From papayas to mangos, cashews to yams, Brazil’s markets are full of notorious fruit and vegetables, many of which can be found growing in the nation’s fertile countryside.

However, people living in cities are increasingly leading lifestyles characterized by unhealthy nutrition and reduced physical activity, all risk factors for the development of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Addressing these underlying NCD risk factors in cities is complex. It requires action on several fronts, for example creating a healthy food environment for the city population through policies and making fresh, healthy food choices available.

The complex nature and heavy burden of NCDs around the world means we cannot afford to wait.

Better Hearts Better Cities is a Novartis Foundation initiative which seeks to improve cardiovascular health in low-income urban communities by adopting a multisector, multidisciplinary approach to improve the control of hypertension as a key risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

Find out more about Better Hearts Better Cities.

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List of links present in page

- https://www.novartisfoundation.org/stories/better-hearts-better-cities-lifestyle-brazil
- #paragraph--2016
- https://www.novartisfoundation.org/tags/category/population-health
- https://www.novartisfoundation.org/tags/sub-category/better-hearts-better-cities
- https://www.novartisfoundation.org/novartisfoundation/node/311