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PROFESSIONAL MASTER REPORT

Presented with a view to obtain a Professional Master's degree.

Speciality : **Système d'Information et Génie Logiciel** (SIGL)

THEME :

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FOOD DONATION MOBILE APPLICATION BASED ON GEOSPATIAL MATCHING

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SESSION 2023-2024

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FOOD DONATION MOBILE APPLICATION BASED ON GEOSPATIAL MATCHING

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April 5, 2025

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late Mums, Nono Marinette and Kionmegne Julienne.

THANKS

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Almighty God for His boundless grace and unwavering mercy. It is through His divine favor and wisdom that I have been able to overcome the challenges of this project and achieve my goals.

I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Dr. AMINOU HALIDOU, Head of the Computer Science Department at the University of Yaoundé 1, as well as my academic supervisor for his invaluable guidance, insightful contributions throughout the analytical and methodological phases of this project.

I would also like to thank Mr. Zibi Raphael, our professional supervisor, who has provided us with valuable advice throughout the completion of this project.

My sincere thanks also go to the administration and the teachers of the SIGL program for the quality of the education provided and the resources they made available to us for the completion of this work.

Sincere thanks to my classmates with whom we have develop the family spirit and team work.

I like to express our gratitude to our families and friends for their financial and moral support.

Deepest gratitude to my boss, Mr Joseph KOBE, thank you for your invaluable guidance, mentorship, and the opportunities you provided me during this internship. Your insights and encouragement have been crucial to my growth and success.

To Harold Nanfack, my heartfelt thanks for his love, patience, and steadfast support. His belief in me gave me the strength to keep pushing forward.

Sincerely grateful to Christelle Matchum, for her unwavering support and regular check-ins. Your kindness made a big difference in helping me stay focused and determined.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude Roosvy Kenne, whose invaluable support and assistance played a significant role boosting me in the successful completion of this work.

Special thanks to Stive Djoko for his constant encouragement, insightful advice, financial assistance and motivation.

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GLOSSARY

Food Waste Reduction : Strategies and practices aimed at minimizing the amount of food that is discarded or wasted, promoting efficient use of resources and enhancing sustainability.

Food Donation : The act of giving surplus food to individuals or organizations in need, such as orphanages or food banks, to prevent waste and support vulnerable populations.

Donor : An individual or organization that contributes surplus food to the Caritas platform for redistribution to those in need.

Recipient : An individual or organization that receives donated food through the Caritas platform, including orphanages, food banks, and community centers.

Geospatial Matching : The technique used to optimize the pairing of donors and recipients based on their geographic locations, ensuring efficient logistics and reducing transportation times.

Sustainability : The practice of maintaining ecological balance by minimizing waste and promoting responsible consumption, particularly in the context of food resources.

Platform : The digital interface (web or mobile) through which users interact with the Caritas system, managing donations, requests, and user profiles.

User Profile : The account information and settings associated with each user of the Caritas platform, including personal details, donation history, and preferences.

Real-Time Database : A database that provides immediate updates and synchronization of data across users, ensuring that information on donations and requests is always current and accurate.

Frontend : The part of the Caritas platform that users interact with directly, including the user interface (UI) and overall user experience (UX).

Firestore : t is one of the main services offered by Google's Firebase, a cloud-based NoSQL database designed for developing web and mobile applications with real-time synchronization.

Cross-Platform Application : An application designed to run on multiple operating systems (e.g., iOS and Android) with a single codebase, enhancing accessibility for users.

Authentication : The process of verifying the identity of users or ensuring the legitimacy of actions on the platform, typically through login credentials or other verification methods.

ACRONYMS

GPS Global Positioning System

GSM Global System for Mobile Communications

GPRS General Packet Radio Service

LTE Long Term Evolution

EDGE Enhanced Data GSM Environment

RUP Rational Unified Process

API Application Programming Interface

GCP Google Cloud Platform

SDK Software Development Kit

IDE Integrated Development Environment

ABSTRACT

Food waste has become a significant global concern, exacerbated by ineffective management practices and the lack of proper channels for redistribution. Traditional food donation systems often struggle with logistical barriers, poor communication, and mismatches between the location of surplus food and those in need. To address these challenges, we developed Caritas, a platform designed to simplify the process of food donations and foster seamless connections between food donors—such as supermarkets and restaurants—and organizations in need, like orphanages.

Caritas leverages the power of **geospatial matching** to optimize the allocation of food donations based on proximity, ensuring that donations are directed to nearby orphanages or organizations. In addition to geospatial matching, the platform includes a **publicity feature** designed to recognize and incentivize regular donors. Supermarkets or restaurants that frequently donate food are highlighted on the platform's homepage, where their contributions are showcased in a carousel. This feature encourages consistent participation by promoting businesses that contribute regularly and raising awareness of their positive impact within the community.

Caritas also integrates **food preservation tips**, enabling users to learn how to extend the shelf life of food. By educating users on proper storage and handling techniques, Caritas actively contributes to reducing food waste and promoting sustainability.

Keywords: Food Waste - Food Donation - Donation Management - Geospatial Matching - Publicity Feature - Food Preservation Tips - Logistics - Platform Development.

RESUME

Le gaspillage alimentaire est devenu un problème mondial majeur, aggravé par des pratiques de gestion inefficaces et le manque de canaux appropriés pour la redistribution. Les systèmes traditionnels de don alimentaire rencontrent souvent des obstacles logistiques, une mauvaise communication et des décalages entre la localisation des surplus alimentaires et ceux qui en ont besoin. Pour relever ces défis, nous avons développé Caritas, une plateforme conçue pour simplifier le processus de dons alimentaires et favoriser des connexions fluides entre les donateurs alimentaires—comme les supermarchés et les restaurants—et les organisations dans le besoin, comme les orphelinats.

Caritas tire parti de la puissance du **matching géospatial** pour optimiser l'allocation des dons alimentaires en fonction de la proximité, garantissant que les dons sont dirigés vers des orphelinats ou des organisations à proximité. En plus du matching géospatial, la plateforme comprend une **fonctionnalité de publicité** conçue pour reconnaître et inciter les donateurs réguliers. Les supermarchés ou restaurants qui font fréquemment des dons alimentaires sont mis en avant sur la page d'accueil de la plateforme, où leurs contributions sont présentées dans un carrousel. Cette fonctionnalité encourage une participation constante en promouvant les entreprises qui contribuent régulièrement et en sensibilisant à leur impact positif au sein de la communauté.

Caritas intègre également des **conseils de conservation des aliments**, permettant aux utilisateurs d'apprendre comment prolonger la durée de conservation des aliments. En éduquant les utilisateurs sur les techniques de stockage et de manipulation appropriées, Caritas contribue activement à la réduction du gaspillage alimentaire et à la promotion de la durabilité.

Mots-clés : Gaspillage Alimentaire - Don Alimentaire - Gestion des Dons - Matching Géospatial - Fonctionnalité de Publicité - Conservation des Aliments - Logistique - Développement de Plateforme.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Context

Food waste is a significant global issue, generating severe environmental, social, and economic consequences. According to recent reports, millions of tons of food are wasted annually, while vulnerable populations, such as orphans and low-income communities, continue to face food insecurity. In many urban areas, surplus food from restaurants, supermarkets, and individuals often goes to waste due to ineffective redistribution processes. However, with the rise of digital technologies, there is now an opportunity to develop systems that streamline food donation processes and efficiently connect surplus food with those in need. Despite these advancements, persistent challenges remain, including a lack of coordination, logistical inefficiencies, and limited awareness of sustainable food donation practices.

Problem Statement

Current food donation efforts face inefficiencies and poor coordination between food donors and recipients. Restaurants and supermarkets, which generate substantial amounts of surplus food, struggle to quickly connect with suitable recipients such as orphanages and charitable organizations. This results in unnecessary food waste and missed opportunities to support those in need. Furthermore, the absence of a real-time platform for managing donations complicates tracking food donations and optimizing distribution. These issues highlight the need for a comprehensive digital solution that addresses logistical challenges and enhances the food donation process.

The primary question arises: *How can we enhance surplus food donations to reduce waste by optimizing the connection between donors and recipients based on their location?*

Objective

The objective of this project is to develop a *Food Waste Reduction and Donation Platform* that tackles the challenges of food donation inefficiencies. Titled *Caritas*, the platform aims to bridge the gap between food donors—such as restaurants and supermarkets—and recipients like orphanages and vulnerable individuals. It will include essential features like real-time **geospatial matching** of donations, logistics management, recipient matching, and automated notifications. These functionalities will ensure optimal donation distribution and encourage sustainability through digital solutions.
In addition to facilitating donations, the platform will include a section on **food preservation tips**, educating users on reducing waste by extending the shelf life of food through proper storage and handling techniques. These strategies will contribute to overall food waste reduction efforts and promote more sustainable practices.

Outline

This thesis is structured as follows: The first section provides the background and motivation for addressing food waste, emphasizing the role of digital solutions in facilitating food donation. Following this, a review of the existing literature is presented, critically examining current food donation systems, identifying their challenges, and highlighting gaps that need to be addressed. The next section outlines the system's design and development, focusing on the architecture and key technologies used, such as Flutter and Firebase. The subsequent section covers the implementation and testing, documenting the process and verifying that the platform meets its intended functionalities. Lastly, the results are analyzed, focusing on the platform's functionality, user adoption, and its potential to enhance food donation processes by leveraging geospatial matching.

Through these chapters, this thesis will demonstrate how digital innovation can contribute to addressing the food waste crisis by improving the efficiency of donation processes and promoting sustainability.

CHAPTER 1

ICES SARL(INTERNATIONAL COMPUTER AND ELECTRONICS SYSTEM)

During our internship, we had the opportunity to work within International Computer and Electronics System (ICES), an organization that plays a crucial role in the design and architecture of Windows Server and Azure platforms. As a training center, ICES is committed to fostering skills and knowledge in the field of computer science. In this section, we will provide a detailed presentation of this structure, starting with its context and missions. Subsequently, we will highlight the significance of its role in the dissemination of academic knowledge. Finally, we will describe our internship experience, outlining the activities we undertook and the lessons we derived from them.

1.1 Presentation of ICES

1.1.1 History

International Computer and Electronics System ICES is an organization created in 2002 by Joseph KOBE, a Polytechnic Engineer in Design and Senior Architect of Windows Server and Azure platforms, a Trainer of Trainers, and the African Representative of the Canadian group JYGA LTD. ICES serves as a computer training center and is a partner with Microsoft, Cisco, HP, Huawei, Commando, and Axis. ICES's services are tailored to cater to a diverse audience, including the general public, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as large corporations. Some of the notable services offered by ICES include:

- Microsoft training
- Maintenance
- Design of applications and websites
- Guidance in the implementation of IT solutions
- Design, deployment, and administration of systems and networks
- Configuration and virtualization of servers

1.1.2 Localisation

The offices of ICES Sarl are located in Bata Nlongkak, behind the Police Station, specifically at the entrance facing the Tourismo agency.

