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## Community Involvement in Urban Nature Conservation Strategies

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### Abstract

The urban area of Manaus, capital of the Amazon State, in the northern region of Brazil, was established on areas covered with primary forests. The high demography growing rate of the town, principally in the seventies and eighties, demanded extensive areas for housing. As a result, plenty of the city districts were established wildly, without any kind of planning. Big forest areas were cut and burned, slope areas were eroded and water resources were altered. Now, these areas must be urbanized and environmental condition must be restored, to guarantee better life quality for urban population. At the same time, remaining forest fragments dispersed on these areas must be preserved, since they are habitat to native flora and fauna, some of them endemic.

In this process, the involvement of local population is essential. People must participate on the natural environmental planning of their neighborhood, must know the consequences of this planning on the physical conditions and on their life and must decide, together with the technicians, which alternatives are to be implemented. Only these conditions can guarantee the success of implementation of the planned in long term. For this, several kind of organizations should be involved, like governmental or non governmental institutions and different kind of associations.

The involvement of dwellers is done by environmental education practices, based on identification of local interested institutions and formal or informal groups, propagation and exchange of information, formation of a local working group and establishment of a working agenda.

This paper presents the results of a two years period, in which eight districts, widespread in different watersheds of the urban area of Manaus, were worked. In some districts, forest fragments and preservation areas of water springs and small rivers are protected by the district residents against environment impacts, in other, fragments were transformed in formal conservation units and are now administered by the municipality.

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