

# How Schools in Brazil Are Teaching Kids to Eat Their Vegetables

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On a hilly slope in São Paulo City, a group of sixth graders is busy at work. They're armed with seeds, soil and a range of gardening tools. Upside-down soda bottles, filled with water, outline a series of rectangular garden plots. A boy named Felipy Pigato tells me they are preparing the soil for planting.

The vegetables they grow are used in school meals. But the real aim of the school garden is not to supply ingredients, he says, but to teach students where food comes from, so they can develop a connection to their food.

Just like in the U.S., highly processed foods like fast food, soda, and high-fructose corn syrup have become all too popular here in Brazil. And obesity rates are rising, even among children. It is a nation-wide problem that has alarmed the government and public health experts in the country. Brazil's government has banned sodas, cakes and cookies in school meals. It has restricted the amount of salt and sugar in them as well. It also requires at least one daily serving of fruits and vegetables.

Sarah Campos, 14, took the school garden class last year at Leão Machado in São Paulo. "I had never eaten radishes before," she says. But she tried some when she and her classmates cooked radishes they had grown in the school garden.

"I loved it so much that I even had a second plate," Campos says. Now, she says she eats radishes often. "I ask my mom to make them for lunch sometimes. She puts them in the salad with carrots, and with potatoes. It's very good."