

How have Housing Conditions in Rio de Janeiro improved in the last 25 years?

Rio de Janeiro is the 2nd largest city of Brazil and South America; it is surrounded by great mountain ranges, forests, and beautiful beaches. 1/3 of Rio de Janeiro's population live in favelas which until now were a collection of 'wooden shacks'. Rocinha is the largest favela in Brazil and is located within the South Zone of Rio de Janeiro and is within one kilometre from the beach. Since 1980, wooden favelas have been upgraded to brick favelas. They are now schools in the favela community, and normal households in favelas have at least 25 channels on satellite. In 1980, they didn't have basic services such as electricity and clean. But now people in favelas take for granted basic services like electricity which is used to power the television and satellite. People move rubbish out of the favelas by hand as they all help each other. A family that lives in the favelas consists of a wife, husband, and two children. Already since 1980, family sizes have gotten smaller from the usual seven children per household to two children. The wife works as a cleaner for wealthy people in Brazil as well as a part-time fortune teller reading people's fortunes. The husband works part-time at a fruit and vegetable market selling fruit and vegetables. The family are much organised and on Saturday they spend all excess money after paying for school and food on improvements for their house. The children have spent their whole lives in favelas and have never experienced poor drought-like conditions in the country sides where their parents were from. The children also earn some money as they go down to the shopping centre at 7am and look after people's cars for a few hours and earn £3 or £4. They spend some of the money on a pinball machine and the rest goes towards the family's savings.

The school the children attend is very nice and the children like the teacher and sports hall as he enjoys studying Portuguese. He dreams of being a lawyer but needs to study hard as he hopes to make it one day. People get on well with their neighbours as they are in a community. In 1980, crime rates were high in Rocinha and people were scared to let their children out but now this has changed. Their mother wants the children to excel and make something of their life. As favelas keep on increasing in size and overcrowding, this is eroding the coastal areas away as there are no home foundations. The sea and mountains look glamorous from the city. Everyday Rio de Janeiro comes to a halt due to rush hour. Due to increased traffic and congestion in the city, tunnels are made under hills in the mountain sides. There are also roads on stilts along the coast line.

Barra is a borough of the city of Rio de Janeiro and was made on flat land. In Barra there are lots of facilities that people didn't have back in Rio de Janeiro. There are local leisure centres, entertainment, and shopping centres. At least every household own one car. The housing is better with all basic services and extra with more space and security checks especially when everything is nearby. Children get to take part in activities and clubs and get to visit the beach and enjoy themselves. They don't miss Rio de Janeiro as in Barra it is peaceful and quiet. There is room for children to grow. However as middle class people in Rio de Janeiro are moving out, there is more space for poor people to move in who inhabit empty favelas which increases the slum population. The reason is that security is poor and very few medical centres. They decided to set up more medical centres and encourage the police force to manage the city on a daily basis. They want residents of Rio de Janeiro to talk to police about any problems they have. The government also wants to get more jobs in the country side and stop people moving in the major cities such as Rio de Janeiro.

