

FOOD FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION:

The Brazilian
Program for
International
Cooperation
in HMB



MINISTRY OF
HEALTH

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INTRODUCTION

Breast milk is a key determinant of human health, with repercussions throughout life. In addition to nourishing the child in the first days and months after birth, it reduces the risk of infectious diseases and prevents malnutrition in its various forms. It also fosters IQ development and reduces the incidence of chronic diseases in adulthood.

These findings, which are unanimous in scientific circles, are even more important when the focus is on premature and low birth weight newborns. In these cases, human milk is more than food, it is a survival factor and human milk banks are a strategic food and nutritional security measure aimed at guaranteeing access to and the quality of this functional food.

For four decades, Brazil has been researching and developing innovative technological solutions for human milk banks in the laboratories of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This pioneering action has made it possible to build and maintain the largest and most complex network of banks in the world, which has been recognized with awards from various United Nations bodies, which draws the interest of countless countries in learning about this Brazilian good practice. In order to meet the demand for international technical cooperation, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,



has successfully included the issue of human milk banks in its activities, enabling the undertaking of a set of bilateral and multilateral cooperation actions that have resulted in important contributions to health systems.

The evidence of the results achieved by Brazilian international technical cooperation as a whole has led to the establishment of an important global association in favor of food and nutritional security for newborns and suckling infants: the Global Network of Human Milk Banks, which brings together all the cooperating countries and focuses particularly on targets 3.2 and 3.7 of SDG 3.

BRAZIL

The Brazilian Network of Human Milk Banks (rBLH-BR, the Portuguese acronym for the Human Milk Bank network of Brazil), the largest and most complex in the world, works to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding, offering acceptance and guidance on breastfeeding for pregnant women and mothers. It also conducts the collection, selection and classification, processing, clinical and quality control, and also distributes certified human milk to premature and low birth weight babies admitted to neonatal units. All these activities together reflect the unique, powerful, and sustainable strategy created in Brazil, based on solid investments in research and technological development.

Low-cost, effective technology with high technical rigor

The Brazilian methodology is developed primarily through empathy, spearheaded by the women who are willing to voluntarily donate their own milk. They represent the first and indispensable strand of the many that make up the rBLH-BR, a network for the protection of maternal and suckling infant life that combines scientific knowledge, innovation, and an interest in the common good. Using low-cost, effective technology with high technical rigor, it distributes human milk according to the specific needs of each baby, increasing the initiative's

effectiveness in responding adequately to health sector demands.

Consisting of 233 human milk banks and 240 collection points, present in hospitals in every state in the country and in the Federal District, in 2023 the rBLH-BR collected approximately 209,000 liters of human milk, donated by around 160,000 women. This made it possible to benefit 178,687 newborns, who received 150,193 liters of pasteurized human milk.

Recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as one of the initiatives that most contributed to reducing the infant mortality rate in the world in the 1990s, the Brazilian method plays an important role in global health. It is present in more than 20 countries, through technical cooperation agreements signed with Brazil, and is part of the Global Network of Human Milk Banks (rBLH), launched in 2015.

“Using low-cost, effective technology with high technical rigor, it distributes human milk according to the specific needs of each baby”

FIGURE I | Global Human Milk Bank Network



The international expansion of the strategy developed in Brazil is taking place through international technical cooperation in human milk banks by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE). Created in 1987, ABC coordinates and negotiates international cooperation with the century-old Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), the most prominent health science and technology institution in Latin America, linked to the Ministry of Health.

An example of successful South-South cooperation

ABC and Fiocruz seek to train trainers to make the national technology feasible, and also create

legal frameworks and public policies. In view of the results achieved, international technical cooperation on human milk banks has been considered by United Nations (UN) agencies to be an example of successful South-South cooperation.

With the technical and financial support for setting up and qualifying human milk banks provided by ABC and Fiocruz around the world, more than a hundred banks are in operation in various countries. Growth has occurred in regional blocks. There are currently networks of human milk banks (HMBs) in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), Mercosur, Ibero-American countries, and the BRICS.

FROM RIO DE JANEIRO TO ALL OF BRAZIL

The symbol of the human milk bank (HMB), a white drop inside a heart perfectly represents the idea of vital nourishment. In Brazil, in the 1970s, in addition to working at home, women had roles outside the home and found it difficult to keep up the practice of breastfeeding. The incentive given in the pages of newspapers and magazines steered mothers down another path: infant formula.

