

## Monitoring and evaluation of food and nutritional security: a look at the official publications

Amanda da Silva Bastos de Oliveira (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9963-8191>)<sup>1</sup>

Juliana Pereira Casemiro (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6940-2479>)<sup>2</sup>

Ana Laura Brandão (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7148-2268>)<sup>1</sup>

Alessandra Maria Silva Pinto (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0814-125X>)<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract** *Food and Nutrition Security, the legal frameworks to guarantee and enforce the Human Right to Adequate Food and construction of a system to monitor and evaluate progress and setbacks in these processes are the outcome of collective efforts led by social movements, organized civil society and some areas of government. This article examines official Brazilian documents regarding such monitoring and evaluation published from 2003 to 2019. The documentary analysis and contextualization were framed by the dimensions specified in Decree No. 7272/2010. The analysis highlighted the importance of the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (CONSEA), the Interministerial Food and Nutrition Security Chamber (CAISAN) and the Brazilian Food and Nutrition Security Conferences in the construction of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The challenges identified in this process stem from inter-sector relations and decentralization of actions, which tend to be weakened in certain political contexts.*

**Key words** *Food and nutrition security, Program evaluation, Monitoring, Inter-sector collaboration*

<sup>1</sup> Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz. R. Leopoldo Bulhões 1.480, Manguinhos. 21041-210 Rio de Janeiro RJ Brasil. amandaoliveiranut@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Instituto de Nutrição, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro RJ Brasil.

<sup>3</sup> Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Rio de Janeiro RJ Brasil.

## Introduction

The course of Brazil's National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (*Política Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*, PNSAN) has been set by a broad process of public participation and pooling of efforts by government, academia and grassroots organisations. After germinating during the restoration of democracy that began in the 1980s, advocacy for Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) developed into mobilisation for health sector reform, for ethics in politics, the campaigns to combat hunger and other expressions of membership and solidarity organisation. In 2003, action in this field was spurred by federal government strategy and sought to materialise throughout the states of the federation through the National Food and Nutrition Security System (*Sistema Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*, SISAN)<sup>1</sup>.

The SISAN set itself to assure the Human Right to Adequate Food (HRAF) and FNS for Brazil's population by integrating various bodies, federative entities and private for-profit or not-for-profit institutions and to apply criteria set by the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (*Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*, CONSEA) and the Interministerial Food and Nutrition Security Chamber (*Câmara Interministerial de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*, CAISAN). Its objectives include "formulating and implementing FNS policies and plans, stimulating integration of efforts between government and civil society, as well as providing for follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of FNS in Brazil" (p. 1)<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in FNS is one of the guiding functions specified for that system<sup>2</sup>.

There is a consensus among the various definitions of the evaluation process that it involves forming a value judgement about an intervention, which will depend on the actors involved in that dynamic within specified timeframes and on given criteria<sup>3,4</sup>. Monitoring is understood to be performed continuously with a view to providing information and measuring progress and/or setbacks with regard to outcomes. M&E are essential to decision-making in both government and civil society<sup>4</sup>.

Consistent with the ample civil society contribution to developing the FNS field and the PNSAN, Decree No. 7.272/2010 proposed to introduce an M&E system grounded in participation, transparency, publicity, ease of information access and attentive to implementation of the

PNSAN, as well to attainment of the goals and targets set in the National Food and Nutrition Security Plans (*Planos Nacionais de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*, PLANANSANs). At the base of the M&E system<sup>5</sup>, the decree emphasises the use of indicators for the diverse sectors connected with FNS, including those that express social, gender and ethnic or racial inequalities.

This article examines the M&E proposals set out in documents produced by the CONSEA and the CAISAN published from 2003 to 2019 and correlates them with their political contexts.

## Methods

A document search was conducted in October and November 2019. The recognition that the CONSEA and the CAISAN were "potential sources of information"<sup>6</sup> on FNS M&E informed the methodological choice to examine their output.

