

### BOX 8.1 CURITIBA



*Polish Immigration Memorial Park*

Environment (SMMA), including functions previously within the remit of the state and the federal government. It became Curitiba's most influential local government agency thanks to its legislative and financial autonomy and its broad remit.

SMMA continues to identify locations to be transformed into open areas and has the powers to appropriate privately owned land or negotiate land exchange with the owners. In 2002 the exchange of conservation guarantees for the right to build outside the protected areas led to the preservation of around 9500m<sup>2</sup> of green open space. Fiscal incentives and other mechanisms also encourage conservation. With the city's continued expansion, the future challenge will be maintaining the current ratio of open area per person. Moreover, in 2000, 70 per cent of squatter settlements were located on the banks of watercourses and nature protection areas.

#### **Effective communication and environmental education**

Since the 1970s the city authorities have been engaged in selling their open space policies to the community. As a result of growing popular support for them, politicians of all parties subscribe to their broad thrust, endorsing the work of the administration and guaranteeing long-term continuity for Curitiba's open space initiatives.

Environmental education was also used to win support for the city's policies, having been introduced in 1989 into the curriculum of all municipal schools. It has now extended to the community, reaching people of all ages and social backgrounds, comprising a variety of educational activities and fostering community participation in the protection of natural resources. Environmental education was bolstered in 1991 with the creation of the Free University of the Environment in Curitiba to receive and disseminate the most recent ideas on urban environmental management.

Curitiba (population 1.7 million, 3 million in the metropolitan area) is one of Brazil's large regional cities. It is recognised in Brazil and internationally as a model for urban management, largely based on environmental achievements including its integrated transport system. Its success is attributed to political will, leadership and efficient marketing and environmental education which has ensured widespread support for the creation and protection of the city's open spaces.

#### **Achieving environmental objectives**

In 1966 the Curitiba Master Plan's designation of Environmental Protection Areas created a framework for the creation of large parks along its main rivers as places for recreation, reserves for native vegetation, protection of water resources and watercourses, and flood control. These areas have been successfully reclaimed as open space, reaching 51.5 m<sup>2</sup>/person in the late 1990s.

In 1986 responsibility for all environmental matters was handed to the newly created Municipal Secretariat of the