As a reaction to the scenario of early weaning and the increase in infant mortality and malnutrition, the National Breastfeeding Incentive Program (PNIAM) was created in 1981 to coordinate policies in favor of breastfeeding. At the time, scientific studies were already revealing the positive impact of breastfeeding on children's health.

Until then, the country's first milk bank, inaugurated in 1943, catered exclusively for special cases. It operated at the National Institute of Child Care, now known as the Fernandes Figueira National Institute of Women, Children, and Adolescents' Health (IFF), a Fiocruz unit located in Rio de Janeiro.

Breastfeeding support homes

In 1985, a pilot experiment conducted at the IFF gave rise to a new operational model for the few human milk banks that existed in Brazil at the time. Previously restricted to collecting and

distributing the product, they also became spaces for supporting and encouraging breastfeeding, as well as for training and qualifying professionals to work in the field, creating a whole movement to promote breastfeeding throughout the country. At the same time, a new approach to assessing the sanitary quality of the milk distributed emerged, with the adoption of new processing and control procedures, such as pasteurization.

Two years later, in 1987, the HMB at the Fernandes Figueira National Institute of Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (IFF) was transformed into the National Referral Center for Human Milk Banks (CRNBLH). With this, it starts to function as a research body and an advisory and executing body for the actions planned for human milk banks throughout the country. It also develops alternative, low-cost methodologies for the processing and quality control of the product. Based on analyses carried out by the institution, recyclable glass bottles with screw caps have been adopted for conditioning milk, replacing imported bottles, resulting in a cost reduction of around 85%.

In 1988, the first federal legislation regulating the operation of milk banks in the country was published: Ordinance GM/MS No. 322. From then on, human milk banks began to multiply in Brazil.

A decade later, in 1998, after the First Brazilian Congress of Human Milk Banks in Brasilia, the Ministry of Health established the National



The first federal legislation regulating the operation of milk banks in the country was published: Ordinance GM/MS No. 322.

Breastfeeding Policy and launched the Brazilian Network of Human Milk Banks (rBLH-BR), which is linked to the country's Unified Health System (SUS).

Network adopts breastfeeding and food technology benchmarks

An initiative of the Ministry of Health, through a partnership between Fiocruz and the Department of Programmatic and Strategic Actions of the Secretariat of Health Care (DAPE/SAS), the Brazilian HMB network (rBLH-BR), coordinated by Fiocruz, has the technical support of the Institute of Communication and Scientific and Technological Information in Health (ICICT), in Rio

de Janeiro: The network was born with the mission of promoting women's and children's health, by integrating and building partnerships with federal bodies, federal units, municipalities, private initiatives and society, with a view to reducing infant mortality, especially neonatal mortality, and promoting advances in breastfeeding indicators in Brazil. The Brazilian model is based on the strong reference of breastfeeding and food technology, increasing the safety of processes and services. It is forbidden to sell the milk distributed.

In 2001, after receiving the Sasakawa Prize—awarded by the World Health Organization (WHO) during the 54th World Health Assembly—the Brazilian HMB network (rBLH-BR) crossed national borders.

BRAZIL AS A MODEL: ABC AND FIOCRUZ, INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE NETWORK

With the international recognition of the Brazilian network of human milk banks (rBLH-BR) by the World Health Organization (WHO), the food and nutritional security strategy developed by Brazil is now attracting the interest of the international community.

In 2003, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) provided the first technical cooperation actions in Latin America, establishing human milk banks, a strategic action to tackle the high rates of infant mortality and morbidity in the region, aggravated by the global scenario of an increase in high-risk births. The idea is to guarantee neonatal nutritional security and contribute to reducing infant morbidity and mortality and, in the long term, the occurrence of chronic non-communicable diseases.

Two years later, in 2005, a fundamental step in international cooperation in the field of HMB was taken during a series of events held in Brasilia. Technicians from the Ministries of Health of 11 Latin American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela) and representatives from four international organizations (UNICEF, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the International Breastfeeding Network (IBFAN) and the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)) decided to set up the Latin American HMB Network during the Latin American Forum of Human Milk Banks.

The structuring role of the Brazilian Human Milk Bank network (rBLH-BR) on the international stage

The Brasilia Charter, a document that defines commitments and guidelines for the internationalization of human milk bank (HMB) action, with a focus on setting up a Latin American network of human milk banks, highlights the structuring role of the rBLH-BR on the international stage. It also emphasizes the search for solutions aimed at reducing the adverse health conditions of strategic population groups in special situations of distress, particularly low birth weight newborns.