Among the documents found in the public domain and published between 2003 and 2019 were 149 Explanatory Memoranda<sup>7</sup> (EM) and 43 publications in the CONSEA's Content Centre, as well as 19 from the CAISAN, totalling 211 publications. Of that total, 13 publications containing the search expressions "evaluation", "monitoring", "evaluate" or "monitor" [in Portuguese] were selected.

All the material selected was subsequently organised in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, by name, agency, year of publication and content, and systematised by "skim reading"<sup>8</sup> on the basis of the analytical dimensions described in Decree No. 7.272/2010, viz.: I – Food production; II – Food availability; III – Income and conditions of life; IV – Access to adequate, healthy food, including water; V – Health, nutrition and access to related services; VI – Education; and VII – Programmes and actions relating to food and nutrition security.

The document analysis, using the methodology proposed by Cellard (2014)<sup>6</sup>, applied five preliminary dimensions: the context in which the document was produced, covering the remarks from the author and others involved; the author(s) observations, positions and motivations; the quality of the information and relation of the author(s) to the document; and an analysis of the concepts that appear and their importance, attentive to how the information is conveyed and outlining the meanings expressed. Document analysis in the broader sense was used after all these steps had been completed.

### Monitoring and evaluation in the Brazilian legislation on FNS

Figueiró, Frias and Navarro (2010)<sup>9</sup> summarise the main objectives of evaluation as: (1) assisting in planning and conducting an intervention (strategic objective); (2) providing information input to improve an intervention during its implementation (formative objective); (3) determining an intervention's effects in order to decide whether to maintain, alter or interrupt it (summative objective); (4) using evaluation processes as an incentive to modifying unfair or problematic situations, with a view to greater wellbeing (transformative objective); or (5) contributing to the progress of knowledge and theoretical elaboration (fundamental objective).

The CONSEA and the CAISAN jointly performed important FNS M&E functions. The first CONSEA was set up in 1993 in response to demand from the Ethics in Politics Movement (*Movimento pela Ética na Política*) and was active until 1995, when it was extinguished and replaced by the Solidarity Community Programme (*Programa Comunidade Solidária*)<sup>10-12</sup>.

In 2003 the CONSEA was reinstated to play a fundamental role in dialogue between society and government. It was composed as follows: two thirds were civil society representatives and one third represented government, and the council was chaired by a civil society member<sup>10,12,13</sup>. Set up in 2007, the CAISAN comprised representatives of ministries and served to interconnect FNS actions with federal government agencies and departments by dialoguing with the CONSEA<sup>14</sup>.

That joint action continued until January 2019, when the CONSEA was extinguished for the second time, by Provisional Order No. 870, and whose amendment, submitted by organised civil society and parliamentarians, was subsequently vetoed<sup>15,16</sup>. While it was active, the CONSEA was responsible for connecting, following up, mobilising and monitoring the actions proposed in the policies and plans, together with other agencies of the SISAN. The CAISAN is responsible for formulating policy, plans, evaluation and monitoring instruments, as well as for coordinating relations with its counterparts in the states and federal district<sup>2</sup>.

The National Food and Nutrition Security Conferences (*Conferências Nacionais de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*, CNSAN), the highest deliberative bodies, influenced public policy development by proposing guidelines to the CAISAN to shape both the PNSAN and PLANSANs. The conferences were held five times

and, in the intervals between them, Conference +2 Encounters were held for the purpose of drawing up a balance of progress on conference proposals<sup>2,17</sup>.

Legacies from this period include the production and establishment of a theoretical and political field relating to M&E of FNS and the HRAF. That path that process took can be reconstructed from a range of documents, dating particularly from the period between when the SISAN was instituted by the Framework Food and Nutrition Security Law (*Lei Orgânica de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*, LOSAN), through to its regulation by Decree No. 7272/2010<sup>2,5</sup>.

In 2004 the federal government set up an Information Evaluation and Management Secretariat (*Secretaria de Avaliação e Gestão da Informação*, SAGI) to take on the role of monitoring and evaluating the policies and programmes of the Ministry of Social Development. Its methodology was considered an important reference for evaluation research<sup>18,19</sup>.

