fight against food waste
Concept/ Definition	Adequate facilities for the on-site preparation and consumption of meals, having as guiding principle the promotion of the Human Right to Adequate Food	Physical and/or logistic structures that obtain and/or receive foodstuffs from donations; distribution directed to public or private institutions that provide social assistance, protection and civil defense services, schools, legal and healthcare facilities, and other food and nutrition units
Objectives	Ensure access to adequate and healthy food; Value the use of regional foods; Develop social inclusion activities; Train workers for the food sector	Provide availability of adequate and healthy foods; Support public procurement for foods; Promote educational activities on nutrition; Reduce food losses and waste; Contribute to the HRAF
Example of infrastructure	Community kitchen; Popular restaurant	Food Bank

Brazil (2016)

Popular Restaurants, and 189 Community Kitchens in operation in Brazil in 2020.

Data from a 2015 national survey (*MapaSAN*) conducted within the scope of the National System for Food and Nutrition Security (SISAN) indicated that in the 1,652 Brazilian municipalities which participated in the survey, EPSAN facilities served more than 230,000 individuals directly and more than 16,000 social assistance institutions (Brasil, 2014). Unfortunately, the same survey reported that more than 23.5% of the infrastructure had discontinued operations.

### 3.1 Popular restaurants and community kitchens

Popular Restaurants (PR) and Community Kitchens (CK) have a long history as public policies in Brazil, first appearing in the 1950's. One of their main objectives was to reduce worker absenteeism in the growing industrialized and urbanized economy of the country. At the time, it was assumed that the provision of affordable meals to workers and their families could also be used as an educational strategy, through activities in these spaces, such as nutrition education lectures during meal times, health campaigns, as well as the distribution of booklets and leaflets (Conti, 2009; Oliveira, 2018). Public cafeterias were later closed during the period of military dictatorship (1964–1985), reemerging only after the Popular Restaurant was re-opened in the city of Belo Horizonte in 1994. Later, in 2003, the Brazilian government included PR and CK as programs integrated to the actions of the Zero Hunger strategy (Sobrinho et al., 2014).

Popular Restaurants and Community Kitchens are cafeteria-style spaces offering prepared meals – lunch, and sometimes breakfast and/or dinner – for free or, more often, at subsidized low prices. Their clientele is mostly people living in poverty; but given their universal access, PR and CK also attract low-income students, retired

seniors, people who live alone, low-wage workers, and a significant contingent of homeless individuals. They are located in areas where there are large concentrations of people in social vulnerability, facilitating thus their access to an affordable meal (Garajau & Afonso, 2016). Besides offering healthy meals, PR and CK often serve as spaces for other activities such as training and professional qualification of low-income individuals, aiming at social inclusion (RedeSAN, FAURGS, UFRGS & MDS, 2011; Brasil, 2005). They are usually open to the public six days a week.

PR and CK differ primarily in their size, infrastructure, and capacity. PRs are larger facilities, found in cities with more than 100 thousand inhabitants, having a capacity to serve up to 400 to 1000 meals per day (Conti, 2009; RedeSAN, FAURGS, UFRGS & MDS, 2011). In comparison, CK can produce up to 100 meals per day, and are located in municipalities with more than 50,000 people.

In Brazil, the administration of the PR and CK units is the responsibility of local municipal governments, which often contract private companies to manage and staff the facilities. The Federal Government supports the construction and/or renovation of the premises, and the purchasing of equipment. It also provides technical support and inspects the implementation of the programs (Oliveira, 2018; Brasil, 2004).

According to the Manual of the Popular Restaurant Program by the former Ministry of Social Development (MDS) in Brazil, this Public Infrastructure is defined as:

“(…) establishments managed by the government, which are characterized by the sale of ready, nutritionally-balanced meals, originating from safe processes, predominantly made with local foods, served in appropriate and comfortable places so as to ensure the right to feed oneself with dignity. They are intended to provide varied, affordable meals to people who eat outside the

home, with priority to the most vulnerable populations (...)" (Brasil, 2004)  
(Author's translation)

Research studies have shown positive outcomes with the implementation of PRs and achievement of their goals (Gobato et al., 2010; Godoy et al., 2014; Gonçalves et al., 2011; Leal, 2015; Oliveira, 2018; Padrão & Aguiar, 2018; Silva, 2012; Sobrinho et al., 2014). PRs provide a continuous service, from Monday to Friday, delivering balanced, good quality and affordable meals, in addition to access to traditional Brazilian foods (Carrizo, 2018). They also contribute to the promotion of healthy eating habits among the population, valuing local cultural habits (Carrizo, 2018; Brasil, 2004).

### 3.2 Food banks

Food Banks aim to distribute food to those most in need, thus reducing food and nutrition insecurity. An additional expressed goal of FB is the reduction of food waste (Brasil, 2015; Garcia, 2013). From a global perspective, the Food Banks (FB) movement grew from the early 1980s to the 1990s as a philanthropic response to the increased FNI situation, especially in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. Food Banks are thus mainly private spaces intended to collect donations and redistribute foods to vulnerable people or families (Riches, 2002; Riches & Silvasti, 2014). The first FB in the world date back to 1967, in the USA.

