

Brazil

Working in Partnership

Vital Strategies' Brazil office supports city and state governments to tackle the leading drivers of preventable death and disease. We have worked with the cities of Belo Horizonte, Fortaleza, Goiânia, Natal, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, São Paulo, Recife and Campinas; the states of Ceará, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Norte and Rio Grande do Sul; the National Ministry of Health; the Consortia of State and of City Departments of Health (CONASS and CONASEMS, respectively); the National Front of Mayors; and civil society partners.

Key Achievements

More than **100 million** people have viewed the mass media campaigns for healthier food policies developed with technical assistance and resources provided by Vital Strategies.

Fortaleza achieved a **47% reduction** in road fatalities between 2014 and 2019, following our work with the government.

We helped develop a city road safety plan for São Paulo that will guide the city's actions through **2028**.

Vital Strategies was mentioned in more than **1,000 press stories** related to the COVID-19 pandemic that highlighted our studies or quoted our experts.



With more than 200 million citizens, Brazil is the largest country in Latin America. All its citizens receive free health care, making its health system a model for the region and the world.

However, in recent years the country has faced challenges from the vertiginous growth of chronic noncommunicable diseases and injuries, leading to premature deaths that could be avoided through simple and effective measures. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the need to strengthen the health system to support rapid data collection and response capacities. In this context, our team works with governments and partners to: develop and implement sound public health policies; efficiently manage programs; strengthen data systems; conduct research; and develop strategic communication campaigns to support policy and promote behavior change.



Campaign asset available on the communication hub “Cidades Contra COVID-19” (Cities Against COVID-19)

Current Activities

COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Vital Strategies partnered with more than 50 countries to strengthen capacity to respond to the pandemic and to promote learning across national and municipal borders. Vital Strategies' Brazil office developed a national partnership with the National Front of Mayors and with the Consortia of City and of State Health Departments to support multiple cities in their pandemic response. We helped these partners develop tools, including the first national [excess mortality dashboard](#); a [social media and COVID-19 dashboard](#) that used Facebook to monitor self-reported behaviors and symptoms; and the first national risk communication campaign and [communication hub](#). We also provided technical support to two cities and two states in Brazil to develop data-driven alert-level plans; a third city was helped with vaccination surveillance. To shed light on the magnitude of racial inequities in Brazil, our team developed the [Race and Public Health platform](#), which captures data on excess mortality among white and Black Brazilians, highlighting disparate COVID-19 health outcomes.

Data for Health

We work with governments to improve public health by building new tools for data analysis, use and communication. We worked in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and with the cities of Salvador, Natal, and Belo Horizonte to improve the quality of data on causes of death across states and municipalities, including those from COVID-19. We supported the validation of a ten-item questionnaire used during the pandemic to detect deaths that may have been due to COVID-19, with results showing verbal autopsy to be a reliable method for rapidly tracking mortality. In Belo Horizonte, we supported an assessment of the effects of COVID-19 in underserved areas to guide vaccination efforts and cardiovascular care. Lastly, we supported the city of Goiânia in linking health and non-health data sources to predict gender-based violence and inform public policies.

Environmental Health

Poor air quality is responsible for more than 60,000 deaths in Brazil each year. Starting in 2021, Vital Strategies Brazil partnered with the city of Belo Horizonte to increase public awareness and political engagement in actions to improve air quality and mitigate the effects of climate change. Since the transport sector serves as a leading source of air pollution, the project focuses on the public health benefits of sustainable mobility policies.



The campaign was led by the Brazilian Institute of Consumer Rights (IDEC) in collaboration with Vital Strategies and the Brazilian Alliance for Healthy and Adequate Food. Source: IDEC

Food Policy

In Brazil, where one in every three children is obese or overweight due to a shift from traditional diets to diets high in ultra-processed food, we work with local partners to help them deliver strategic communication campaigns to achieve healthy food policy goals. Our work supports: increased taxes on sugary drinks; clear front-of-package food labeling; and the defense of the Brazilian Dietary Guidelines, which emphasize the importance of natural and minimally processed foods as the basis of a healthy diet. For example, we collaborated with a consortium of organizations to inform the public about the health risks of foods high in salt, fat and sugar which built support for a food labeling model—a [front-of-package warning label standard](#) effective in 2022.

Mental Health

We supported the city of Fortaleza to develop a “Mental Health Map,” which analyzes mental health indicators among the city’s population, with a focus on children and teenagers. The map informs the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public health policies using an intersectoral approach that draws together the health, education and social assistance sectors, among others.



With support from the Partnership for Healthy Cities, streets in the Granja Lisboa school district were transformed to better protect students walking to and from school. Source: City of Fortaleza

Partnership for Healthy Cities

We support Fortaleza, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo as part of a prestigious network of 70 cities around the world that are committed to fighting noncommunicable diseases and injuries; projects in these three cities range from making streets safer for walking or cycling to enforcing tobacco advertising bans.

Road Safety

Through the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety, we work in the cities of Campinas, São Paulo, Salvador and Recife to reduce fatalities and injuries on the roads and to promote active and safe mobility. Vital Strategies coordinates multiple local and global partners in alignment with city governments and supports progress in infrastructure, surveillance, enforcement, and strategic communication to address risky behaviors on the roads.

Tobacco Control

In partnership with civil society organizations, we support anti-tobacco laws and the strengthening of tobacco control policies in Brazil through media activities. With local partners, we supported a policy to ensure that Brazilian regulators have the power to ban the use of additives and flavors in tobacco products—a tactic used to attract youth. As a result of our work, millions of people will be prevented from initiating tobacco use and are encouraged to quit smoking and to support government policies against tobacco.

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About Vital Strategies

Vision

A world where everyone is protected by equitable and effective public health systems.

Mission

We work in partnership to reimagine evidence-based, locally driven policies and practices to advance public health.