

Thathiana Gurgel - Community Post: How an Informal Post Office Connects Rio's Slums

✖ *sustainablecitiescollective.com. November 21, 2013.* Five years after the implementation of the Pacifying Police Unit - a law enforcement program aimed at reclaiming territories controlled by gangs - many utilities and services in Rio de Janeiro still have difficulty operating in the city's slums. This is the case of the Post Office, which fails to deliver mail in the streets and alleys of Rio hills. According to the Rio de Janeiro Post Office, the reason for this is a lack of "signposts and ordered numbering, and overall conditions of access." To overcome this shortage, slum dwellers have created informal organizations such as the "Community Post", which works in the Vidigal neighborhood.

Mail Community was created in 1997 by four friends who wanted to do something good for Vidigal's slums and at the same time generate employment. "We had seen services like this in the Itanhangá neighborhood. We saw how the project worked there and decided to launch something similar in Vidigal," says Edson Pepper, one of the founders of the program. "We decided to go from house to house in Vidigal to announce our service and earn the confidence of the owner." For two months, Mail Community offered free delivery to earn the trust of the locals and get them used to the service.

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