In 2006, given the centrality of the M&E issue, the CONSEA formed a Technical Group on Indicators and Monitoring which met systematically until 2010. Its work culminated in publication of the report "Food and Nutrition Security and the Human Right to Adequate Food" (*"A Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional e o Direito Humano à Alimentação Adequada"*), which guided and informed further specification of the monitoring dimensions listed in Decree No. 7272/2010<sup>20,21</sup>.

After the decree was published, the number of publications on M&E – both normative and relating to the organisation of FNS indicators and mapping – on the CAISAN and CONSEA websites can be seen to increase. Of the 19 documents found on the CAISAN website, five address the issue; of the 192 CONSEA publications, eight deal with monitoring and/or evaluation. Chart 1 shows the documents, by issuing agency and entity and year of publication.

The reading of the material sought to examine the M&E perspective expressed there and its relation to the political conjuncture regarding FNS. These were found to follow a course that began with the inclusion of M&E as an integral part of the legal framework of the SISAN and a central element of social oversight of the State's obligations as regards the HRAF<sup>22,23</sup>. That conception was reinforced by the incorporation of the concept of enforceability of rights into CONSEA publications<sup>20,24,25</sup> and also by Constitutional Amendment No. 6426, which included food among social rights and reaffirmed the competences of the Brazilian State.

**Chart 1.** Official documents published, by issuing agency/entity and year of publication.

Document	Agency/entity	Year of publication
Construção do Sistema e da Política Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional: a experiência brasileira	CONSEA, FAO, IICA	2009
Avanços e desafios na implementação do direito humano à alimentação adequada	CERESAN, ABRANDH, CONSEA	2009
A segurança alimentar e nutricional e o direito humano à alimentação adequada – indicadores e monitoramento da Constituição de 1988 aos dias atuais	CONSEA	2010
A exigibilidade do direito humano à alimentação adequada e o Sistema Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional – relatório final	FAO, ABRANDH, CONSEA, FOME ZERO, Ministério do Desenvolvimento e Combate à Fome, Governo Federal	2010
Estruturando o Sistema Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional	CAISAN	2011
Agroecologia e o direito humano à alimentação adequada	CAISAN	2012
Volatilidade dos preços internacionais e inflação de alimentos no Brasil: fatores determinantes e repercussões na segurança alimentar e nutricional	CAISAN	2013
Estratégia intersetorial de prevenção e controle da obesidade – recomendações para estados e Municípios	CAISAN e Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social e Combate à Fome (MDS)	2014
Estudo técnico – mapeamento da insegurança alimentar e Nutricional com foco na desnutrição a partir da análise do Cadastro Único e do Sisvan	CAISAN	2014
MAPASAN – Mapeamento da segurança alimentar e nutricional	MDS, Secretaria de Avaliação e Gestão da Informação (SAGI/MDS), Secretaria Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional, CAISAN	2015
A exigibilidade do direito humano à alimentação adequada – ampliando a democracia no SISAN	CAISAN	2016
Compromissos do Brasil para a Década de Ação das Nações Unidas para a Nutrição (2016-2025)	CAISAN e Ministérios e Secretarias Especiais e Nacionais	2016
Estratégia intersetorial para a redução de perdas e desperdício de alimentos no Brasil	CAISAN	2018

Source: Author.

The following step in the configuration of M&E at the national level was the production of input for states and municipalities<sup>27</sup>. Managerial decentralisation of the SISAN proposed that the constituent units of the federation operate autonomously, but interrelate in a coordinated fashion. Those organisational pillars pose ongoing challenges expressed in difficulties in focusing specific programmes, limited joint coordination and the federal government's weak ability to stimulate the process – particularly at the municipal level<sup>28,29</sup>.