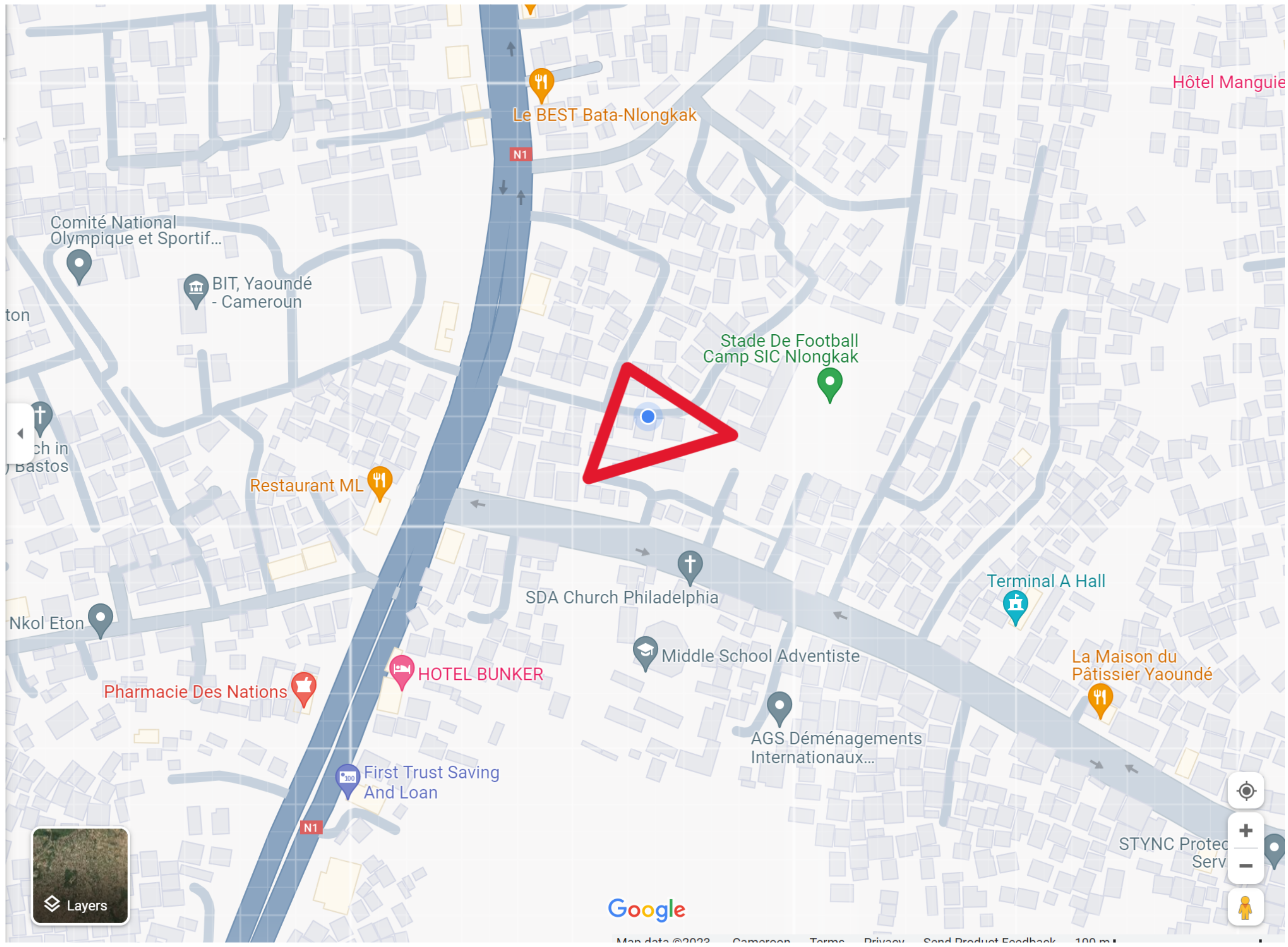

Figure 1.1: ICES Location [1]

1.1.3 ICES Mission

ICES positions itself as a technological

- As expert in training and consulting: With its clients and partners,
- As a cornerstone through advanced expertise: Quality as a technological guide for businesses of all types, Through its interventions and the up-skilling of professionals, Through a comprehensive understanding of the challenges of implemented technology.
- ICES is a comprehensive solution for businesses that: Addresses all Microsoft and Oracle technological needs, Caters to companies of all sizes.
- Today, ICES has developed a unique competence in assimilating new technologies from Microsoft, Oracle, and Cisco. It offers knowledge transfer to businesses through training and consulting.

[1] https://www.google.com/maps

1.1.4 Organigram

Here is the diagram presenting the ICES hierarchy.

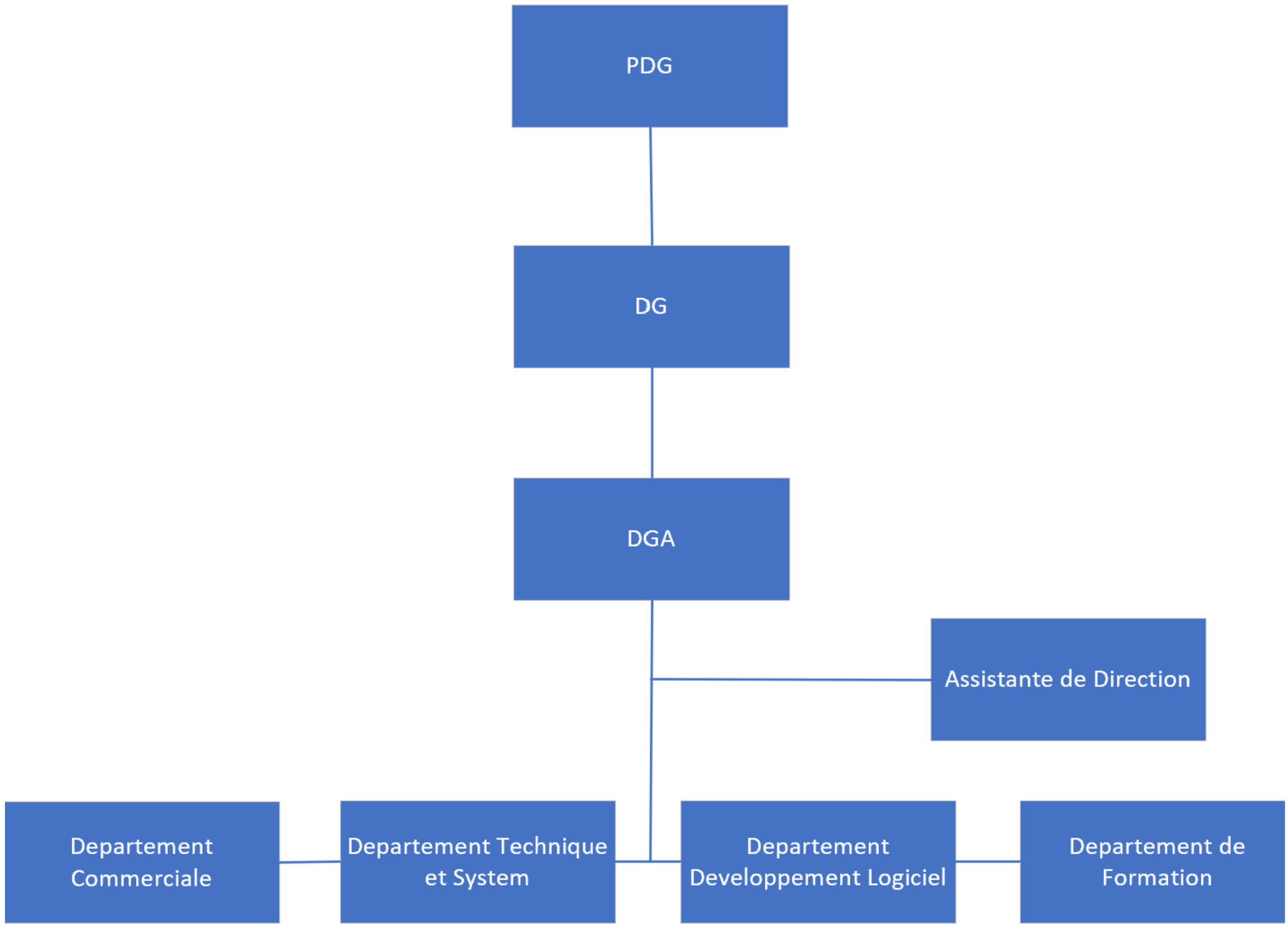

Figure 1.2: Organigram ICES Sarl [2]

1.2 Internship Progression and Tasks Accomplished

1.2.1 Welcome and Integration

Upon our arrival, we were warmly welcomed by the team and introduced to the Application Development Department. We had the opportunity to review some documents to familiarize ourselves with its operation. However, we quickly noticed a persistent issue related to hunger in our country, specifically in orphanages.

1.2.2 Discovery of Issues

The genesis of our solution has its roots in a poignant observation during our exploration of local restaurants and supermarkets. There, we were confronted with evident food waste, a shocking reality

[2] https://icesinternational.com/

that captured our attention and fueled our contemplation. The repeated sight of a significant quantity of quality food being discarded while people in need were nearby acted as an emotional catalyst. This direct experience triggered a profound awareness of the imbalance between the abundance of wasted food and the pressing needs within our community. This is how our mission crystallized: to transform this blatant injustice into an opportunity for positive action, leveraging technology to create an innovative platform for reducing food waste and facilitating donations.

1.2.3 Mission and objectives

Faced with these observations, the mission of our platform is to combat food waste by creating a sharing and solidarity ecosystem. We are committed to transforming food surplus from restaurants and supermarkets into valuable resources for the less fortunate, especially orphanages. Our ultimate goal is to build a food community where every individual has equitable access to nutritious meals, thus eliminating waste while meeting the essential needs of those who need it the most. We aim to establish a food assistance network supported by technology, placing generosity, sustainability, and fairness at the core of our approach.

1.2.4 Tasks Completed

- **Needs Analysis and Design**:
  - Drafting of the specifications for managing food donations and reducing waste.
  - Designing the architecture of the food donation management system (surplus food) between restaurants, supermarkets, and orphanages.
- **Development and Integration**:
  - Developing the front-end application in Flutter to facilitate food donations.
  - Integrating a geolocation feature to identify nearby donors and recipients.
  - Integrating a notification system to alert recipients about newly available donations.
- **Testing and Debugging**:
  - Conducting unit and functional tests to ensure the reliability of the donation process and food inventory management.
  - Identifying and fixing bugs related to interactions between donors and recipients on the platform.

In summary, our time working on the project allowed us to actively contribute to the design, development, and implementation of an innovative food donation management system. Thanks to the warm welcome from the team and quality guidance, we gained valuable technical and practical skills. The various tasks, ranging from needs analysis to system maintenance, provided us with a rewarding experience and enabled us to contribute significantly to the platform's goals of reducing food waste and facilitating donations. In the next chapter, we will present some solutions for optimizing food donation and waste management.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: GEOSPATIAL MATCHING AND FOOD DONATION

In order to address the multifaceted issue of food waste and enhance the effectiveness of food donation systems, it is essential to explore the existing literature on food waste, geospatial matching, food preservation techniques, and technological innovations in donation platforms. This chapter reviews the current state of research in these areas, identifying gaps and opportunities for developing a more efficient and sustainable food donation system.