In Brazil, private food banks were already in existence when public food banks emerged in 2000 as initiatives of some local municipal governments. Federal participation in food banking started only with the Zero Hunger strategy in 2003 (Belik et al., 2012; Brasil, 2015), with the government granting funds for the installation, modernization or expansion of food banks by municipal governments. By 2012 there were 67 food bank units supported by the Ministry of Social Development (MDS), distributing close to 39 thousand tons of food around the country. In 2016, MDS structured the Brazilian Food Banks Network. The idea was to join local experiences, private initiatives and activities of the organized civil society, as a concerted effort to strengthen public policy (Brasil, 2016, 2017).

Food Banks in Brazil consist of physical spaces that receive food donated by supermarkets, restaurants, the food industry, small farmers, and farmers' markets. When delivered to FB, the food is examined, classified and stored for distribution. In some larger FB, food can undergo some minor processing (freeze-dried or canned), and packaged before being distributed. The food is distributed to private (non-governmental and charitable) social assistance entities that attend people in situation of social vulnerability and

FNI (Conti, 2009), (RedeSAN, FAURGS, UFRGS & MDS, 2011). Public FB do not distribute food directly to individuals or families.

Today, most Brazilian FB are public institutions, receiving funding from the federal government, and managed by municipal administrations. Thus, this FNS public infrastructure depends on public funds to contract professionals to work in the areas of management, sanitary control, and social assistance, as well as the hiring of other workers responsible for receiving, sorting, and preparing food for distribution. Public funding supports the entire physical structure, with a storage area with conditions to stock perishable and non-perishable foods (RedeSAN, FAURGS UFRGS & MDS, 2011; Rangel, 2016; Tenuta et al., 2017; Paula et al., 2017). The former Ministry of Social Development created guidelines and manuals to govern the installation and operations of public food banks.

### 3.3 Rural–urban connections

Food Banks, Popular Restaurants and Community Kitchens also receive fresh fruits and vegetables directly from smallholder family farmers included in the Food Acquisition Program (*Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos – PAA*). Developed as part of the Zero Hunger strategy, PAA is a public food procurement program, which purchases food directly from local smallholder producers. It aims to strengthen FNS policies and contribute to the income of small producers (Vasconcelos et al., 2019). In addition to the benefits to local family farmers, the supplied produce is of good quality and with a short circuit (Burlandy, 2009; Rocha, 2014; Silva, 2012). PAA fosters local agriculture and provides high quality, low-cost meals, respecting the cultural aspects of regional dietary practices (Zanini & Schneider, 2015), in accordance with the objectives of the Food and Nutrition Security Organic Law (Brasil, 2006).

The federal government has also created the Distribution Centers for Family Farming Products (DCFPs) to work as a point of delivery and distribution of food. These are operational units within municipalities, which regularly operate the PAA or the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) with purchases from family agriculture. DCFPs support the receiving and/or distribution of family farming products linked to governmental commercialization programs (Brasil, 2013). There are currently (in 2021) 1,519 DCFP units in operation throughout the country (Brasil, 2013, 2019).

As part of an integrated set of programs for FNS, EPSAN have contributed to decreasing hunger and food insecurity in Brazil. The positive outcomes result from a set of inter-related policies and actions, and not just from one or another isolated program. In this context, the development of a supporting public infrastructure has been crucial.

### 3.4 Challenges

Vasconcelos et al.'s analysis of the recent history of food and nutrition policies in Brazil proposes three phases with distinct discourses, values, priorities and interests associated with three different governments (Vasconcelos et al., 2019). The period from 2003 to 2010 was very prosperous in the creation of FNS laws and programs, and in prioritizing hunger reduction and the promotion of healthy diets. From 2011 to 2016, actions for the promotion of healthy eating were strengthened, but at the same time one notes the beginning of a slowdown in FNS programming. In the period since 2016 there have been massive and continuous budget cuts, which weakened policies for hunger and poverty reduction, and for the promotion of FNS.

The challenges in the implementation of EPSAN programs are many. Studies have pointed out differences in regional coverage, underuse of regional foods (Martinelli et al., 2018), and overuse of ultra-processed foods (Calazans et al., 2018), undermining these programs' objectives under SISAN and the HRAF.

Much of the concern about EPSAN units falling short on following the HRAF perspective comes from a polarizing debate on the nature of programs aimed at fighting hunger, whether through income transfer or food distribution. On the one side are those who see these programs as legitimate tools through which the State must secure the rights of individuals through "provision". On the other side of this debate, are those who claim that such programs do not act on the causes of hunger and, therefore, are not effective solutions. This side considers these programs merely "assistentialist" (Araújo et al., 2016; Fonseca et al., 2018), generating dependence on the part of those who access them.