The mapping introduced by the CAISAN between 2014 and 2016 deserves special mention: the MapaSANs were intended to yield continuous evaluation of local management of the PNSAN by way of indicators of states' and municipalities' adherence to the SISAN. The Mapa InSAN (which mapped insecurity), meanwhile, recorded specifically the FNS situation, with a view to identifying areas where HRAF violations occurred, using data from the Unified Records (*Cadastro Único*), the Food and Nutrition Surveillance System (*Sistema de Vigilância Alimentar e Nutricional*, SISVAN)

and the Indigenous Health Care Information System (*Sistema de Informação da Atenção à Saúde Indígena*, SIASI). The panoramas it traced contributed to monitoring the PNSAN and local actions and can guide policymaking<sup>30,31</sup>.

Thinking about the model of production has influenced the documents, posing questions relating to the contribution made by agroecology<sup>32</sup> and family farming to food supply in Brazil, in addition to other factors relating to food production, availability and prices<sup>33</sup>. Similarly, changes in the population's epidemiological profile, particularly as regards increasing obesity, were an influence specifically on the monitoring of Food and Nutrition Education and Food and Nutrition Surveillance activities<sup>34</sup>. In all these cases, opinions could be observed in favour of disaggregating the data to permit a closer look at the differences and inequalities in the population.

As regards the international dimension, the CONSEA-CAISAN agenda prompted thinking aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)/Agenda 2030 and addressing global food and nutrition goals, such as prevention of chronic noncommunicable diseases, regulation of industrialised foods<sup>35</sup> and reduction of loss and waste<sup>36</sup>.

Generally speaking, the documents published by the CONSEA are concerned mostly with inter-sector relations and stimuli for decentralised actions and systems. The challenges of orchestrating and implementing policies, particularly at the municipal level, figure quite significantly, although a number of guideline documents were published<sup>28</sup>. The documents published by the CAISAN, meanwhile, relate to structuring the system and to the applicability of provisions of the FNS legislation, particularly the monitoring dimensions specified in Decree No. 7272/2010.

Few documents, from either the CAISAN or the CONSEA, deal exclusively with M&E. The CAISAN was found to produce more documents exclusively of its own authorship, unlike the CONSEA, most of whose documents were found to have been produced jointly with other institutions. It is to be stressed that these bodies did important work in monitoring decisions at the federal level and in developing measures and proposals.

#### **Analysis of evaluation and monitoring dimensions in the CONSEA Explanatory Memoranda**

As a result of the CONSEA's activities, dialogues between civil society and the federal government took on a strategic role in introducing the FNS agenda and the issues of food and nutri-

tion into projects and policymaking. These latter focussed initially on combating hunger, that is, the food dimension. Gradually, they incorporated the nutrition dimension, which was more challenging to materialise, given the need for inter-sector collaboration<sup>1</sup>.

The Explanatory Memoranda (EM) were one of the channels for civil society to express itself that the CONSEA used to present collegiate decisions on emerging issues in each period, to table proposals, galvanise implementation and pinpoint gaps in public policies. These documents were destined for the Presidency of the Republic, the CAISAN, ministries and other agencies involved in FNS issues<sup>7</sup>.

In all, 149 EM were found posted on the CONSEA website, 30 of them relating to M&E. Correlation of that content with the dimensions of Decree No. 7272/2010, as described in Chart 2, resulted in the classification of some EM into more than one dimension, particularly because of the broad scope of FNS<sup>2,37</sup>.

EM classified in dimensions I and VII (Food production and FNS-related programmes and measures) predominated. In a study of the CONSEA's participation in the federal budget, Oliveira (2017)<sup>38</sup> found that more than half (59.7%) of the EM examined from 2003 to 2013 were directly related to the FNS agenda. Note that analysis of the EM published between 2003 and 2019 proved sensitive to changes in presidential mandates and in the CONSEA, as shown in Chart 3.

The publications began in 2003, which marked the CONSEA's return to advising the Presidency, dialoguing with the government's priority agenda for combating hunger and extreme poverty through programmes such as the Family Allowance Programme (*Programa Bolsa*

**Chart 2.** Distribution of Explanatory Memoranda (Exposições de Motivos, EM) relating to M&A published between 2003 and 2019, by dimensions listed in Decree No. 7.272/2010.

