



POSTAL SOCIAL SERVICES

IMPROVING CITIZENS'
QUALITY OF LIFE





Photo: Correos de Costa Rica



Photo: Azerpost



Photo: Azerpost



Photo: Correos de Costa Rica



Photo: Correos de Costa Rica



Photo: La Poste

RESEARCH PREVIEW

Postal operators have a proud history of providing essential services, connecting communities, promoting literacy, and checking on the wellbeing of their customers.

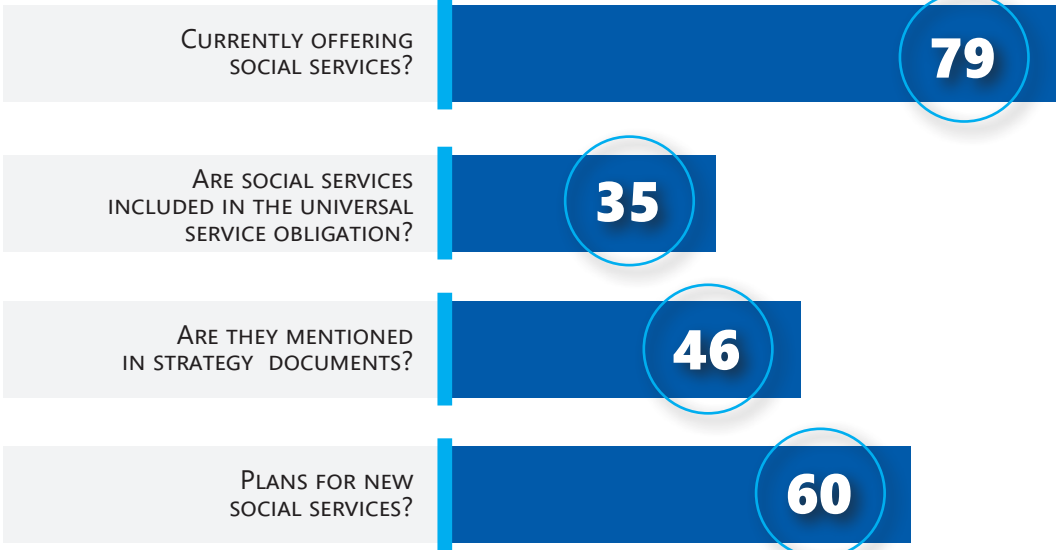
The global postal network continues to be a valuable and effective system for supporting social security and development, as can be seen in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Against a background of declining letter volumes, greater competition and pressure to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals, many Posts are diversifying by offering new social services, designed to directly improve their citizens' quality of life.

To support this process, the UPU International Bureau (IB) has been surveying its members and undertaking desktop research to record these social services, and to understand how and why Posts are offering them.

For the first time, the variety of social services Posts offer will be available in a single publication. The upcoming UPU Guide to Postal Social Services will also include case studies, key success factors, and advice from experienced service providers.

The following is a preview of some of the most important findings from this research.

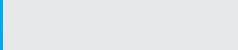
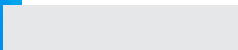
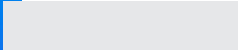
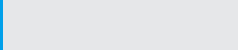
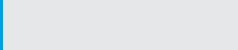


Percentage of responses answering "yes"

POSTAL SOCIAL SERVICES ARE EXTREMELY WIDESPREAD

The research identified 160 UPU member countries and territories that offer some type of social services. Sixty percent of those responding to the IB survey plan to offer new social services in the future, in response to trends such as an ageing population and new opportunities offered by digital technology.

UPU members reported a variety of motivations for offering social services, including:

-  **Generating additional revenue;**
-  **Responding to the needs of customers;**
-  **Increasing the relevance of Posts to governments;**
-  **Increasing customer loyalty and brand recognition; and**
-  **Implementing corporate social responsibility commitments.**