The Brazilian participation in the Brasilia Charter takes place through a process of inter-ministerial coordination. In addition to the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health – through the International Health Affairs Office (AISA), of the technical area of child health and breastfeeding – and Fiocruz, represented by the Fernandes Figueira National Institute for Women, Children and Adolescents Health (IFF) and the Institute for Scientific and Technological Communication and Information in Health (ICICT). The joint effort makes it possible to disseminate the national experience through technical cooperation projects.

The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), whose mission includes making Brazilian technologies, experiences, and good practices available to other countries, plays a central role in the movement to internationalize human milk banking (HMB) as a strategy for improving maternal and child health care. It occupies a prominent position on the agency's international cooperation agenda, with a relevant international political character that goes beyond the technical health sphere.

In view of the results achieved with bilateral cooperation projects, as well as the positive effects produced in the Latin American public health scenario, ABC began a cycle of debates on the importance of establishing a multilateral cooperation forum on HMB in the region, resulting in the Ibero-American Program of Human Milk Banks (Iber-HMB).

The investments made since 1985 by Fiocruz in the field of research, technological development, and training of human resources in the area of human milk banks are proving to be strategic for the expansion of the network.

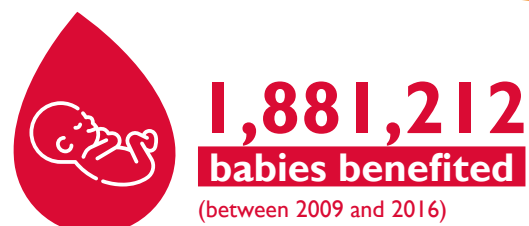
PAHO and UNDP recognize the contributions made by the initiative

In December 2009, the human milk bank (HMB) initiative was recognized by PAHO/WHO and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as particularly significant for human development in the southern hemisphere, providing practical solutions that have been reproduced, expanded, or adapted by other countries.

In addition to the Ibero-American HMB Network (rBLH-Ibero), which marks cooperation with Portugal and Spain, the expansion of the initiative led to the creation in 2010 of the Latin-Ibero-Afro-American Network of Human Milk Banks, initially including Angola, Cape Verde, and Mozambique.

Five years later, in 2015, representatives from 20 countries and international and non-governmental organizations met in Brazil to reaffirm the commitments made in the strategy, evaluate the results achieved, and align actions with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Global Network of Human Milk Banks (HMB network) was born.

Currently, the international technical cooperation in human milk banks practiced by ABC and Fiocruz brings together Argentina, Angola, Belize, Bolivia, Cape Verde, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Ecuador, Spain, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela.



As of December 2016, there were 311 human milk banks in the world, most of them in Brazil (220). Between 2009 and 2016, 1,850,590 women donated breast milk and 17,860,678 were served. A total of 1,548,205 liters of breast milk benefited 1,881,212 newborns. For each donor, approximately 11 women were assisted.

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

The human milk bank (HMB) action is very important on the agenda of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC). The agency adopts a horizontal cooperation model with its partner countries, based on inclusive dialog and mutual learning, without interfering in internal affairs. The goal is to promote the countries' autonomy so that they achieve self-sufficiency.

Technical cooperation relations between the Brazilian government and those of countries interested in implementing the food and nutrition security strategy are legally supported by international acts called basic technical cooperation agreements. They include, among other things, the objects of the cooperation, the instruments for formalizing and implementing each initiative to be developed and the responsibilities of each government and the future institutions implementing the technical cooperation initiatives.

The network expansion policy is based on bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Multilateral cooperation:

[The Network of Human Milk Banks in the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries](#)

In 2011, with the inauguration of the first human milk bank (HMB) in Africa, at the Agostinho Neto hospital in Praia, the capital of Cape Verde, and the training of technicians, cooperation between Brazil



and the African continent was kicked off, paving the way for the creation of the network of human milk banks in the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (rBLH-CPLP). The initiative came to fruition on October 2017, during the IV Meeting of Health Ministers of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries in Brasilia.

