

Correo Uruguayo – Centros de Cercanía (proximity centres)

In many rural corners of Uruguay, accessing essential services once meant long, costly trips to distant urban centres. For residents of small villages, where populations might number only in the hundreds and the nearest town can be over 40 kilometres away, such journeys posed a major barrier to accessing essential services without incurring considerable time and financial burdens. Recognizing this challenge, Correos Uruguayo equipped its extensive network of 117 post offices, most of which are located in rural towns, with a multifunction software capable of delivering nearly 100 essential digital services in person, and later extended this capability even further to the most remote parts of the country.

After successfully rolling out the software at its own locations, Correos Uruguayo partnered with departmental governments and municipalities to deploy the same software to small local government buildings and offices in communities lacking a post office. By leveraging existing infrastructure and personnel – often just a single staff member – these “Centros de Cercanía” dramatically expanded access to services in places where no such support previously existed. Today, 64 of these proximity centres are operating across the country, enabling rural residents

to carry out a wide array of transactions, such as paying government and utility fees, transferring money, receiving government subsidies, applying for vital certificates (birth, marriage, IDs, passports), and even obtaining livestock vaccination tags.

The initiative has proven successful partly owing to direct local involvement, as residents frequently request proximity centres after learning about their benefits through word of mouth from neighbouring communities. This grassroots, demand-driven approach, coupled with a robust partnership involving departmental governments and municipalities, has been key to the initiative’s reach and effectiveness. By substantially reducing travel costs and time, the Centros de Cercanía initiative fosters equitable access to services, effectively providing rural communities with opportunities comparable to those available in urban areas.



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