

ORGANIZATION: MILKEXPRESS

WEBSITE: N/A

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PROBLEM CONTEXT

There is a wealth of scientific evidence on the benefits of breastfeeding for infants and mothers. However, situations still abound where mothers are unable to breastfeed. Many mothers suffer from incapacity or restrictions caused by illness, medication, stress, or even improper information. Incapacity to breastfeed or the insufficiency of breastmilk have dire consequences on the health of infants and young children. There are only a handful of DOH-approved human milk banks in the Philippines. Worse, accessibility is severely limited by monetary cost, inadequate supply, and the lack of awareness.

Currently, the families who need breastmilk reach out through Facebook groups like "Breastfeeding Pinays" and "Human Milk 4 Human Babies". This process works, but it is tedious and potentially dangerous because it mothers will post their infants names and photos online in order to draw in more breastmilk donations. It would be ideal if those who have the capability to donate can be notified without the family needing to post and wait, hoping for a response. Not all breastmilk donors are online all the time and even Facebook changes its algorithm causing some posts to not show up on news feeds.

The envisioned solution is a cloud-based application that would facilitate breastmilk collection from donors and distribution to infants in need. It shall also facilitate the delivery of surplus breastmilk to public hospitals and institutions. MilkExpress, a virtual community breastmilk bank, aims to facilitate the donation of breastmilk at zero to low cost with the ease and mobility of telecommunication. The system also intends to address the problem of inadequate breastmilk supply and lack of information on proper breastfeeding practices.

The MilkExpress project aims to:

- Assist mothers who are unable to or restricted from breastfeeding
- Supplement the supply of mothers who can not produce enough breastmilk
- Nurture infants who are in dire need of breastmilk for health reasons
- Help mothers who desire to serve as wet-nurses for therapeutic purposes
- Aid infants in need during calamities or natural disasters
- Raise awareness on the health and economic benefits of breastfeeding
- Encourage members of communities to help one another

SOLUTION FUNCTIONALITIES

Milk donors and seekers will be able to register with and access the MilkExpress system through web browsers, tablets or smartphones. The geo-based application will enable donors and seekers to locate and communicate with others within the proximate vicinity. Donors with either surplus or available breastmilk not distributed to seekers will be linked with public hospitals and institutions, which shall arrange for the collection and/or delivery of the same to children in need. Users of the system may also opt to avail of the services of partner institutions and individuals such as volunteer or low-cost cyclists or messengers for the proper delivery of breastmilk.

A few years ago, MilkExpress created a short video presentation for a grant hoping to get this project running. The video submitted to the said contest might help your team learn more about this advocacy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdM2JOodTh4>.