The cooperation agreement signed by the member countries highlights the recognition of the Global Human Milk Bank Network (rBLH) by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), considered “one of the initiatives that has contributed most to human development in the

southern hemisphere, promoting practical solutions that are reproduced, expanded and adapted by the countries, observing the precepts that govern horizontal cooperation”.

The document also emphasizes that “human milk banks play a strategic role in early childhood public policies, through the encouragement, protection and support of breastfeeding, which is a right shared between women and children within the context of the interculturality of each country.” It also stresses “the indisputable contribution” of the network to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), specifically the reduction of infant morbidity and mortality and the fostering of breastfeeding.

The establishment of the network facilitates and fosters knowledge sharing and cooperation in the Global South between governments, the

private sector, civil society, and non-governmental organizations.

With the signing of the commitment agreement, the group made up of Brazil, Cape Verde and Portugal is joined by Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor Leste. Together, they aim to act in an integrated manner to implement and expand the strategy.

Since 2011, with the support of Brazilian international cooperation, two human milk banks have been set up in Cape Verde, one in Mozambique (2018) and one in Angola (2019), inaugurated at the Lucrecia Paim Maternity Hospital in the capital city of Luanda. This experience is expected to grow by 2024, with the creation of new services.



Ibero-American Program of Human Milk Banks

There is at least one human milk bank (HMB) in each of the countries participating in the Ibero-American Program of Human Milk Banks (Iber-HMB). The initiative encourages breastfeeding and renews support for the training of human resources to work in the food and nutrition security strategy. Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Spain, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela are currently participating in the program.

In the countries that make up the Iber-HMB, 292 human milk banks had been set up by 2014, 213 of them in Brazil. Eleven of them opened in 2014: 2 in Peru, 1 in Bolivia, 6 in Colombia, 1 in Venezuela and 1 in Guatemala. Between 2008 and 2014, 12,720,853 women were assisted and 1,249,440 donated milk, benefiting 1,286,585 children.

Latin-Ibero-African-American Network of Human Milk Banks

Mercosur Human Milk Bank Network

Created in 2019, the Mercosur Human Milk Bank Network's mission is to expand the sharing of knowledge and technologies in order to guarantee food and nutrition security. It considers the strengthening of international technical cooperation and communication to be strategic elements for the expansion and consolidation of the network, which is made up of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

BRICS Human Milk Bank Network

The idea of human milk first appeared on the BRICS agenda at the initiative of Brazil, during the time it held the *pro tempore* chairship of the group of emerging countries made up of South Africa, Brazil, China, India, and Russia. Recognized as one



The idea of human milk first appeared on the BRICS agenda at the initiative of Brazil

of Brazil's most successful horizontal cooperation experiences, the human milk bank (HMB) action was showcased at a workshop held in Brasilia in August 2019.

As a result of the discussions held during the event, the Declaration of the First BRICS Meeting on Human Milk Banks was drawn up, formalizing the bloc's commitment to join forces to create the BRICS network of human milk banks. In November of the same year, the heads of state of the five countries attending the 11th Summit of BRICS Heads of State and Government in Brasilia created the BRICS Human Milk Banks Network.

CC (Technical Cooperation between Countries) PAHO - Brazil, Honduras, and Ecuador

In July 2008, Brazil began negotiating a South-South technical cooperation agreement with Honduras and Ecuador in the field of human milk banks (HMB). For a year, they will work in partnership to reduce infant mortality by developing and supporting public policies to strengthen breastfeeding.

HUMAN MILK BANKS: PATH TO ACHIEVING GLOBAL GOALS

Relavant to overcoming challenges on the world stage, the human milk bank (HMB) strategy is aligned with international health macro-policies, contributing to the fulfillment of guidelines established by the United Nations (UN). The action has proved effective in advancing towards the fulfillment of one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) drawn up in 2000 as a target to be achieved by 2015: the reduction of infant mortality by two-thirds (SDG 4) compared to 1990.

In 2015, the same year that the UN established the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with goals and targets to be met in 15 years in order to eradicate poverty and promote a dignified life for all, the global network of human milk banks (HMB network) was created. The document formalizing its creation establishes a new framework of action for HMBs, steering them towards the commitments set out in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development in the area of health. A decision was made to focus efforts on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all, at all ages (SDG 3) and to strengthen the means of implementing the global partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17).