Dimension - Decree 7.272/2010	EM
I – Food production	11
II – Food availability	8
III – Income and conditions of life	2
IV – Access to adequate, healthy food, including water	6
V – Health, nutrition and related services	6
VI – Education	1
VII – FNS-related programmes and actions	22

Source: Author.

**Chart 3.** Classification of Explanatory Memoranda (Exposições de Motivos, EM), by year of publication, presidential incumbent, CONSEA mandate and dimension in Decree No. 7.272/2010 – 2003 to 2019.

Year	Presidential incumbent	CONSEA mandate	Dimension in Decree No. 7.272/2010
2003	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	1°	-
2004		2°	I, II
2005			I, II
2006			V, VII
2007	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	2° - 3°	-
2008		3°	V, VII
2009			V, VII
2010			I, VI, VII
2011	Dilma Vana Rousseff	3° - 4°	II, III, IV, V, VII
2012			I, II, IV, V, VII
2013		4°	I, II, III, IV, VII
2014			I
2015	Dilma Vana Rousseff	4° - 5°	I, II, VII
2016			-
2017	Michel Miguel	5°	I, IV, VII
2018	Elias Temer Lulia		-
2019	Jair Messias Bolsonaro	Extinguished	-

Source: Author.

*Família*, PBF) and Zero Hunger (*Fome Zero*). That agenda gave centrality to the issue of FNS, although social movements and civil society had been shaping actions in that regard since Brazil's return to democracy<sup>39,40</sup>.

EM relating to M&E began to be published in 2004. Until 2005 they highlighted dimensions I and II (Food production and food availability), showing the need to evaluate the Harvest Plan (*Plano Safra*) and the Food Procurement Plan (*Plano de Aquisição de Alimentos*, PAA), as well as the fact that the Agricultural Census (*Censo Agropecuário*) had not been held, in a period of incentives for family farming and agrarian reform following the 2<sup>nd</sup> CNSAN<sup>41</sup>.

Family farming and agrarian reform were extensively discussed at the conferences and described explicitly in the EM, because even though a programme was in place to promote a model of sustainable production, there was a contrary movement by government providing incentives for commodity production and exportation<sup>32</sup>.

Together with that dimension, the SISAN began to be outlined with a view to instituting the PNSAN<sup>42</sup>.

Implementation of the LOSAN in 2006 left its mark on the period from 2006 to 2009. The dimensions V and VII (Health, nutrition and access to related services and FNS-related programmes and measures) stood out in the EM, which highlighted favourably the budget earmarked for programmes such as the PBF, PAA and the National School Meals Programme (*Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar*, PNAE). Meanwhile, the EM show in an unfavourable light action to monitor the population's nutrition status: despite progress in budgets for inter-sector programmes, there were found to be institutional constraints on measures to structure the SISAN, which continued to fall short of the proposal budgeted by the CONSEA<sup>38</sup>.

From 2010 onwards, the EM began to address other dimensions that had been absent, such as VI (Education), noting gains in social oversight through the School Meal Councils (*Conselhos de Alimentação Escolar*, CAE), which deployed PNAE funding to procure foodstuffs from family farms and family rural enterprises<sup>43</sup>. As regards food production, in addition to its relation to education, the EM reflect the beginnings of processes to propose the use and oversight of herbicides, pesticides and GMIs, and the suggestion of monitoring the quality of resulting foods and strengthening the National Pesticide Residue Analysis Programme (*Programa Nacional de Análise de Resíduos de Agrotóxicos*, PARA).

Between 2011 and 2013, the EM contemplated a larger number of dimensions than in previous years. In that period, important milestones in the FNS field included the publication of Decree No. 7.272/2010, the 4<sup>th</sup> CNSAN, preparation of the 1<sup>st</sup> PLANSAN and the transition to a new presidential mandate with the priority goal of eradicating extreme poverty through Brazil Without Extreme Poverty Plan (*Plano Brasil sem Miséria*). In that transition, the content of the EM turned to food prices, demands for monitoring of private stocks, and models of food production and consumption, reinforcing the need to strengthen family farming policies, which formed part of the strategic directions of the programme of government at the time<sup>44,45</sup>.