2.1 Food Waste and Its Global Impact

Food waste is a widespread issue with significant environmental, social, and economic repercussions. The FAO reports that approximately one-third of the food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally, contributing to food insecurity, greenhouse gas emissions, and economic losses [1]. In addition, wasted food represents a considerable waste of resources such as water, energy, and labor used in its production [7]. This problem is exacerbated in urban settings, where surplus food from supermarkets, restaurants, and individuals often goes to waste due to logistical inefficiencies and a lack of coordination between food donors and recipients [2].

2.2 Food Donation Systems

Over the years, various systems have been developed to address the issue of food waste through donations. Traditional models involve the manual collection and redistribution of surplus food by charitable organizations, but these systems often struggle with logistical barriers and inefficiencies [3]. Research has shown that many food donation systems lack real-time coordination and transparency, leading to mismatches between donors and recipients in terms of timing, location, and food needs [3]. Furthermore, there is often a disconnect between the location of food surplus and those who need it, which reduces the effectiveness of these donation systems.

To address these gaps, digital platforms have emerged that aim to optimize food donations by connecting donors and recipients more efficiently. However, many of these platforms still face challenges such as limited user engagement, lack of scalability, and poor integration of advanced technologies like *geospatial matching*.

2.3 Fundamentals of Geolocation

Geolocation has opened up broad research and development avenues, all related in general to the positioning of fixed or mobile objects within a reference system. Geolocation may also refer to the association of an object with a particular region. It can be an important factor in the development of socio-economic and commercial activities such as geomarketing and can serve as a tool for natural disaster prevention, such as earthquakes, by estimating their hypocenters. The location systems are diversified and depend on the application and the required accuracy in localization. In the following section, we will define geolocation and describe the various geolocation techniques that are most commonly used today[5] .

2.3.1 Definition of Geolocation

Geolocation is the process of determining or estimating the physical location of an object or person on Earth using technologies such as GPS, cellular networks, Wi-Fi, or other positioning systems. These technologies allow for precise knowledge of an object or person's location in geographic coordinates (latitude, longitude, or altitude) at a given time. This process uses a terminal with GPS or other technologies to determine and share its position. Location data can be saved for later use or directly sent to an online geolocation platform, requiring a connection like GSM/GPRS or LTE for continuous position updates on an interactive map[1] .

2.3.2 Geolocation Techniques

Several geolocation techniques are widely used, depending on specific needs and technological constraints. Below, we will present the most commonly used geolocation techniques [5].

a. Satellite-based Geolocation (GPS)

GPS is a widely used geolocation technology that determines precise locations using orbiting satellites. Devices equipped with GPS chips calculate positions based on satellite signals, providing latitude, longitude, and sometimes altitude, displayed on a map.

The GPS system includes 27 satellites (24 active, 3 backups) in six orbital planes at 20,200 km altitude, ensuring at least four satellites are always visible for accurate positioning. Alternative systems, such as GLONASS and Galileo, also exist. GPS provides civil accuracy between 10 and 100 meters.

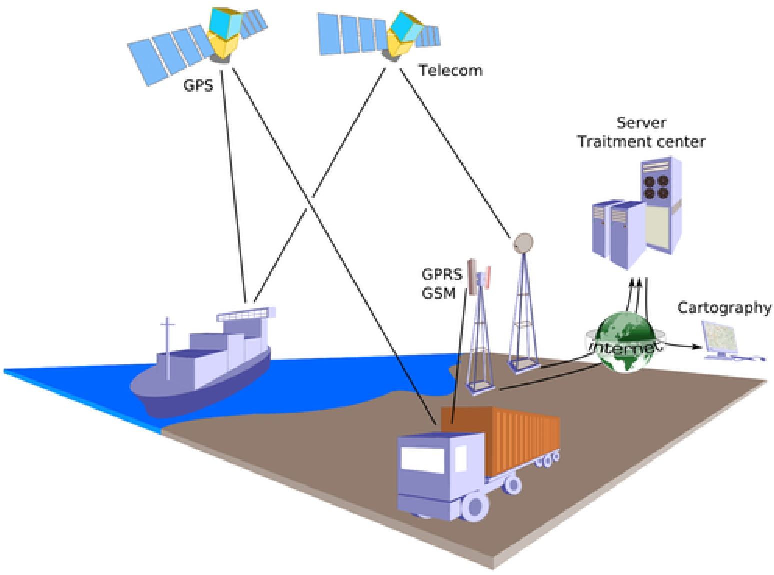

Figure 2.1: Principle of geolocation via GPS [9]

[1]Wikipedia, *Geolocation*, January 13, 2024, 09:16, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geolocalisation

b. GSM-based Geolocation

GSM-based geolocation estimates a terminal's position using information from connected GSM antennas. Accuracy ranges from 200 meters in urban areas to several kilometers in rural areas.

The most common method is Cell ID, which identifies connected antennas and estimates location using databases linking cell IDs to geographical positions. These databases, provided by operators, private companies, or communities, often require internet access (e.g., GPRS, 3G, 4G, 5G) to retrieve location data.

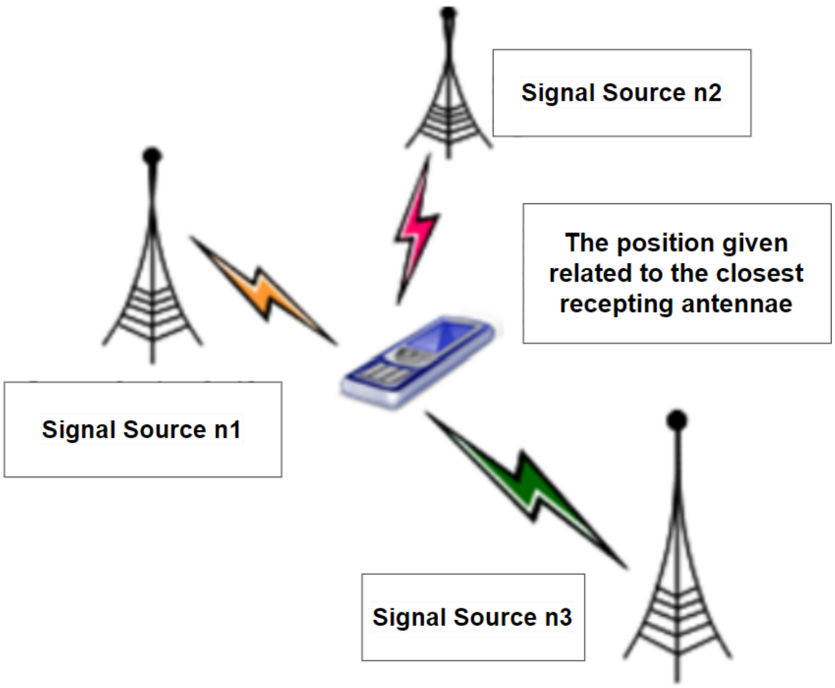

Figure 2.2: GSM geolocation technique using the "Cell ID" method [6]

c. Wi-Fi-based Geolocation

Similarly to how a GSM terminal can locate itself using the Cell ID method on a GSM network, a Wi-Fi terminal can use the same method by relying on the MAC addresses of the Wi-Fi networks it detects. There are databases that list a multitude of Wi-Fi access point identifiers and their geographic locations. These databases may belong to private companies or be published for free by community-driven initiatives. These databases are created using a technique called War Driving, which involves driving through city streets with a smartphone or laptop equipped with Wi-Fi and a GPS receiver to collect as many Wi-Fi access points as possible[5] .

2.4 Geospatial Matching for Donation Systems

Geospatial matching refers to the process of leveraging location-based data to optimize the allocation of resources or services. Technologies driving geospatial matching include global positioning systems (GPS), geographic information systems (GIS), and location-based services (LBS). These systems work together to capture, analyze, and visualize geospatial data, enabling real-time decision-making in donation logistics. Advanced techniques such as proximity algorithms, routing optimizations, and data analytics further support the seamless matching of donors with recipients in a spatially efficient manner. The integration of such systems into food donation frameworks ensures equitable distribution and a sustainable process for addressing food insecurity.

Research like [4] highlights how geospatial matching can solve key challenges in resource allocation by fostering smarter networks that balance supply and demand dynamically. Geospatial approaches, as explored in [10], are pivotal in ensuring that food resources are matched with recipient locations precisely and effectively, contributing to the success of food donation initiatives globally.

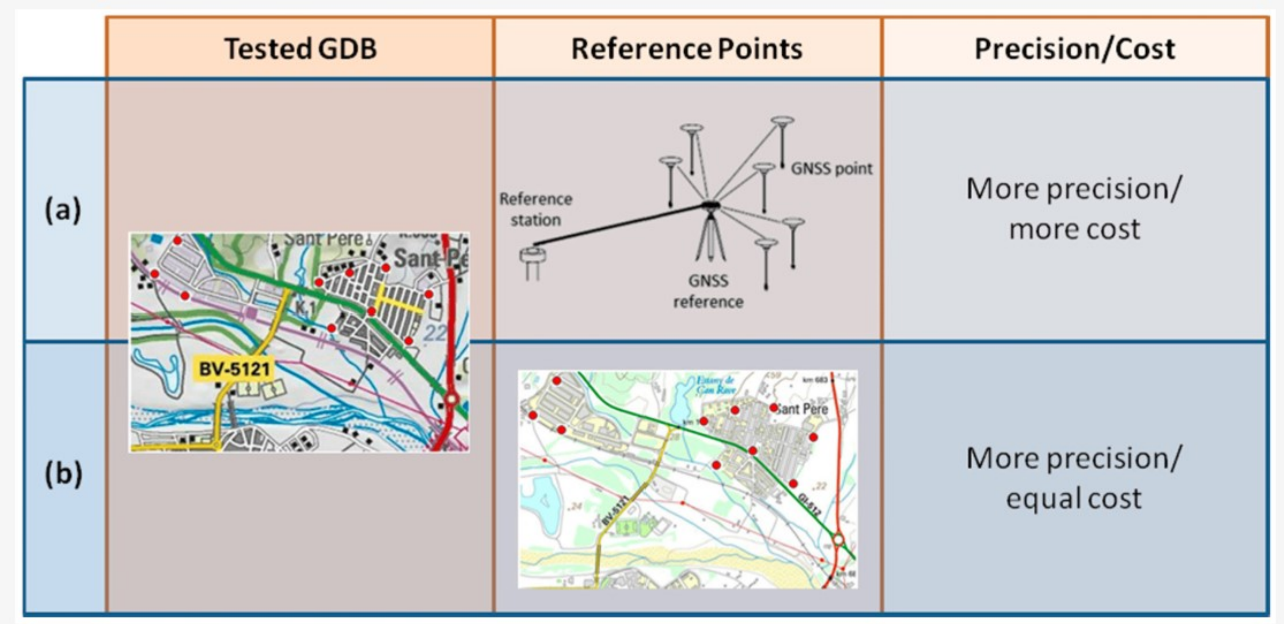

Figure 2.3: Visualization of Geospatial Matching in Food Donation Systems [10]

However, while several studies have explored the use of *geospatial data* in logistics and delivery systems, there is still limited research on its application specifically within food donation platforms. This presents an opportunity for the development of a more sophisticated system that leverages geospatial matching to streamline food donations and minimize waste.