FIGURE 2 | Sustainable Development Goals



LIVING FOOD: FEWER DEATHS AND ILLNESSES AND MORE BONDS

National and international studies point to the positive impacts of breastfeeding, which is central to the human milk bank (HMB) strategy. As well as reducing early weaning, it offers immunological and emotional benefits. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), breast milk is the most complete food for children and is recommended exclusively until the baby is six months old and up to two years old or more, in a complementary way, since breastfeeding reduces up to 13% of avoidable deaths in children under five.

Nutrients in breast milk are able to protect against various diseases and reduce deaths. The mother's antibodies are transmitted through breast milk from mother to baby. In addition, breastfeeding saves direct costs related to the purchase of breast milk substitutes, which are widely marketed by food companies.

Scientific evidence shows that premature babies, with or without pathologies, who are fed human milk during their stay in the neonatal ICU have a better chance of recovery and a healthier life.

The improvement in breastfeeding rates in Brazil was one of the factors that contributed to the 73% drop in the country's infant mortality rate between 1990 and 2012, according to a report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). They also played an important role in advances in vaccination, basic sanitation services, family income and educational levels.



CERTIFIED QUALITY MILK SUITED TO EACH BABY'S NEEDS

The act of donating human milk triggers a process that has proven to be of great importance for maternal and child health. In order to transform reality with a positive impact on the health conditions of mothers and babies, it is necessary to rigorously control the path that begins with the milking of the milk by the donor mother and ends with the baby. Part of this path refers to compliance with techniques adopted on a daily basis, which are mandatory to guarantee the quality of actions and products linked to the HMB.

Safety is a fundamental element in the nutritional strategy created by Brazil, where rules and manuals define routine procedures and the minimum conditions for operating a HMB,

following the model adopted by the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (ABNT). There are more than 50 standards, ranging from the hygiene and conduct of employees, donors, companions and visitors, environmental care, to the qualification of human resources and internal control of pests and vectors and water quality. Milking, receiving, labeling, and storing, transporting, and selecting the milk are all stages carried out based on strict criteria.

Donated breast milk goes through a process involving analysis, pasteurization, and quality control before it is distributed. From each bottle of human milk milked, a sample is taken for microbiological examination and tested for impurities and the transmission of infectious diseases.





AXIS 1

Professional Certification for Work Processes in Human Milk Banks and Human Milk Collection Stations



AXIS 2

Certification of Information in Human Milk Banks and Human Milk Collection Stations



AXIS 3

Certification of the Physical Infrastructure of Human Milk Banks and Human Milk Collection Stations



AXIS 4

Certification of Equipment for Human Milk Banks and Human Milk Collection Stations



AXIS 5

Certification of Work Processes in Human Milk Banks and Human Milk Collection Stations



AXIS 6

Certification of HACCP Quality Control practiced by Human Milk Banks and Human Milk Collection Stations

In addition to research to prove the quality of the product, techniques are used to determine the acidity, fat, and energy content of the milk, which is essential for it to be distributed according to the specific needs of each baby, increasing the effectiveness of the initiative to reduce neonatal mortality. For example: for a baby who needs to gain weight, it is appropriate to choose milk with more calories; for another, with little calcium in the body, the indication is milk with low acidity.

Since 2023, the Fiocruz Certification Program for Human Milk Banks (PCFioBLH) has been

continuously evaluating the effectiveness of the actions carried out at the human milk banks and human milk collection points that are part of the Global Network of Human Milk Banks. This methodology consists of six axes: professional certification for work processes; information; physical structure; equipment; processing and quality control, as well as an internal quality control system. These steps ensure uniform procedures and the conformity of the results obtained in the physical-chemical and microbiological analyses.

HAVING A HEALTH LICENSE IS MANDATORY

The human milk bank (HMB) is a specialized service linked to a hospital maternal and child health care unit with a neonatal intensive or semi-intensive care unit.

To operate, an up-to-date health license issued by a health surveillance agency is mandatory. The rule also applies to human milk collection points, which operate in association with the HMB and can be fixed or mobile, installed inside or outside a hospital unit. It is forbidden to sell the products distributed.



EVEN JUST 1 ML OF BREAST MILK CAN SAVE LIVES

Every breastfeeding woman is a potential human milk donor. All you have to do is be healthy and not take any medication that interferes with breastfeeding. In addition, it is not recommended to consume alcoholic beverages, nor is it permitted to use illicit drugs.

Human milk banks, as well as human milk collection points, must ensure that milk donations come exclusively from surplus production and that the donor remains breastfeeding her baby.