In response to grievances as regards rising food prices, the CONSEA proposed the creation of a special commission under the Special Secretariat for Human Rights, for the purpose of monitoring possible HRAF violations and introduce mechanisms to enforce that right. In that

same period, the DATASAN – covering the same analytical dimensions as defined in Decree No. 7.272/2010<sup>46</sup> – was set up with a view to monitoring the determinants of FNS.

The CONSEA, acting on the federal government's increasing incentives for food production, was guided at the time by M&E of the impacts of herbicide and pesticide use and GMI production on FNS and the HRAF. In that context, Controversy Round Tables (*Mesas de Controvérsias*) were organised to debate and formulate recommendations, which were highlighted in the EM in 2013 and 2014<sup>47,48</sup>. EM from 2015 demonstrate that these discussions continued and proposed programmes to support the reduction of herbicide and pesticide use in food production and the monitoring of the quality of meals offered under the Worker's Health Programme (*Programa de Saúde do Trabalhador*).

In 2016, no M&E-related EM were published. In 2017, there was content relating to monitoring of the PAA, the PNAE and quality in food production and water supply. The need to establish interrelations between FNS and racial equality policies was also addressed.

From 2018 onwards, no EM were published; rather, the period was marked by the economic and institutional crisis brought on by the 2016 impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, budget cutbacks in programmes of strategic importance to FNS and constraints on investments in health and education imposed by her successor<sup>45</sup>. In 2019, the neoliberal influence was reinforced by the new presidential mandate and the EM ceased to be published due to the extinction of the CONSEA<sup>15</sup>.

### **Instruments and opportunities for M&E of FNS**

While the CONSEA's existed, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> PLANSAN (2012-2015 and 2016-2019, respectively) were published. These plans resulted from the CONSEA's and CAISAN's systematisation of the debates at the CNSANs and were influenced and informed by the discussions of FNS M&E indicators. Those documents brought together data on the food and nutrition (in)security situation and the extent to which FNS-related programmes and measures had been implemented, which made it possible to identify priorities and propose manners of meshing with the goals of the Multi-year Plans (*Planos Plurianuais*)<sup>46,49</sup>.

Comparison of the indicators in each plan showed that the 1<sup>st</sup> PLANSAN used more (57) than the 2<sup>nd</sup> PLANSAN (35). That difference can

be attributed to the process of refinement of the analyses which, in the second plan, were better systematised to meet the demand for data to inform the specification of priority and strategic FNS goals<sup>46,49</sup>.

In addition to the quantitative changes, qualitative shifts can also be seen in the dimensions analysed. Food production (seven indicators) and food availability (three indicators) were disaggregated in the 1<sup>st</sup> PLANSAN, while in the 2<sup>nd</sup> PLANSAN these dimensions were aggregated into five indicators. Despite the understanding that these two dimensions are interrelated, the indicators developed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> PLANSAN reflected concerns relating more to production than to availability.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> PLANSAN, Dimension III (Income and conditions of life) comprised eight indicators similar to the 12 of the 1<sup>st</sup> PLANSAN. However, the data were disaggregated by race/colour, gender and urban and rural areas<sup>46,49</sup>. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> PLANSAN, that dimension appears in combination with Dimensions IV (Access to adequate, healthy food, including water) and V (Health, nutrition and access to related services), with two indicators focussing on the nutrition status of indigenous and *quilombola* children, as well as others for family income resulting from the PBF.