2.4.1 Integration Approaches

Integrating geospatial matching typically involves several key steps:

- **Data Collection**: Gathering relevant spatial data, including geographic coordinates of entities (e.g., users, services, resources). Data can be collected through APIs, user inputs, or from existing geographic information systems (GIS).
- **Geocoding**: Transforming textual addresses into geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude) to enable mapping and distance calculations. This step is crucial for creating a spatial dataset that can be analyzed.
- **Distance Calculation**: Implementing algorithms to compute distances between entities, which can include:
  - *Haversine Formula*: A mathematical formula that calculates the great-circle distance between two points on the Earth, providing a straightforward method for distance approximation.

$$a = \sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}\right) + \cos(lat1) \cdot \cos(lat2) \cdot \sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta\lambda}{2}\right)$$

$$c = 2 \cdot \operatorname{atan2}\left(\sqrt{a}, \sqrt{1-a}\right)$$

Calculate the distance:

$$distance = R \cdot c$$

- **Matching Algorithm**: Utilizing algorithms to optimize the pairing of resources with recipients:
  - *K-Means Clustering*: Groups entities based on proximity, enabling efficient resource allocation within defined clusters and improving response times.
  - *Hungarian Algorithm*: An optimization algorithm for solving assignment problems, ensuring that resources are allocated in a way that minimizes overall distance or cost.
- **Real-time Tracking**: Integrating GPS and mapping services to facilitate real-time tracking of resources and services. This step enhances communication and coordination among stakeholders.

2.5 Food Preservation and Its Role in Reducing Waste

An essential aspect of reducing food waste is improving food preservation techniques. Research has shown that a significant amount of food is discarded due to spoilage, which can be mitigated through proper storage and handling practices [8]. By educating both donors and recipients on how to extend the shelf life of food, food donation platforms can further reduce waste and ensure that more food reaches those in need.

Digital platforms that incorporate *food preservation tips* offer a unique way to promote sustainability. By providing users with best practices on how to store and handle different types of food, these platforms can empower individuals and organizations to minimize waste at every stage of the donation process.

2.6 Technological Solutions for Food Donation Platforms

In recent years, mobile and web-based platforms have been increasingly utilized to address logistical challenges in food donation systems. Technologies such as *Flutter* for cross-platform mobile development and *Firebase* for real-time database management have been employed to create more responsive and scalable solutions [4]. These technologies allow for the creation of user-friendly applications that can handle real-time data, push notifications, and geolocation services, all of which are essential for the effective management of food donations.

Despite the advantages of these technologies, there is still a need for more comprehensive platforms that integrate geospatial matching, real-time logistics management, and food preservation education into a seamless user experience.

2.7 Existing Solutions and their Limites

Several mobile and web-based applications have been developed to address the problem of food waste and donation by facilitating surplus food redistribution. This section reviews some existing applications that align with this project, followed by a comparison table highlighting their key features.

2.7.1 Too Good To Go

Too Good To Go is a mobile application that connects users with restaurants, bakeries, and supermarkets offering unsold food at reduced prices [2]. Its primary focus is on reducing food waste by selling surplus meals to consumers at discounted rates. The platform does not provide a free donation option, limiting its potential impact in terms of charity. However, it has been successful in engaging businesses in sustainable practices.

[2] *Too Good To Go App :* `https://toogoodtogo.org/en`

2.7.2 Olio

Olio is a food-sharing application that allows individuals and local businesses to share surplus food with neighbors. While it focuses primarily on peer-to-peer sharing, it does not incorporate any advanced geospatial matching systems, which may hinder its efficiency in targeting specific groups in need, such as orphanages or food banks. However, its community-oriented approach has made it popular among users [3]

2.7.3 Food Rescue US

Food Rescue US is a platform designed to connect food donors with receiving organizations using a volunteer-based delivery system. This application integrates geospatial data to match donors with recipients based on proximity, ensuring more efficient distribution. However, the system relies heavily on volunteers, which introduces variability in the availability and timeliness of food deliveries [4].

2.7.4 ShareTheMeal

ShareTheMeal is a charity-based app created by the United Nations' World Food Programme. It allows users to make monetary donations, which are then used to provide meals for communities in need. While it operates globally, the platform focuses on monetary donations rather than physical food redistribution, limiting its application for local food waste reduction efforts [5].

2.7.5 Comparison Table of Food Donation Applications

The table below provides a comparison of the reviewed applications based on several criteria, including ease of use, technology stack, target users, geospatial matching, scalability, and limitations.

Criteria	**Too Good To Go**	**Olio**	**Food Rescue US**	**ShareTheMeal**
Ease of Use	High	Medium	High	High
Technology Stack	React Native, Firebase	iOS, Android, AWS	Web, Mobile	Web, Mobile
Target Users	Businesses, Consumers	Individuals, Shops	Volunteers, Organizations	Donors, Charities
Geospatial Matching	No	No	Yes	No
Scalability	High	Medium	High	Global
Integration	Moderate	Low	High	Low
Limitations	Limited to food outlets, no free donation option	Focuses on individual sharing, lacks geospatial matching	Relies on volunteers, inconsistent delivery times	Focuses on monetary donations rather than food

Table 2.1: Comparison of Food Donation Applications

[3] *Olio App :* `https://olioex.com/`
[4] *Food Rescue App :* `https://foodrescue.us/`
[5] *Share the meal App :* `https://sharethemeal.org/en/`

2.7.6 Limitations of Existing Applications

Despite the effectiveness of these applications in reducing food waste and redistributing surplus food, several limitations exist:

- **Too Good To Go**: Primarily focuses on selling surplus food rather than donating it. This limits its application for food donation initiatives.
- **Olio**: While it enables food sharing, its lack of geospatial matching reduces its ability to effectively target food banks or organizations in need.
- **Food Rescue US**: Relies on volunteer-based transportation, which can introduce inefficiencies in the collection and delivery of food donations.
- **ShareTheMeal**: This platform focuses exclusively on monetary donations, making it unsuitable for projects that aim to physically redistribute surplus food locally.

This project aims to address these limitations by implementing a geospatial matching system that connects donors with recipients based on proximity, ensuring more efficient distribution of food donations.

2.8 Articles Review

In this section, we review existing literature and initiatives related to the reduction of food wastage and donation platforms. Three key articles have been identified, each offering insights into different approaches and technologies for addressing this issue.

2.8.1 Comparison of Articles Related to Food Donation and Waste Reduction

No	Article	Author(s)	Year	Problematic	Method	Dataset	Results	Advantages	Limitations
1	GIS Applications in Agriculture and Sustainability	Various Authors	2021	How geospatial data can optimize decision-making for food sustainability	GIS technology and spatial analysis	Agricultural data, food production patterns	Improved decision-making, waste reduction through better allocation of food resources	Efficient resource allocation, applicability to food waste donation	Limited to agricultural scope, may not directly address donation platforms
2	Geospatial Information Science in Societal Challenges	DGK Division of Geoinformatics	2020	The integration of geospatial data to address societal issues like disaster management	Geospatial data acquisition and processing	Big data from satellites, GNSS, sensor networks	Identified the potential of geospatial data for logistics, including food donations	Advanced geospatial tools for matching and routing in food donation networks	Complex data integration and processing challenges, reliance on sophisticated technologies
3	Mobile Applications to Reduce Food Waste in Supply Chains	Jiequan Hong, Anicia Jaegler, Olivier Gergaud	2024	Mobile applications reducing food waste and poverty in the supply chain	Systematic literature review	Not specified	Applications focus mainly on procurement and consumption stages	Innovations in supply chain management	Limited geographic diversity in research

Table 2.2: Comparison of Articles

- **Problematic:** Succinct summary of the problem addressed in each article.
- **Method:** Description of the methods used by the authors to address the problem.
- **Results:** Key findings obtained from each method.
- **Limitations:** Identified limitations or gaps in each approach.

2.9 Critical Evaluation

Collectively, the reviewed articles contribute to the growing field of technological solutions addressing social issues. While each article presents a unique perspective, they share common limitations such as a lack of detailed results, concrete evidence, or real-world examples to substantiate their proposed solutions. Additionally, the articles highlight the need for considering potential challenges associated with implementing advanced technologies in social contexts.

Summary of Gaps Identified

From the review of existing systems and literature, it is evident that:

- There is a lack of integration between *geospatial matching* and real-time donation systems.
- Food preservation techniques are not adequately integrated into current food donation platforms.
- There is a need for more efficient, scalable digital platforms that can address the logistical challenges in food donation.

In summary, existing food donation platforms lack critical features such as geospatial matching, food preservation tips, and recognition for donors. Our application aims to address these gaps by introducing proximity-based matching for efficient redistribution, offering preservation techniques to extend food usability, and implementing a publicity feature that highlights businesses making significant contributions. These innovations will enhance the platform's effectiveness in reducing food waste and encourage more sustainable donation practices.

CHAPTER 3

CARITAS APPLICATION FOR FOOD DONATION BASED ON GEOSPATIAL MATCHING

The analysis and design phase plays an essential role in structuring the project objectives into a coherent and practical system. We begin with a detailed description of the system, highlighting its objectives and main functionalities. Following this, we present the Rational Unified Process (RUP) methodology adopted to structure our design approach. Finally, the system modeling is detailed, following the phases and iterations specific to this methodology.

Caritas platform seeks to mitigate food waste by creating a digital ecosystem that connects donors, such as supermarkets, restaurants, and individuals, with beneficiaries like orphanages and community organizations.

3.1 Description of the System

3.1.1 Context and Objectives

The platform operates in a context where food waste remains a significant global issue. Its primary objectives are:

- To minimize food waste by efficiently redistributing surplus food.
- To establish a transparent and reliable system for donations.
- To enhance collaboration between donors and recipients through streamlined logistics.

3.1.2 Principal Functionalities

The principal functionalities of the platform include:

- **User Management:** Registration, authentication, and role-based access for donors, recipients, and administrators.
- **Donation Creation:** Enabling donors to list surplus food with relevant details such as type, quantity, and expiration dates.
- **Geospatial Matching:** Matching donations to nearby beneficiaries using location-based algorithms.
- **Publicity:** Promoting the platform and its impact to encourage wider participation and awareness.
- **Real-time Notifications:** Ensuring timely communication between stakeholders to facilitate efficient donation logistics.

3.2 Development Methodology - Rational Unified Process (RUP)

The Rational Unified Process (RUP) methodology will guide us in structuring and successfully implementing the design of the **food waste reduction and donation platform**. The strength of this methodology lies in its ability to adapt to changing project needs, manage risks proactively, and ensure stakeholder satisfaction. It is particularly well-suited to complex and dynamic projects. It is composed of four main phases: Inception, Elaboration, Construction, and Transition, each with specific objectives and activities.