It is important to remember that any amount of donated human milk can help hospitalized babies. Drops of milk can save lives because, depending on a newborn's weight and clinical condition, they only need 1 ml at each meal. Each liter of donated breast milk collected can help up to 10 newborns.



***Even milk drops
can save lives***



WELCOMING AND GUIDANCE MAKE THE NETWORK SUSTAINABLE

The human milk bank (HMB) is not just about collecting, storing, processing, and distributing human milk. It represents, above all, welcoming and guidance, which is essential for women to clear up their doubts and succeed in breastfeeding. For this reason, it performs valuable and tireless work in support of breastfeeding.

Mothers can join the Brazilian network of human milk banks (HMB network) as donors, recipients or seeking support for breastfeeding. In addition to individual consultations, human milk banks can provide group consultations and home visits.



Support also occurs through awareness-raising, on dates such as National and World Human Milk Donation Day, celebrated on May 19. To encourage the donation of breast milk, the Ministry of Health runs an advertising campaign in partnership with the Global Network of Human Milk Banks (rBLH) and carries out major mobilization involving the population, managers, health professionals and women.

Since 1999, Brazil has also taken part in World Breastfeeding Day, which is celebrated on August 1. This date was chosen by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action in reference to the Innocenti Declaration, which emphasizes the need for breastfeeding in the fight against infant mortality, approved on August 1, 1990, by the WHO and UNICEF. In 1992, World Breastfeeding Week was created, from August 1 to 7, to raise awareness about the importance of breastfeeding and to promote breastfeeding, as well as the creation of human milk banks.

“In addition to individual consultations, human milk banks can provide group consultations and home visits”

OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS TRANSFORMED INTO OBJECTS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

The production and sharing of knowledge and the training of human resources are essential for the Brazilian network of human milk banks (HMB network-BR).

The investments made by Fiocruz in research and technological development in the area of human milk banks have allowed Brazil to develop a model based on alternative technology, characterized by its low cost and high-quality standards, which are internationally recognized. The attention given to R&D allows HMB

network-BR to respond adequately to the different demands that arise in the routine of human milk banks and collection points.

The capacity-building actions are coordinated by the Referral Center for the Brazilian Network of Human Milk Banks (CRBLH), IFF/Fiocruz, and are developed through courses and subjects, taught in person or remotely. The courses are part of the postgraduate program of the Institute of Communication and Scientific and Technological Information in Health (ICICT/Fiocruz).



HUMAN MILK BANK TIMELINE



1943

Creation of the National Program to Encourage Breastfeeding (PNIAM), responsible for coordinating breastfeeding policies in Brazil



1988

IFF's human milk bank is the subject of a pilot experiment that has resulted in a paradigm shift in the human milk bank model. It offers support and encouragement for breastfeeding and adopts measures to guarantee the safety of the breast milk distributed

1981



Creation of the first human milk bank in Brazil, inaugurated at the then National Institute of Neonatal Nursing, now known as the Fernandes Figueira National Institute of Women, Children and Adolescents Health (IFF), a Fiocruz unit

First federal legislation regulating the operation of human milk banks in Brazil published

1985





1987

Brazilian network of human milk banks (HMB network-BR) created



2001

World Health Organization (WHO) awards the Brazilian network of human milk banks and recognizes the effectiveness of the strategy in reducing infant morbidity and mortality rates

IFF/Fiocruz human milk bank is transformed into a referral center for the Brazilian network of human milk banks. In that same year, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), an agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is created

1998



World Health Organization (WHO) awards the Brazilian network of human milk banks and recognizes the effectiveness of the strategy in reducing infant morbidity and mortality rates

2003





2005

Creation of the Latin American network of human milk banks

Ordinance 2.193 establishes the national health policy for the sector, which defines the structure and operation of human milk banks in Brazil



2009

In December, the human milk bank (HMB) initiative was recognized by PAHO/WHO and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as one of the most important contributors to human development in the southern hemisphere

Representatives from 20 countries and international and non-governmental organizations meet in Brazil to reaffirm commitments made by the strategy and create the global network of human milk banks (HMB network)

2006



2015





2017

CPLP human milk bank network created

Angola's first human milk bank is inaugurated at the Lucrecia Paim maternity hospital in Luanda. The Mercosur human milk bank network (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay) and the BRICS human milk bank network are established.



2024

1st Seminar on Human Milk Banks in the CPLP

2019



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