

**PROSANEAR - BASIC SANITATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION FOR THE LOW INCOME POPULATION
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

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Brazil is currently ranked, from an economical standpoint, as a developing nation. This ranking, in the final analysis, means that the country moved out of the Third World contingent but it is not part of the select group that integrates the so-called First World, that is, it is in a complete phase of transition between the two poles of world economy. This status reflects precisely the situation of the Infrastructure Sector and, in particular, the Sanitation Sector. This sector is anxiously awaiting for urgent, efficient and decisive measures so it can attain the targeted developmental level, which is of basic importance.

The city of Rio de Janeiro mirrors this problem very well. Located in the Brazilian coast, the city of Rio de Janeiro has an extensive coastal area with beaches, coastal lagoons and bays, along with environmental protection areas with mangrove swamps, where we should highlight the Guanabara Bay. With a population of approximately 6 million people and with the demographic boom, slums emerged occupying the surrounding hills. These areas, occupied basically by a low income population, are densely populated and have virtually no basic sanitation infrastructure.

In this context, the aim of this work is to show the partnership which is taking place between the Universidade do Rio de Janeiro (University of Rio de Janeiro - **UERJ**), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and the State Government in the Basic Sanitation and Environmental Education for the Low Income Population Program - **PROSANEAR**. The program, conceived initially in 1985, together with the Banco Nacional de Habitação (**BNH**), with the decisive support of World Bank (**BIRD**), relies presently on an effective participation of Caixa Econômica Federal (**CEF**) and the State Government, institutionally and financially.

PROSANEAR is a Basic Sanitation Program mainly oriented to the low income populations which live in communities. Without the support of the Public Power, these communities live in abject health and hygiene conditions, secluded by the formal society, though they are very close in terms of the location of their homes. In order to improve this population's quality of life, **PROSANEAR**'s essence and philosophy embody new concepts that distinguish it from previous attempts due to its unprecedented characteristics regarding its communal methodology for water supply and sewerage in slums and due to the ongoing socioeducational process.

This strong component of social character, in spite of making it more complex in terms of the operational arrangements for its execution, promotes the basic elucidations to the supported population. The program, while preserving the unique characteristics of the slums, aims at keeping the integrity and adequate use of the existing systems in order to preserve the investments and the quality of life of the serviced population.

The participation of **UERJ** in this program takes place through the Núcleo Superior de Estudos Governamentais (Superior Nucleous of Governmental Studies - **NUSEG/UERJ**). Created in 1996, **NUSEG** proposes, as its main objective, a more effective participation, from the professors as well as the students, in projects that aim at a sensible improvement of the problems related to the state of Rio de Janeiro. Like the United States and other European countries, this partnership between the Public Administration and the Universities aims to foster the quality of labor of the graduands, besides using the numerous departments and professors in research and specialized technical activities.