Another important difference has to do with the indicators for consumption of fruit and vegetables and for food products and cooking ingredients, such as soft drinks and salt. This suggests the impact of the new classification of foods<sup>50</sup> incorporated into the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population (*Guia Alimentar para a População Brasileira*) during publication of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (revised) PLANSAN<sup>49</sup>. Note that the Guide was a goal of the 1<sup>st</sup> PLANSAN to promote adequate, healthy diet<sup>51</sup>. Similarly, the food quality monitoring indicator is contemplated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> PLANSAN and reinforced for analysis of herbicide and pesticide residues in plant-based foods – a highly recurrent topic in CONSEA plenaries and discussions.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> PLANSAN, the education indicators (Dimension VI) were aggregated with others, notably relating to access to adequate food in the school environment and in health services. In that dimension, the 1<sup>st</sup> PLANSAN features four indicators which reflect sanitation in schools to the upper secondary level and years spent at school. The year 2012 saw the launch of the Food and Nutrition Education Policy Frame of Reference (*Marco de Referência de Educação Alimentar e Nutricional para as Políticas Públicas*), which included measures to encourage adequate,

healthy diet, particularly in the school environment, among the goals and targets of the 1<sup>st</sup> PLANSAN<sup>52</sup>.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> PLANSAN, the indicators were predominately for Dimension V – Health, nutrition and access to related services, associated with monitoring nutrition status, nutritional deficits and food quality (herbicide, pesticide and veterinary drug residues). Similarly, it also contemplated indicators for monitoring procurement of food at home and away from home (Dimension II – Food availability) and extreme poverty (Dimension III – Income and conditions of life). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> PLANSAN, the indicators that predominated were for Dimensions III (extreme poverty disaggregated by subnational regions, genders, race/colour) and IV (food insecurity, expenditure on food, consumption habits, food consumption, food quality and availability, including in the school environment).

The PLANSANs – developed in the ambit of the CAISAN – dialogued with the EM published by the CONSEA, demonstrating that the inter-sector collaboration fostered by the FNS agenda and by Decree No. 7.272/2010 establishing the M&E dimensions was a strong trait from the outset<sup>5</sup>. While the EM examine favourable, unfavourable and attention-worthy points with regard to progressively achieving the HRAF and FNS, the PLANSANs express those points in indicators and targets for monitoring, evaluating and proposing FNS-related measures and policies.

In practice, the M&E approach taken to FNS is directed to the various objectives described above<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, the M&E processes and initiatives feed back into one another, implementing evaluation cycles to the detriment of compartmentalised initiatives, whose outcomes tend to be less productive.

Champagne *et al.* (2011)<sup>53</sup> identify the ultimate goal of evaluation as social advancement, through the improvement of institutions and coherent social policies and programmes. There can be no denying that this was observed during the study period.

## Final considerations

The importance of bodies such as the CONSEA and the CAISAN was clear from analysis of the published documents, particularly in their complementing one another in the proposals and content they presented, which were aligned with their current historical and political contexts. The inter-sector collaborations – or endeavours

in that direction – were the keynote of these agencies' activities, particularly as regards M&E of interventions with impact on the FNS and HRAF of Brazil's population.

Extinction of the CONSEA and other key councils meant that documents, conferences and other forms of dialogue and collaboration, particularly between civil society and government, ceased to occur. That meant a reduction in spaces for social participation in proposal- and decision-making processes and the raising of barriers to access by nongovernmental agencies and entities to the policymaking agenda. It also opened up new gaps and reinforced existing ones.

Although some of the CONSEA's attributions were absorbed by the Ministry of Citizenship (*Ministério da Cidadania*), no moves were observed within the scope of the Special Secretariat for Social Development (*Secretaria Especial do Desenvolvimento Social*)<sup>14</sup> to prepare a 3<sup>rd</sup> PLANSAN, leading to uncertainties as whether or not ongoing measures and efforts would continue.

It has to be acknowledged that the comprehensiveness of the concept of FNS poses complex challenges for efforts to establish M&E mechanisms. However, positive developments were observed and the concept was given due worth in the actions of government and in the legal frameworks introduced over time.

Lastly, it must be stressed how important it is to produce and credit studies reporting experiences and repercussions of the work of these bodies, whether in analysing M&E or other approaches, notwithstanding occasionally limited access to documents and sites in the public domain.

## Collaborations

ASB Oliveira, JP Casemiro, AL Brandão and AMS Pinto participated in all stages of the article's construction.

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