

Associations between the Brazilian National Food and Nutrition Policy and food and nutrition education

Tessituras entre a Política Nacional de Alimentação e Nutrição e a educação alimentar e nutricional

Asociaciones entre la Política Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición y la educación alimentaria y nutricional

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This article by Santos et al. ¹ traces the history of the Brazilian National Food and Nutrition Policy (PNAN) (1999-2020), its tensions and contexts; marking the advances, changes, and forces operating in its constitution. The evolution of the food and nutritional education alongside PNAN's history, and more particularly, the *Food and Nutritional Education Landmark of Reference for Public Policies* ² constitutes the scope of this commentary which claims food and nutritional education is essential not only for promoting PNAN's guidelines, but also for potentially widening the intersectoriality and interdisciplinarity of the knowledge of food and nutrition ^{3,4}.

Therefore, the dialogue between PNAN's guiding lines and food and nutritional education are recognized as strategic for promoting healthy eating within the human right to adequate food (HRAF) and ensuring food security ⁵.

The General-Coordination of Food and Nutrition Policy (CGPAN), later CGAN; responsible for formulating and implementing PNAN alongside other initiatives from the civil society and articulations from sectors dealing with societal demands, outlined – considering the Brazilian food and nutritional scenario exemplified by the 2003 Zero Hunger program – the bases that substantiated 2012 Landmark of Reference, published by the Ministry for Social Development and Fight Against Hunger now extinct General-Coordination of Food and Nutritional Education (CGEAN).

Notably, building these political directives – whether in the Landmark's of Reference ² or in PNAN's case – entailed the participation of several institutional, technical, scientific, and societal segments, as well as representatives from Brazil's states and regions. As we emphasize, however, PNAN's 2011 version focused on health, since – with the creation of the Food and Nutritional Security System (SISAN) in 2006, under *Law n. 11,346* – food and nutrition policies were redirected to different sectors within the Federal Government once it realized the need for involving environmental, cultural, economic, regional, and social dimensions.

The Landmark of Reference is a technical reference document oriented at aiding the achievement of PNAN's goals; “it offers concepts, principles, and guidelines aimed to the construction of referenced practices to be translated into better qualified food and nutritional education axioms, actions and programs” ⁶ (p. 596).

We emphasize that the Landmark of Reference constitutes itself in full observance of the organizational and doctrinal principles of the field in which food and nutritional education actions are inserted – whether SISAN, Brazilian Unified National Health System (SUS), Brazilian National

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School Feeding Program (PNAE), the Unified System of Social Assistance, among others – adding: (i) social, environmental, and economic sustainability, (ii) integral approach to the food system; (iii) local food culture appreciation and respect for the diversity of opinions and perspectives, legitimizing knowledge of different natures; (iv) food as references; (v) appreciating cooking as an emancipatory practice; (vi) promotion of self-care and autonomy; (vii) permanent education as the active and informed participation of individuals, supporting autonomy; (viii) diversity of acting scenarios; (ix) intersectoriality; (x) action planning, evaluating and monitoring ².

Despite expanding the scope of the Landmark's of Reference mobilized sectoral and disciplinary articulations, it is worth returning to the "food and nutrition education" part of its name, since it arose together with the notion of adequate and healthy eating within Brazil's public policies. Paiva et al. ⁷ explores this notion of adequate nutritious food as a confluent of debates in food security, human rights, and dietary impacts on health.

These remarks revitalize the field of food and nutrition by broadening its interdisciplinary complexities via the reception of once marginalized themes, such as the dimension of food cultures. Following the Landmark, events and documents such as the 5th National Conference on Food Security's Real Food Manifesto; the second version of the *Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population* ⁸; and other publications ^{9,10}, increase the circulation of concepts such as eating being a political act, real food, farm-to-table, cooking, and commensality; which comprise the fundamental concepts of the field pushing an in-depth reflection on its relations with health. Moreover, the dialogue among PNAN, food and nutrition education, and the Landmark still fertilizes the field, illuminating aspects that influence care relations like the humanization of health practices, self-care and autonomy; the latter mediated by Freirian educational perspectives whose "*critical and contextual actions, horizontal relations and appreciation of popular practices and knowledge, aligned themselves with equity and democratization movements*" ² (p. 17).

Concluding this brief commentary, we may take the Landmark of Reference to represent, over PNAN's 20 years, to be an food and nutrition education achievement; fundamental to this public policy, it demarcates principles and guidelines centered around intra and intersectoral articulations alongside different society segments, eager to achieve what is "pressing for PNAN": "*to persevere with the historical commitment to contribute to the guarantee of the human right to healthy and sustainable food to all who inhabit the Brazilian territory*" ¹ (p. 15) as stated by the authors of the article analyzed here.

On the other hand, the experience of building the Landmark of Reference breathes life into PNAN since it opposes the fragmentary logic which has marked the country's history of public policies: one that challenges the consolidation of actions articulating different food sectors; and retrieves dimensions of autonomy, self-care, and responsibility towards human, environmental, and social relations. PNAN, food and nutrition education, and adequate nutritious food may potentiate the constant search for a greater articulation between the SUS and the SISAN, as expressed in one of PNAN's guidelines.

Finally, one last comment on the polyphonic narratives and discourses involving food and nutrition education practices: deepening and updating this powerful document is urgent, so that its principles and guidelines are not reduced to – often decontextualized – replicable methods and techniques which may serve interests hostile to the ethical-humanistic principles that promote and guarantee health, food security and the right to adequate nutritious food.

Contributors

The authors participated in all stages of the article's production.

Additional informations

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