3.2.1 Phases of the Methodology

1. **Inception:**
    - Identification of project objectives.
    - Identification of System Actors such as donors (individuals, restaurants, and supermarkets), beneficiary organizations (orphanages), platform developers and designers, end-users (donation recipients), and system administrators.
    - Definition of basic requirements (Functional and Non-functional needs).
    - Development of a business case emphasizing the vision: *Risk identification and feasibility study.*
2. **Elaboration:**
    - In-depth analysis of requirements and functionalities, including geospatial matching for donations.
    - Definition of the platform's foundational architecture, focusing on key modules and features.
    - Planning of the construction phase to ensure an iterative and flexible development approach.
3. **Construction:**
    - Iterative development of platform components, with a focus on delivering specific features in each cycle.
    - Comprehensive documentation for developers, administrators, and end users to facilitate effective use and maintenance of the platform.
    - Regular code reviews for quality assurance, error identification, and adherence to coding standards.
4. **Transition:**
    - Validation testing to confirm alignment with specified requirements and stakeholder expectations.
    - Preparation for deployment, including end-user training, support material creation, and knowledge transfer sessions.
    - Initial support and maintenance to address post-deployment issues and optimize the platform based on real-world use.

3.2.2 Inception

Identification of project objectives

The primary goal is to create a platform that minimizes food waste by connecting donors with beneficiaries in need, improving logistics, and ensuring the transparency of donations.

System Actors

The platform involves various actors, each with specific roles and interactions:

- **Donors:** Individuals, restaurants, and supermarkets willing to donate surplus food.
- **Beneficiary organizations:** Orphanages and community groups that distribute food to those in need.
- **Platform developers and designers:** The technical team responsible for building and maintaining the platform.
- **End-users:** Recipients who will benefit from the donated food.
- **System administrators:** Team managing the platform's smooth operation and addressing technical challenges.

Functional Needs

Understanding the needs of different user types—donors, beneficiaries, and administrators—is essential for designing an effective platform. Key functional requirements include:

- **Account Registration and Management:** Differentiated registration processes for orphanages, individuals, restaurants, and supermarkets, with appropriate verification and approval workflows.
- **Donation Management:** Ability for donors to create, allocate, and publish donations, with detailed descriptions and availability for orphanages.
- **Request Handling:** Orphanages can make specific requests for food donations, which will be visible to all users.
- **Geospatial Matching:** Integration of geospatial data to match donors with the nearest beneficiaries, optimizing logistics and reducing transportation time.
- **Advertisement and Promotion:** Restaurants and supermarkets with a minimum donation count are featured in a carousel for promotional purposes, and their profile page can be visited for more details.
- **Communication:** An integrated chat system for real-time communication between donors and recipients.
- **Educational Content:** A dedicated section for food preservation tips to help users improve food storage, transformation, and quality.

Non-functional Needs

In addition to functional requirements, it is essential to consider non-functional needs to ensure the platform's overall effectiveness and user satisfaction:

- **Data Security:** Ensuring user data, especially personal and donation-related information, is securely stored and transmitted.
- **Performance:** The platform should handle a high volume of users and transactions efficiently without performance degradation.
- **Usability:** The user interface should be intuitive and easy to navigate for all user types, providing a seamless experience.

Development of a business case

The business case highlights the vision and strategic benefits of the platform. The primary mission, titled *Caritas*, aims to:

- Reduce food waste by efficiently channeling surplus food to beneficiaries.
- Enhance transparency through tracking and reporting tools.
- Create a scalable and user-friendly system that can adapt to evolving needs.

Risk Identification

- **Risk**: A malicious user could impersonate an existing orphanage or create a fictitious orphanage to receive donations meant for legitimate beneficiaries.
- **Consequences**:
  - Misappropriation of critical resources.
  - Loss of trust from donors and partners.
  - Legal damage to the platform.

Risk Management Measures

To mitigate this risk, the platform adopts a proactive approach by requiring the submission and validation of official documents for each registered orphanage. The key steps are as follows:

Submission of Official Documents

Each orphanage registering on the platform must submit the following mandatory documents:

- Certificate of legal registration.
- Operating authorization issued by a competent authority.
- Verified physical address with geographical precision.

Document Validation

Submitted documents are reviewed by the platform administrator to ensure their authenticity:

- Cross-checking with public databases (e.g., official NGO registries).
- Physical verification, if necessary, through on-site visits to confirm the legitimacy of the organization.

Ongoing Authentication

- Regular updates to institutional information to ensure registered orphanages continue to operate legally.
- Annual revalidation of documents to maintain access to the service.

3.2.3 Elaboration

Requirement Refinement

A thorough analysis of the basic requirements to ensure accuracy, prioritization, and alignment with project goals. This includes:

- Detailing specific functionalities such as donation tracking, user roles, and reporting mechanisms.
- Identifying dependencies and constraints to set realistic expectations for the platform's capabilities.

Tool Selection

Selecting the right tools is essential for the successful development of the food waste reduction and donation platform.

Choice of Database

For the development of the application's backend, several technologies were evaluated, including Firebase[1], MySQL[2], and MongoDB[3].

Criteria	**Firebase**	**MySQL**	**MongoDB**
Description	NoSQL document database with real-time synchronization	Open source, widely used	One of the most popular document stores
Database Model	Document store	Relational DBMS	Document store
SQL	No	Yes	No
Supported Programming Languages	Java, JavaScript, Python, Swift, Dart	C, C#, Java, JavaScript, Python, PHP, Ruby	C, C++, C#, Java, .Net
Server-side Scripting	Yes (via Cloud Functions)	Yes	Yes
Scalability	Horizontal	Vertical	Horizontal
Real-time Capabilities	Built-in	Limited	Yes (with additional setup)
Offline Support	Yes	Limited	Yes
Integration with Other Services	Seamless integration with Firebase Authentication, Storage, and more	Requires additional setup and management	Requires additional setup and management

Table 3.1: Comparative table of database types

We've chosen Firebase Firestore for its flexibility in managing data and real-time tracking of donations, while its integration with Firebase services ensures a robust and scalable backend.

Choice of Frontend Technology

In the context of developing the frontend of the application, several technologies were evaluated, including React[4], Angular[5], and Flutter.[6]

[1] https://firebase.google.com/
[2] https://www.mysql.com/
[3] https://www.mongodb.com/
[4] https://flutter.dev/
[5] https://react.dev/
[6] https://angular.dev/

Name	React	Angular	Flutter
Description	JavaScript library for building user interfaces	JavaScript framework for building web applications	Google's open-source framework for cross-platform app development
Language	JavaScript	TypeScript	Dart
Performance	Good performance	Acceptable performance	High performance
Components	Library of reusable components	Predefined components	Customizable widgets
Popularity	Very popular	Popular	Rapidly growing

Table 3.2: Comparison of Frontend Technologies

After examining the various options, **Flutter** has been selected as the best solution for developing the frontend of the application. Flutter offers high performance, customizable widgets, and increasing popularity, making it an optimal choice to ensure a smooth and attractive user experience.

Geospatial Matching Tool

Geospatial matching tools play a critical role in applications involving location-based services, such as donor-recipient matching, routing, and real-time tracking. In this section, we compare three widely-used geospatial tools—Google Maps [7], OpenStreetMap (OSM)[8], and ArcGIS—based[9].

Feature	Google Maps	OpenStreetMap (OSM)	ArcGIS
Real-Time Data	Offers real-time traffic and location tracking.	No native real-time data; external tools needed.	Supports real-time spatial analytics (limited).
Customization	Limited style customizations.	Highly customizable via open-source tools.	Highly customizable maps and analytics.
Scalability	Highly scalable with cloud infrastructure.	Scales with third-party tools like GraphHopper.	Suitable for enterprise-level scalability.
Geospatial Matching	Built-in APIs like Distance Matrix and Places.	Requires integration with tools like OSRM.	Advanced matching via network analysis tools.
Map Visualizations	Professional and polished look.	Requires additional libraries (e.g., Leaflet).	Excellent visualizations, professional-grade.
Key APIs/Tools	Geocoding, Distance Matrix, Directions APIs.	OSRM, GraphHopper, and others for routing.	Spatial Analyst, Geocoding, Network Analyst.
Real-Time Integration	Excellent for web and mobile apps.	Requires custom integrations.	Supports enterprise applications.
Best Use Case	Apps needing real-time, easy geospatial matching.	Cost-sensitive projects or open-source solutions.	Large-scale, high-budget geospatial analytics.

Table 3.3: Comparison of Geospatial Tools: Google Maps, OpenStreetMap, and ArcGIS

[7] https://maps.google.com/
[8] https://www.openstreetmap.org/
[9] https://www.arcgis.com/home/index.html

Google Maps offers accurate geolocation services, which enable you to track a user's location in real-time, whether it's a donor or a recipient. By leveraging latitude and longitude coordinates, Google Maps allows you to pinpoint the position of both donors and orphanages, making it ideal for geospatial matching with the help of its **Distance Matrix API**, **Places API** and **Geocoding API**.

System Architecture

Our food waste reduction and donation platform is designed to offer a comprehensive and secure solution for managing food donations. The architecture is built on modern and modular technologies that ensure optimal performance, scalability, and ease of maintenance.

- Selection of a multi-tier architecture to separate the presentation layer, business logic, and data management.
- Database schema design for handling user information, donations, and geospatial data.
- Implementation of scalable services to accommodate growth in the user base and transaction volume.

Physical Architecture

The physical architecture comprises the actual hardware and network infrastructure required to run the platform. This includes:

- **Client Devices:** Smartphones and tablets running Android and iOS.
- **Firebase Servers:** Google Cloud infrastructure hosting Firebase services such as Firestore for database management, Firebase Authentication for user management and Cloud Functions for server-side logic.
- **Network Infrastructure:** Internet connectivity that allows communication between client devices and Firebase services.

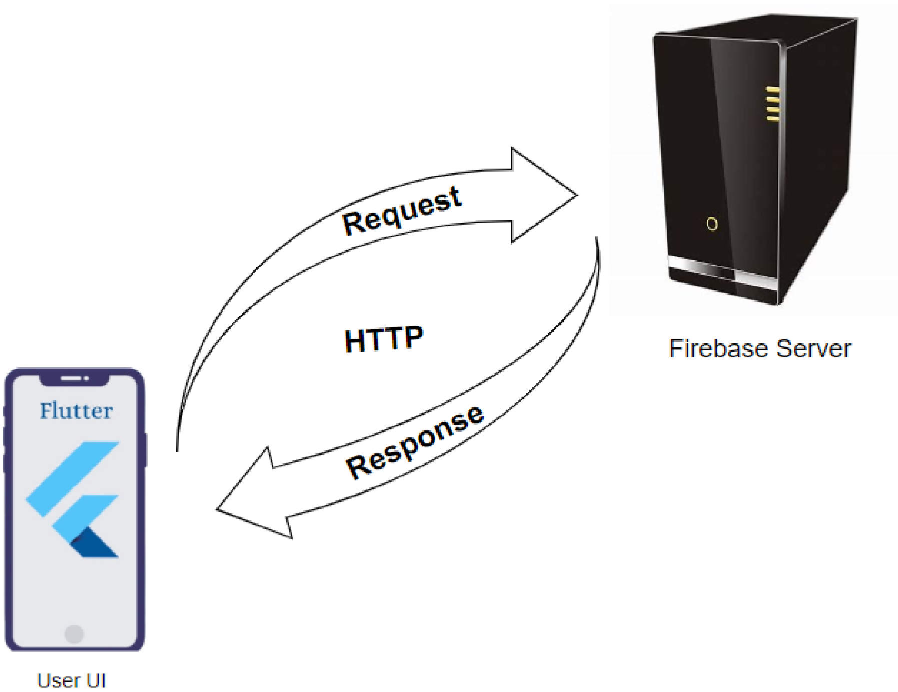

Figure 3.1: Physical Architecture Diagram

Logical Architecture

The logical architecture outlines the functional components of the system and their interactions. Key components include:

- **User Interface Layer:** Developed using Flutter, providing a seamless user experience across devices.
- **Business Logic Layer:** Responsible for processing user requests, managing data flow, and implementing business rules. This layer is primarily managed by Firebase Cloud Functions.
- **Data Layer:** Utilizing Firebase Firestore to store and manage user data, donations, and other relevant information, ensuring real-time data access and updates.