The controversy surrounding Food Banks is probably the best example of this debate. If well structured, FB can be an agile, effective response to FNI situations. Nevertheless, the HRAF perspective raises a reflection on the ethical legitimacy of food donations, supported by transnational and large food industries, questioning who really benefits from them (Riches & Silvasti, 2014). This concern has been particularly shaped by food banking practices in other countries, such as the USA and Canada, where governments seem to abdicate of their responsibilities and encourage non-governmental organizations to respond to the serious and increasing FNI problem (Philip et al., 2017). FB in those countries are private, philanthropic institutions, and not part of public services.

In Brazil, there are efforts to make FB gain legitimacy as a public policy for accomplishment of the HRAF (Brasil, 2010; Riches & Silvasti, 2014; Rocha, 2014). Food Banks consist of structures created within the concept of the Food and Nutrition Security and, therefore, intended to promote adequate and healthy eating. Most units have adequate spaces

for handling fruits and vegetables (Burlandy, 2009), which is vitally important to avoid the situation of FB becoming outlets for unhealthy products, aggravating health problems such as obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure (Pipkin, 2016; Seligman et al., 2015). Some FBs are already regulating the acceptance of unhealthy foods donated, establishing guidelines and rules for donation and even refusing foods with high contents of sugar, fat and salt. There is also a proposal to review the tax exemption given to retailers who donate food of low quality (Brasil, 2019). FB also contribute to strengthening other policies and programs, such as the PAA, fostering local economy, and supporting family farming and consumption of local foods (RedeSAN, FAURGS, UFRGS & MDS, 2011; Garcia, 2013; Rocha, 2014).

The fulfillment of the HRAF has two dimensions – preventing hunger and providing access to adequate food. Food provision is one of the HRAF dimensions, also present in Brazil's Federal Constitution and, therefore, the State has the obligation to fulfill it by means of public policies (Riches, 2018). Often, those who donate, whether in the retail chain or household, do it as a way to avoid their own waste and do not pay attention to the nutritional quality of foods. It is necessary to define criteria that are in accordance with the guidelines of healthy eating for the receipt of donations.

Finally, one major challenge faced by the implementation of EPSAN has been the low priority given to FNS by the federal government since 2014 and, consequently, the reduction in budgets directed to FNS programs – a clear breach of the State's obligations under the ICESCR, which requires the progressive realization of the HRAF for all and result in violations of the Right and worsening the conditions of life of the most vulnerable groups. Official reports indicate that, while in 2014 R\$ 64 million were allocated to EPSAN budgetary action, there were no new funds allocated in 2015 and 2016. R\$ 8.7 million, R\$ 3.8 million, and R\$0.6 million were allocated in 2017, 2018, and 2019 respectively. In response to the COVID-19 emergency crisis, in 2020 this budget was increased to R\$ 4.6 million, a fraction of what it had been in 2014 (Brasil, 2019).

Other FNS programs, associated with EPSAN, also suffered significant budget cuts. The Food Acquisition Program (PAA) had a 55% reduction in the Federal Government budget since 2015, reaching only R\$ 274 million in 2019, and only R\$100 million in 2020 (Brasil, 2019a, b). Because it is a structuring program to shorten the commercialization and distribution circuits of family farming produces, which is closely related to the operations of Food Banks and Popular Restaurants, the dismantling of the Program directly affects the supply of food to vulnerable people.

The lack of a budget for the construction/structuring of new EPSANs over the past few years, represents a

limitation of the capacity to offer the service provided to the population, considering that a Popular Restaurant offers, on average, 1,287 meals per day and a Food Bank benefits about 94 thousand people per month with the donation of food (Brasil, 2014). Continued budget reductions shed light on the weakened agenda of food security in Brazil and points to the need for a restructuring and prioritization of actions related to social inclusion, production and fight against poverty and extreme poverty.

#### 4 Final considerations

From the perspective of the State's obligation to accomplish the Human Right to Adequate Food (HRAF), Public Infrastructure for FNS can have an important contribution on the provision dimension. It is fundamental that, along with these actions, the State develops strategies to fulfill other HRAF dimensions: respect, protection and promotion. The fulfillment of the HRAF depends on intersectoral, articulated and complementary programs for the achievement of its objectives, and includes programs with impacts on all stages of the food system: production, distribution, and consumption. Adequate funding, institutionalization, and operational processes must be secured for implementation and qualification of all these actions.

The Brazilian experience shows that effective public initiatives are possible. To promote this reality, it is necessary to strengthen the monitoring of public policies and discuss the setbacks and slowdowns that have been identified. Adequate healthy eating is an expression of citizenship and autonomy. Unfortunately, the past decade indicates a decline in the commitment of the country's federal government to a food and nutrition security agenda, reflected in the decreased budgets allocated to EPSAN and other important programs such as the PAA.

This manuscript was prepared during the Covid19 pandemic in Brazil. The sanitary and socioeconomic crisis generated as consequence of the pandemic highlights the importance of the FNS infrastructure and the need for a well-structured social protection network, able to address the humanitarian consequences in such moments of crisis.

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