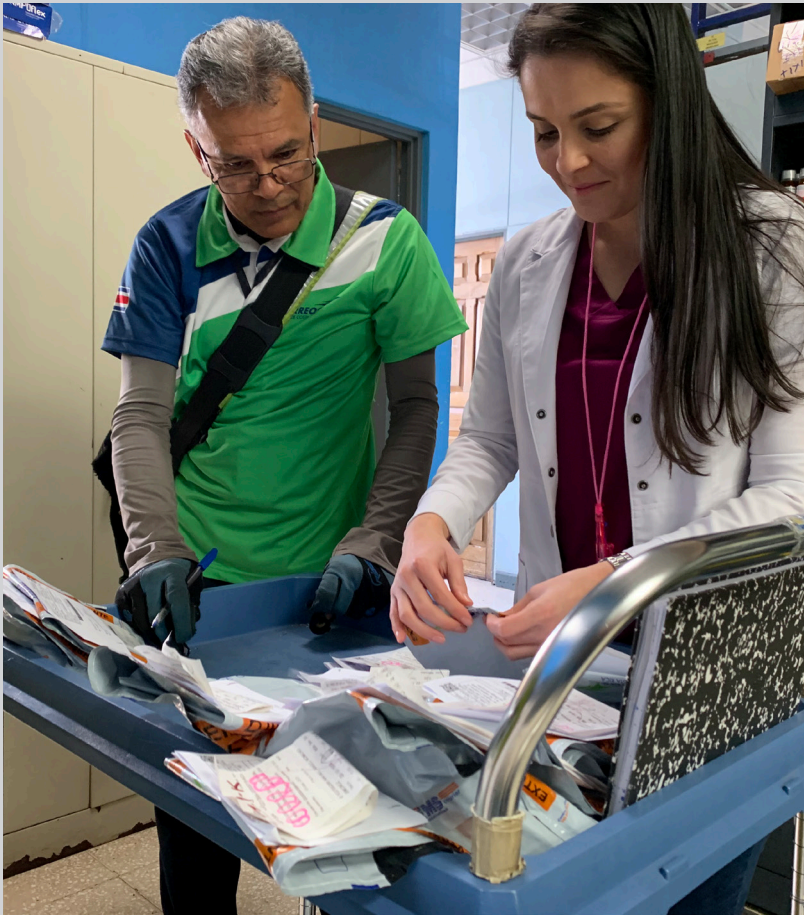
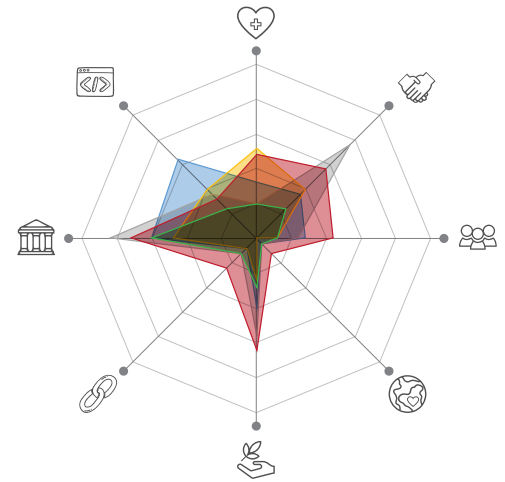


Photo: Correos de Costa Rica



AFRICA (not including Arab countries)

ARAB COUNTRIES

EUROPE AND CIS

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES

Postal social services were grouped into eight categories, as follows:

 HEALTH AND WELLBEING	 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
 COMMUNITY COHESION, DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY	 WASTE AND RECYCLING
 ENERGY AND UTILITIES	 DATA COLLECTION AND PROVISION
 ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES	 TECHNOLOGY

Posts commonly provide access to government social services, yet priorities for other social service types vary depending on geographic and economic development class. For example, Posts in Africa have focused on social services involving technology (e.g. WIFI access in post offices). Posts from developing European and CIS countries tend to prioritize education and employment services. Posts in industrialized countries are more likely to offer community development services compared to developing countries.

PRIORITIES FOR SOCIAL SERVICES VARY BY REGION

POSTS OFFER A WIDE VARIETY OF SOCIAL SERVICES



HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

52

Delivery/collection of medical materials for homes and hospitals

33

Free/discounted delivery of food and essential items

10

Operating or hosting medical facilities, health info and checks

6

Broad social care provision at home (including home check)

5

Health data management

5

Supporting searches for missing people

4

Blood donation at post offices

3

Medical certificate/test results delivery

3



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

68

Reduced price/free delivery of materials for the visually impaired

32

Subscription service and delivery of newspapers

16

Delivery of library/school books and teaching materials

15

Offering of educational courses and bespoke teaching materials

14

Distribution of computers to students

6

Reduced price postage for reading materials

5

Delivery of homework, student reports and exam papers

4



COMMUNITY COHESION, DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY

40

Transport services - vehicle operation or ticket sales

23

Administrative assistance for refugees and immigrants

6

Delivery of poverty reduction parcels and collection of donations

5

Social uses for postal buildings and investments in housing

4

Recruitment or apprenticeships for refugees and immigrants

3

Reading letters and completion of forms for customers

3

Services for the homeless - addressing, storage, etc.

2

Befriending and maintenance services for the elderly and isolated

2

41 Broad social service types were identified. Of these, government services such as social security payments and passport renewals were most common, indicating a high level of trust in Posts by both governments and citizens.

Posts are also leveraging their delivery network, logistics capability and data management skills to offer utility, transport and medical services. The ability to pay an electricity bill via the local post office, to take a bus trip, or to have prescription medicines

delivered to residences is convenient for many people, improving their quality of life. For some elderly people or those living in rural areas, these postal services are essential.



POSTS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PARTNER



Some of these social services are considered necessary for citizens to meet their basic needs, or for a government to deliver its core administrative functions. Posts therefore offer many services that are considered essential to the functioning of society.

In addition, the Post is often the only (or dominant) provider of some essential social services.

These two points also illustrate why Posts are extremely well placed to **partner with governments, charities and multilateral institutions** to help them implement their social development goals.

CONCLUSIONS

The global postal system is the world's largest physical network. It is vital to the wellbeing of millions of people, and should be promoted, protected and enhanced.

This research has made the variety and popularity of postal social services more visible, giving Posts more confidence to further diversify and innovate.

The UPU Guide to Postal Social Services will be published at the beginning of 2021. However, the UPU is keen to continue to consult its members on postal social services. Examples, suggestions, tools, and other relevant materials should be sent to pss@upu.int



For a summary of the results of this UPU research, scan the following QR code or visit:

www.upu.int/The-Postal-Social-Services-Project

This project is funded by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan

UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

International Bureau
Weltpoststrasse 4
P.O. Box 312
3000 BERNE 15
SWITZERLAND

Tel: +41 31 350 31 11
E-mail: pss@upu.int