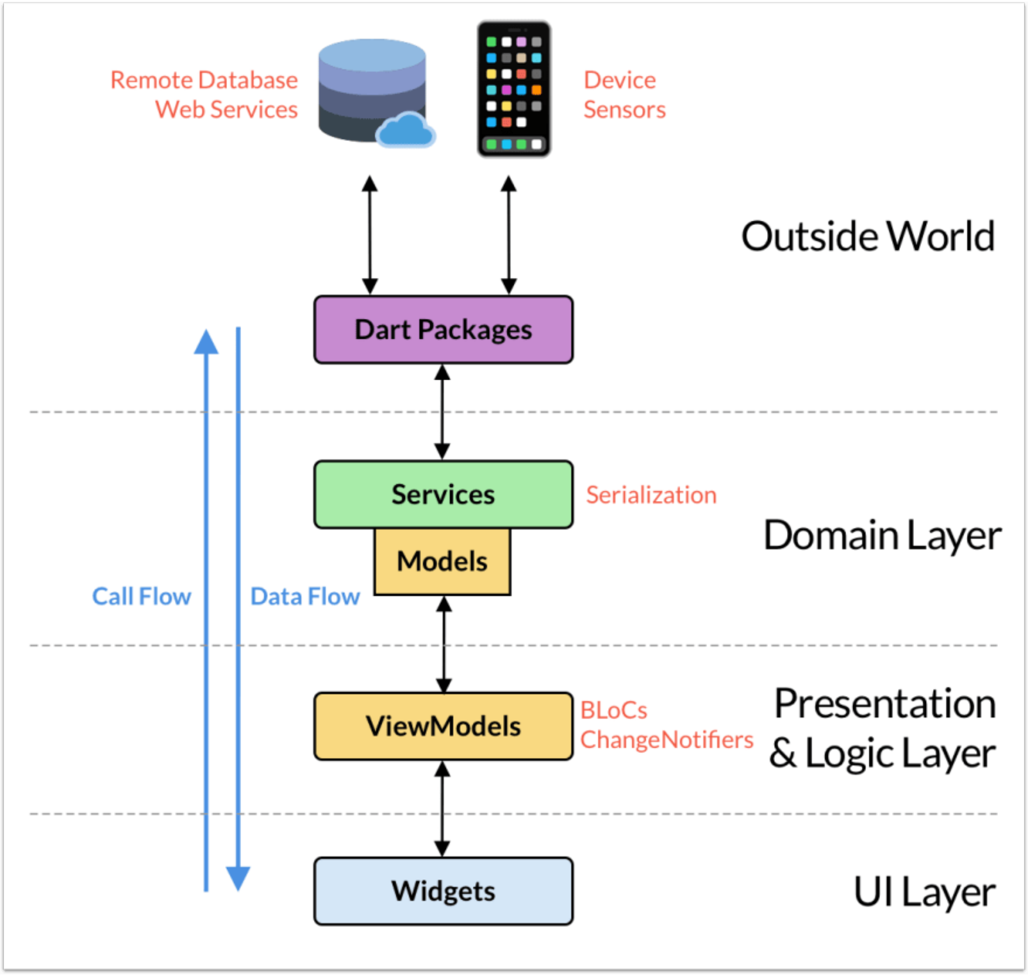

Figure 3.2: Logical Architecture Diagram

Hosting Architecture

The hosting architecture defines how the various components of the system are hosted and accessed:

- **Firebase Hosting:** Used to host static assets of the web version of the application, ensuring fast delivery and reliability.
- **Cloud Functions:** Deployed on Firebase to handle backend logic and server-side operations, providing a scalable solution that automatically adjusts to traffic demands.

- **Firestore Database:** Hosted in the cloud, allowing for real-time synchronization of data across all devices.

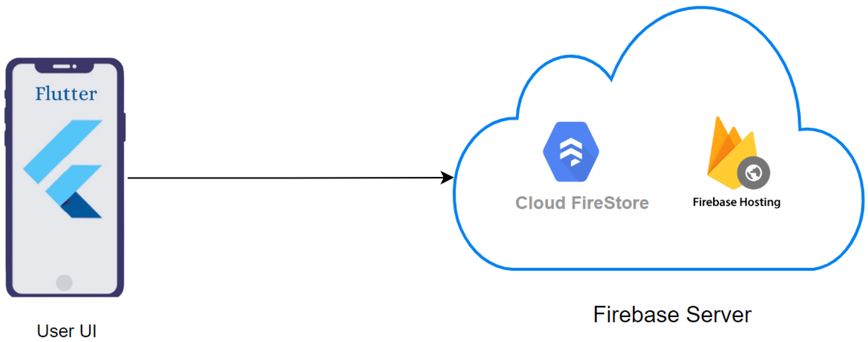

Figure 3.3: Hosting Architecture Diagram

Deployment Architecture

The deployment architecture describes the processes involved in deploying the application to users:

- **Continuous Integration/Continuous Deployment (CI/CD):** Utilizing tools like GitHub Actions or Firebase CLI to automate the deployment process, ensuring that the latest changes are reflected in the application.
- **Staging and Production Environments:** Two distinct environments where the application can be tested (staging) before being made live (production), minimizing downtime and ensuring stability.
- **User Testing and Feedback Loop:** After deployment, user feedback will be gathered to identify issues and areas for improvement, guiding future updates and iterations of the platform.

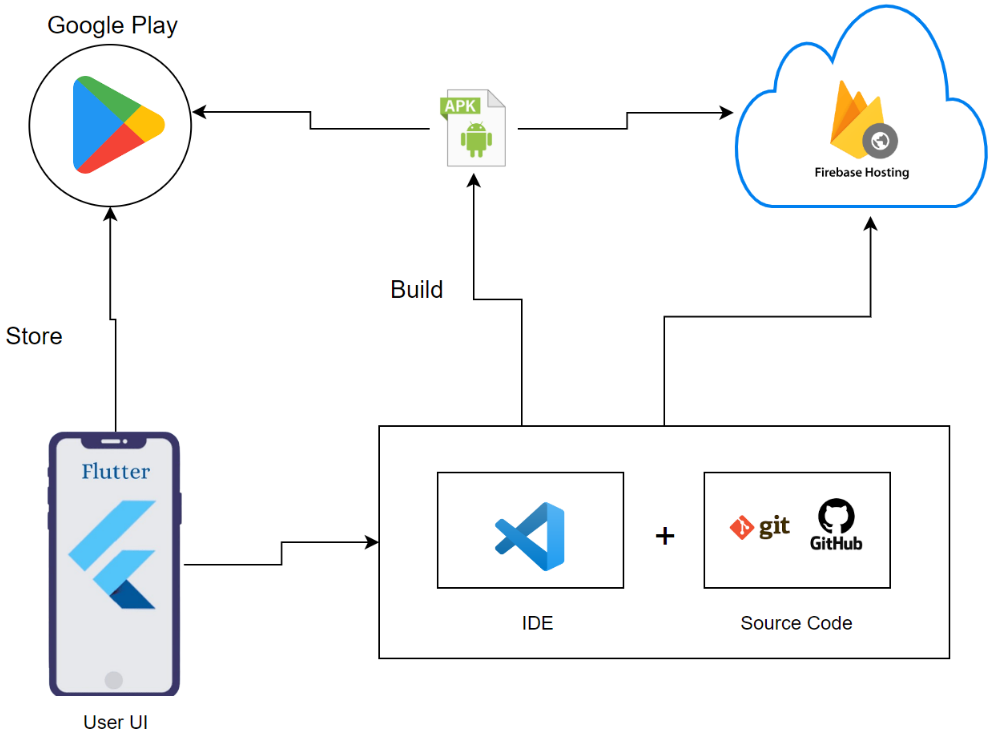

Figure 3.4: Deployment Architecture Diagram

Integration of Geolocation in the Food Donation Application

Geolocation is a critical component of our application, used to manage the positions of users and establishments (orphanages, restaurants, supermarkets) in the context of creating food donations and requests. This process relies on capturing coordinates via GPS or manual entry, ensuring high precision and flexibility for users and establishment managers.

1. **Capturing User Positions:** When creating a donation or request, the application uses GPS sensors to capture the user's current position (latitude and longitude). If necessary, the user can manually enter another location, such as when they wish to report a location different from their current one.

2. **Recording Establishment Positions:** Managers of orphanages, restaurants, and supermarkets can register their positions in the application during the sign-up process. These positions, obtained via GPS or manually entered, ensure that establishments are available for geospatial matching and visible to users looking to make donations.

3. **Storing Coordinates in the Database:** Position data, whether captured by GPS or entered manually, is stored in the Firestore database. This information is linked to the profiles of users and establishments, enabling efficient management and quick search capabilities.

4. **Displaying Locations on the Map:** All recorded positions are visualized on a map via the Google Maps API. This feature allows users to verify their location and view nearby establishments, simplifying interactions and enhancing transparency throughout the process.

