

Food insecurity in Brazil grows in the pandemic and reaches the highest level in history

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The share of Brazilians who were unable to feed themselves or provide food for their family at some point in the last 12 months rose from 30% in 2019 to 36% in 2021. This index, released this Wednesday (25) in a survey by the Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV) Social, represents the new record in the historical series in the country, which began in 2006. According to data from the study, food insecurity in Brazil rose four times more than the average for the other 120 countries analyzed. "It is the first time since then that Brazilian food insecurity has surpassed the simple world average, comparing the simple average of the same 120 countries with Brazil, before and during the pandemic", highlighted the FGV. According to the institution, the data suggest the "relative ineffectiveness of national actions". In 2006, the first measure of this index by FGV Social, the food security rate in Brazil was 20%. In 2010, food insecurity reduced to 19% and had a further reduction in 2014, going to 17%. In 2019, the rate rose to 30% and, in 2021, it went to 36%. In the poorest population, the increase in food insecurity was even worse. Among the poorest 20% in the country, there was an increase of 22 percentage points between 2019 and 2021. It went from 53% in 2019 to 75% in 2021. The level of food insecurity for this population niche is very close to that observed in Zimbabwe, for example, which is currently the worst country in this regard with 80%. For Marcelo Neri, author of the research, the numbers show a worrying scenario in the country, which needs special attention in order to solve the problems mentioned. "The results show that insecurity increased more in Brazil than in the world during the pandemic. This increase is much more felt at the base of distribution, which is something very worrying, as it has been concentrated among the poorest, who already have other types of insufficiency", he commented. In contrast, the richest 20% had a three percentage point drop in food insecurity. It went from 10% in 2019 to 7% in 2021 – just above Sweden (5%), the least food insecure country. "Compared to the global average of 122 countries in 2021, our poorest 20% have 27 percentage points more food insecurity while our richest 20% have 14 percentage points less. High levels and increases in inequality of Brazilian food insecurity by income are also found by levels of schooling", highlighted the foundation's research. In Brazil, the rate of food insecurity among people with only elementary education is 52%. Among those who have secondary education, it is 31% and those with higher education is only 8%. Another cut highlighted by FGV Social is the difference between men and women in Brazil. While the current rate of food insecurity among women is 47%, that among men is 26%. And that gap widened even further between 2019 and 2021. In 2019, the rate among women was 33% and among men, 27%. That is, while there was an increase of 14 percentage points among women, a drop of 1 percentage point among men was pointed out. "When this insecurity affects women in this proportion, who even today are still those closest to children, this situation can generate an even more difficult long-term effect", pointed out Neri. We contacted the federal government to comment on the research and await a response. Source: CNN Brasil

