

Part 2: Narrative Concept Note

What is the problem or development challenge that you are trying to address?

Our community faces the same socioenvironmental challenges like many others, but it has some specific characteristics, being a famous [place that depends on nature and ecotourism](#) as its main economic source, at risk for the increasing number of dwellers and visitors without the due infrastructure and for the lack of social cohesion needed to overcome the vectors of degradation through community active stewardship.

Considering the absence of the municipal authorities to enforce the laws and regulations that could avoid the current and progressive degrading trends, the only way is to foster a “new community mindset”, where every inhabitant and entrepreneur would know the importance and urgency of preserving nature and developing a future-friendly culture to ensure feasible conditions of life for our descendants.

But here lies another challenge: to join new volunteers to work for the community – especially now, after the pandemic, political polarization, cell phones, social media etc., that drove people away from each other, less prone to dedicate their time, resources and weakened energy beyond their own interests and needs.

What are the project’s primary activities?

In order to tackle the many challenges in promoting local sustainability and enduring development, we prioritized two large doors to access them all in a synergetic way: “youth development” and “urban agriculture”, with their potential to benefit community in many ways, including community cohesion and organization, environmental education, food security, health and nutrition, waste management, income generation, violence reduction etc.

So, the Institute proposed to the board of the only High School in the region the [“Group of Socioenvironmental Practices” project](#), to gather students around activities that will prepare them to exert community governance a few decades ahead, facing challenges we can hardly imagine. Since 2022, the project has implemented permanent activities with the students, as [school \(monitored\) composting](#), [socioenvironmental internships](#), [School Essays Festival](#) on “youth issues”, [pedagogical trails](#), [personal development courses](#) (English, leadership, entrepreneurship), – always promoting awareness and focus among the kids about their current conditions, the future and the urgent need to improve themselves, personally and in group.

Recently (April 19), the Department of Education of Resende RJ signed an agreement with IEM to [replicate the composting and youth development practices in 20 municipal schools](#).

The [activities of our Group of Practices are all registered](#) and kept available on our website, to make it easier to replicate them in other High Schools and [create a network](#) on community sustainability and youth development.

What changes is your project trying to achieve?

IEM’s objective is to promote a replicable change in the local “common mind-set”, making it more future-friendly, stimulating social awareness and organization to protect the long term interests – mainly related to environment protection, youth development, local economy and community communications.

What process did your organization carry out to define this proposal? Who participated in the process and how?

In Brazil, socioenvironmental sustainability became an obvious objective to define urgent proposals. The IEM was created by [experimented dwellers](#) who perceived the need of an institution to gather our efforts and get support from development agencies. Since inception, IEM [spreads on the internet all its activities](#), calling interested people to come and collaborate in planning and implementing them.