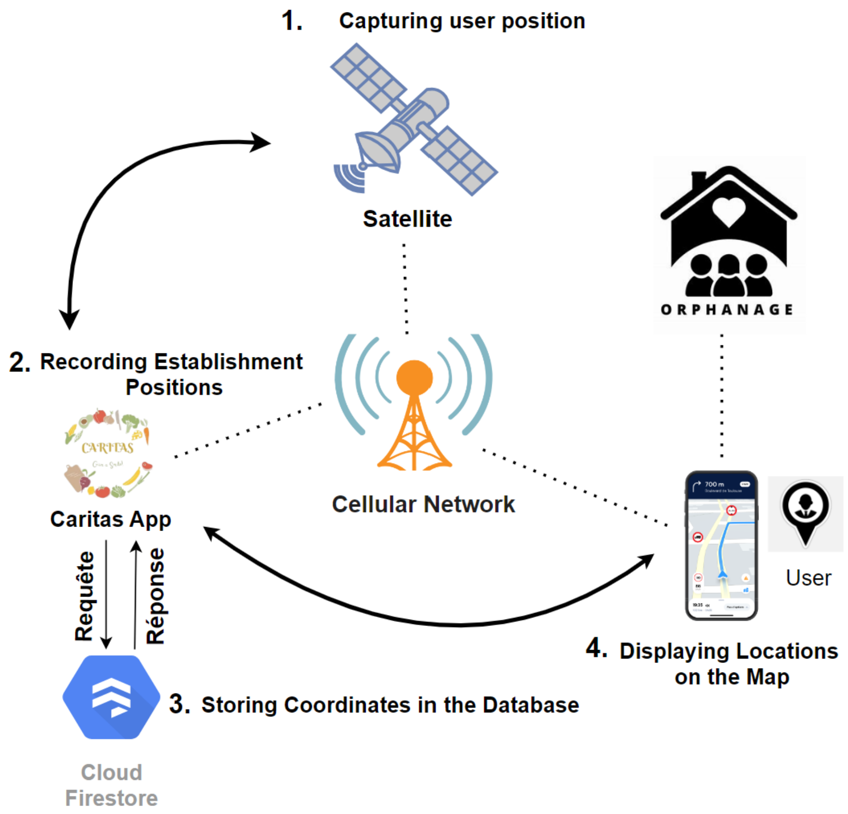

Figure 3.5: Process of Capturing and Recording Positions in the Application

3.2.4 Conception

Algorithms and Flowcharts

The development of the food donation platform required the design of various algorithms to ensure efficient matching and redistribution of surplus food. These algorithms handle tasks such as donor-recipient matching, geospatial optimization, and notification dispatch.

Interactions During Food Donation Process

This flowchart describes the process of donating food through the platform, detailing the steps from beginning to end. Here is a description of each step in the process:

- **Start** : The process begins when the donor decides to make a donation.
- **Choose Orphanage** : The donor selects an orphanage for the donation or chooses not to.
- **Is Orphanage selected and distance matches?** : A decision point where the system checks if an orphanage is selected.
  - **No** : The system displays the donation on the platform as "available to any orphanage within a geographical location near the donor."
  - **Yes** : The system notifies the selected orphanage about the donation.
- **Did Orphanage Accept Donation?** : A decision point where the system checks if the orphanage has accepted the donation.
  - **Yes** : The system proceeds to collect and validate the donation.

- **Feedback** : The donor and the orphanage provide feedback on the donation process.
- **End** : The process ends successfully with the donation being completed and validated.

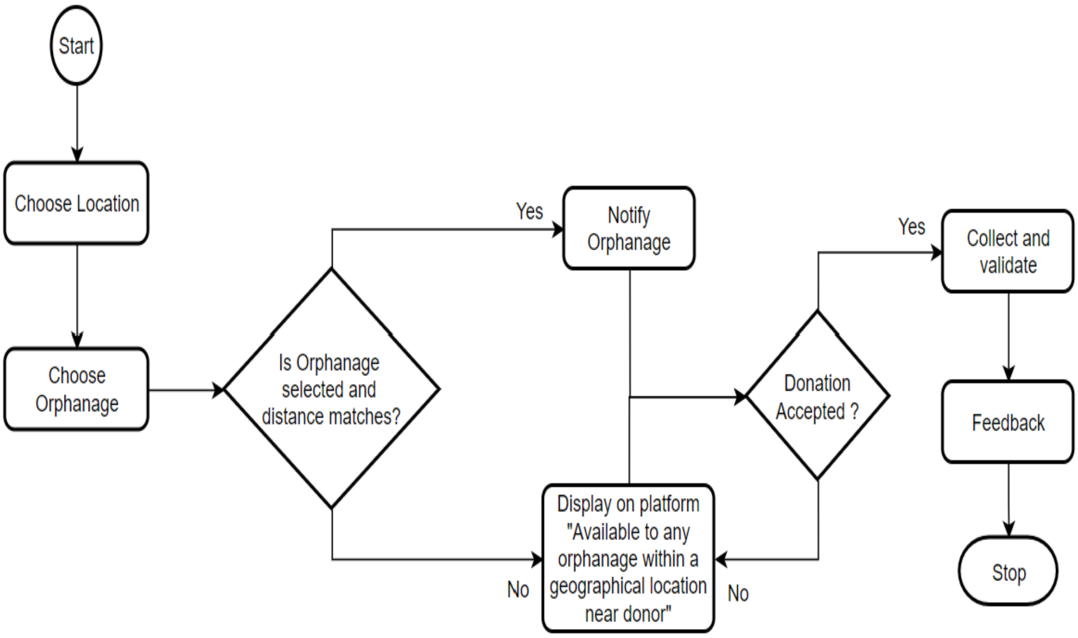

Figure 3.6: Food donation Process

Donation Creation Algorithm

The donation creation algorithm processes the following steps:

1. The user inputs details about the donation (location, type, expiration date).
2. The system saves the donation in the database.
3. If an orphanage is selected, it assigns the donation to that orphanage.
4. If no orphanage is selected, the system uses location-based matching to display the donation to users close to the collection point.

Interactions During Food Request Process

This flowchart describes the process of requesting food donations through the platform, detailing the steps from start to finish. Here is a description of each step in the process:

- **Start** : The process begins when the orphanage creates a request for donations.
- **Display on Platform** : The system displays the request as "Open to any donor within a geographical location near the orphanage."
- **Has Donor Accepted Request?** : A decision point where the system checks if a donor has accepted the request.

Algorithm 1 Donation Creation

```
Input: donationDetails (location, type, expirationDate), selectedOrphanage
Step 1: Input Donation Details
DISPLAY "Enter donation details"
donationDetails ← GET donation details from user

Step 2: Save the Donation in the Database
donationID ← DATABASE.SAVE(donationDetails)

Step 3: Assign or Match Donation
if selectedOrphanage is not NULL then
    Assign the donation to the selected orphanage
    ASSIGN donationID TO selectedOrphanage
    DISPLAY "Donation assigned to selected orphanage."
else
    No orphanage selected, perform geospatial matching
    NEARBY_USERS ← GEOLOCATION.FIND_USERS_CLOSE_TO
        (donationDetails.collectionPoint)
    DISPLAY donationID TO NEARBY_USERS
    DISPLAY "Donation displayed to nearby users."
end if
return "Donation processed successfully" =0
```

  - **No** : The system continues to display the request as "Open to any donor within a geographical location near the orphanage."
  - **Yes** : The system notifies the orphanage about the donor's acceptance.

- **Collect and Validate** : The system ensures that the donation is collected and validated by both parties.
- **Feedback** : Both the donor and the orphanage provide feedback on the donation process.
- **End** : The process ends successfully with the donation completed and validated.

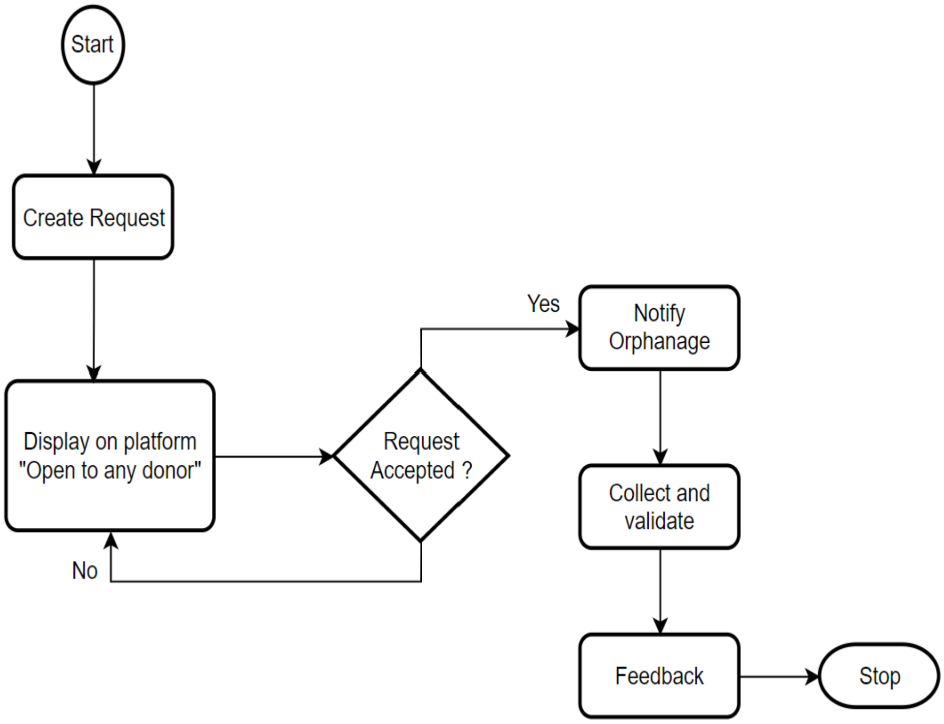

Figure 3.7: Food Request Process

Request Creation Algorithm

The request creation algorithm processes the following steps:

1. The orphanage inputs details about the requested food items (type, quantity, location).
2. The system saves the request in the database.
3. If a donor accepts the request, the system assigns the donation to that donor.
4. If no donor accepts, the system continues to display the request to nearby donors until it is fulfilled.

Algorithm 2 Request Creation Algorithm

```
Input: requestDetails (type, quantity, location)
Step 1: The orphanage inputs details about the requested food items
Step 2: The system saves the request in the database
Step 3: If a donor accepts the request
    The system assigns the donation to that donor

Step 4: If no donor accepts
    The system continues to display the request to nearby donors until it is fulfilled

return "Request processed successfully" =0
```

Marketing Feature: Donor Recognition

The platform also includes a marketing feature to recognize frequent donors, particularly supermarkets and restaurants. Donors who contribute more than five times are highlighted on the homepage, and their image is displayed in a carousel.

Donor Recognition Mechanism

This flowchart describes the process of tracking user donations and displaying advertisements based on their donation activity. Here is a description of each step in the process:

- **Start** : The process begins when the user makes a donation.
- **Verify Number of Donations** : The system checks how many donations the user has made.
- **Is Number of Donations >= 5?** : A decision point where the system checks if the user has made five or more donations.
  - **No** : The system allows the user to continue making donations.
  - **Yes** : The system displays the user's advertisement on the platform.
- **Is Days = 7?** : A decision point where the system checks if the advertisement has been displayed for three days.
  - **Yes** : The system removes the advertisement from the platform.
- **Feedback** : The user provides feedback on their experience with the donation and advertisement process.
- **End** : The process concludes either with continuous donations or the advertisement being removed.

