

Huhtamaki Brazil collects more than 10,000 books for project that encourages reading

As Huhtamaki employees know, paper recycling is a sustainable way to reduce waste in landfills. **Rute Mika, Purchasing Supervisor**, explains that Huhtamaki Brazil processes around 2,000 tons of recycled paper purchased from certified paper recycling companies each month. "I often noticed books next to the scraps and I saw an opportunity there, as these books could reach readers", Rute recalls.

It was at this moment that, together with her colleague **Paula Freitas, Process Analyst**, she started to search for a project that could accommodate this wish. During the search in the region, they came across the "Pegaí Leitura Grátis", a nonprofit organization whose mission is to bring books without readers to readers without books. Pegaí Leitura Grátis was founded in 2013 and after a long and intense journey, it is currently present in 15 cities in the state of Parana, with 67 bookshelves and 175 collection points. The Pegaí team in partnership with Ponta Grossa State Penitentiary has also set up a "Hospital for Books" to repair damaged books.



Rute Mika, Purchasing Supervisor and Paula Freitas, Process Analyst



Paula and Rute together with Pegaí, selecting the books

More culture for employees

After discussing the needs and the next steps, Huhtamaki Brazil and Pegaí Leitura Grátis established a partnership. Rute and Paula took part in a volunteer training, and after this, they started contacting the recycled paper suppliers and the process of separating books started. "These books were useless for some people, and ended up into the recyclable garbage containers. Now they will reach new readers, who will be able to acquire culture and knowledge", Rute points out. In addition to this, there are also collection points - which is how the project originally began - where people can leave books they no longer want or need, making them available for a new reader.

Many readers have already been reached

Since the partnership began in July 2019, our recycled paper suppliers from different regions in the country have already separated more than 10,000 books that were donated to Pegaí. The whole process, from collection, restoration, availability, reading and return, is free of charge for the reader, and managed by volunteers. During the pandemic, this project has also included sending a children's book to employees monthly, along with a food basket.

The next step is setting up two new bookshelves in the city of Palmeira. "As soon as this coronavirus pandemic ends, two bookshelves will be available in the city of Palmeira, so that even more readers have access to Pegaí Leitura Grátis", emphasizes Rute.