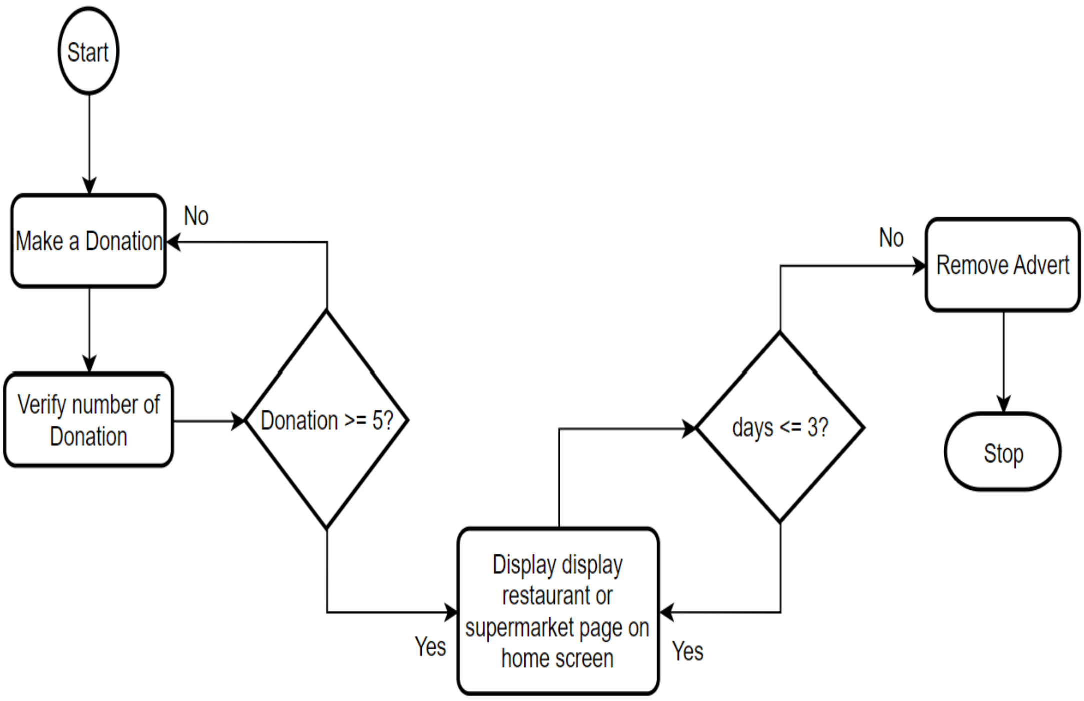

Figure 3.8: Advert Process

Donor Recognition Algorithm

The advertisement process algorithm handles the following steps:

1. The user makes a donation.
2. The system checks if the user has made at least 5 donations.
3. If yes, the system displays the user's advertisement for 3 days.
4. After 3 days, the system removes the advertisement from the platform.

Algorithm 3 Advertisement Process Algorithm

```
Input: userDonationCount, donationDetails
Step 1: The user makes a donation
Step 2: The system checks if the user has made at least 5 donations
if userDonationCount ≥ 5 then
    Step 3: The system displays the user's advertisement for 3 days
    Wait for 3 days
    Step 4: After 3 days, the system removes the advertisement from the platform
else
    The system does not display the user's advertisement
end if
return "Advertisement processed successfully" =0
```

Geospatial Matching System

Geospatial Matching refers to the process of aligning donations with recipients based on their geographic location. This system ensures that donations are efficiently distributed to orphanages or individuals that are geographically close to the donor, thereby optimizing logistics and minimizing time and transportation costs.

Components of the Geospatial Matching System

- **Geolocation Data:** The system collects real-time geographic data from donors and recipients using GPS coordinates or location-based services.
- **Proximity Calculation:** It calculates the distance between donors and recipients, identifying the closest orphanages or individuals to each donation.
- **Donation Matching:** Based on proximity, the system automatically matches donations to the nearest available orphanages or recipients.

Process Flow of Geospatial Matching

1. A donor creates a new donation on the platform.
2. The system captures the geographic location of the donor.
3. The system calculates the proximity between the donor and orphanages or recipients in the database.
4. The system matches the donation to the nearest orphanage, ensuring timely delivery.
5. Notifications are sent to nearby orphanages informing them of the available donation.

Algorithm 4 Proximity Calculation (Distance Matrix API)

Input: donorLocation (lat_1, lon_1), recipientLocations[] (lat_2, lon_2) for each recipient
Step 1: Initialize *closestDistance* to a large value
Step 2: **For each** recipientLocation in recipientLocations[]:
    Step 2.1: Calculate the distance using the Distance Matrix API:
        $distanceBetweenUs$ = calculateDistance(lat_1, lon_1, lat_2, lon_2)
    Step 2.2: **If** $distanceBetweenUs < closestDistance$, **then**:
        Update *closestDistance* and store the corresponding recipient
Step 3: Return the recipient with the *closestDistance* =0

Benefits of Geospatial Matching

- **Efficiency:** Geospatial matching ensures that donations are distributed efficiently by connecting donors with the closest recipients.
- **Timeliness:** This approach reduces the time taken for perishable food items to reach orphanages, helping to prevent food waste.
- **Cost-Effective:** By minimizing transportation distances, the system helps lower logistical and transportation costs.

Visual Representation

Figure 3.9 illustrates the process of geospatial matching, where donations from supermarkets or restaurants are matched to nearby orphanages based on their geographic location.

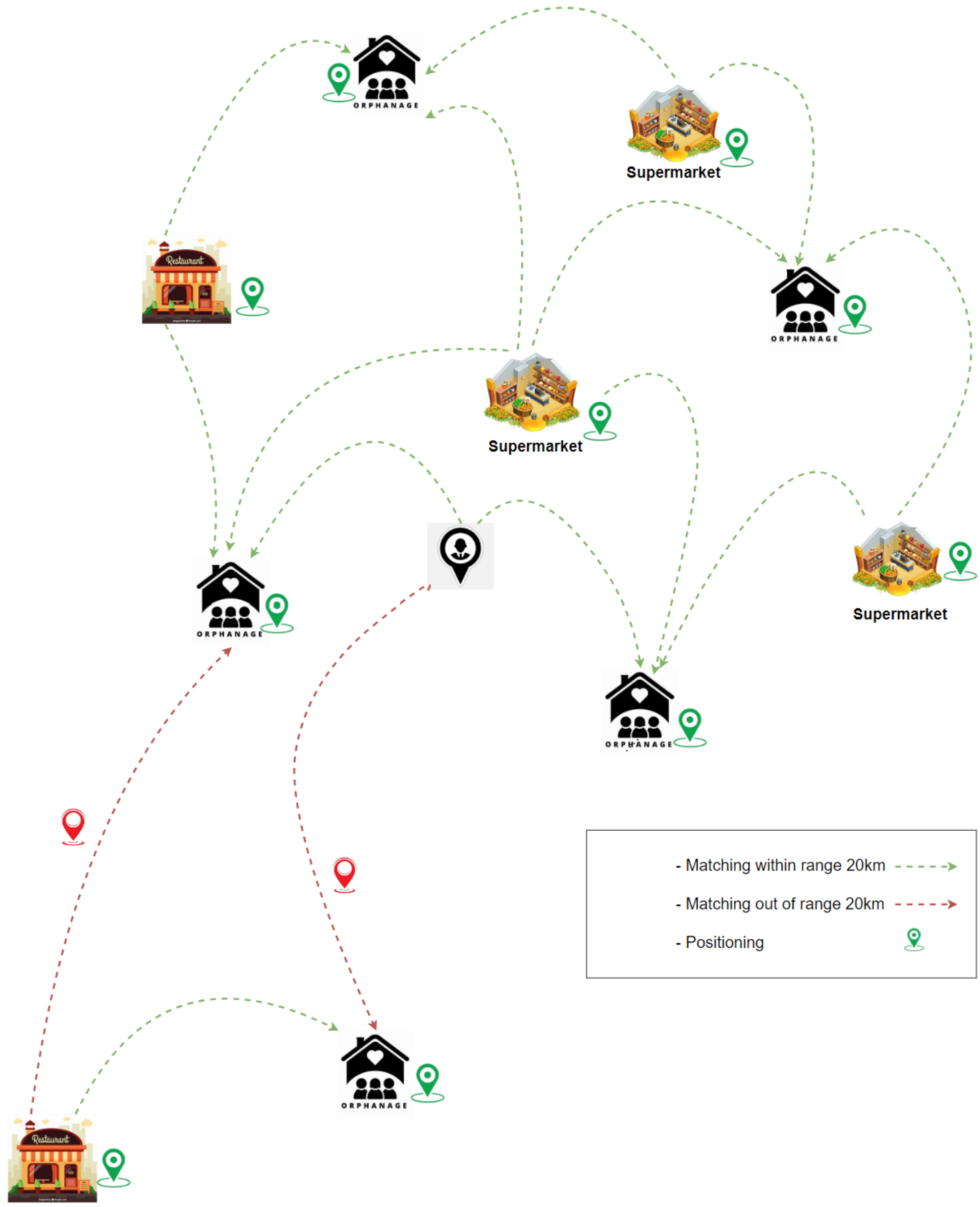

Figure 3.9: Geospatial Matching System Flow

3.2.5 Transition

- Validation testing to confirm alignment with specified requirements and stakeholder expectations.
  - Conduct thorough testing across various modules to ensure all functionalities meet the requirements outlined in the project.
  - Collaborate with stakeholders for feedback and adjustments before the final release.
- Preparation for deployment, including end-user training, support material creation, and knowledge transfer sessions.
  - Design and implement comprehensive training programs for end-users to ensure smooth adoption of the system.
  - Create easy-to-follow documentation, FAQs, and support materials for user reference post-deployment.

  - Organize knowledge transfer sessions with support and development teams for smooth handover of system knowledge.

- Initial support and maintenance to address post-deployment issues and optimize the platform based on real-world use.

  - Provide rapid-response troubleshooting during the initial phase after deployment to fix unforeseen bugs.
  - Conduct performance optimization and refine features based on user feedback and operational data.
  - Monitor and ensure the long-term scalability and security of the platform post-deployment, with scheduled maintenance.

The analysis and design of the platform have provided a clear roadmap for implementing a solution that meets the project's objectives. By identifying user requirements and incorporating advanced features like real-time donation tracking and geospatial matching, we have created a robust and scalable system architecture. This foundation will ensure that the platform efficiently addresses food waste by facilitating seamless connections between donors and recipients. The next phase will focus on the system's implementation based on the design established in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter outlines the technical and financial aspects of implementing the mobile food donation application based on the geospatial matching system, detailing the hardware and software used, the deployment stages of the model, as well as the costs associated with the project.

4.1 Essential Software Tools

Selecting the right tools is essential for the successful development of the food waste reduction and donation platform. The chosen tools were selected based on their ability to meet the functional, technical, and performance requirements of the project. Below is a detailed list of the tools and their justification:

4.1.1 Flutter

Chosen for its cross-platform capabilities, Flutter allows the development of a single application that works seamlessly on both Android and iOS devices.

- It ensures an attractive and responsive user interface with a modern design.
- Implement features like real-time food donation tracking, user login, and push notifications for donors and recipients.
- Ensure responsive design elements that adapt across different devices and screen sizes.

A piece of code demonstrating the implementation of this tool is presented in the appendix section.

4.1.2 Dart

The primary programming language for Flutter, Dart was selected for its efficient compilation and suitability for modern application development.

- Enable fast application performance and smooth code execution across both Android and iOS platforms.
- Ensure ease of development with syntax and structure designed for modern app development.
- Provide efficient performance and quick compilation for quick iterations and testing during the app development process.

A piece of code demonstrating the implementation of this tool is presented in the appendix section.

4.1.3 Firebase

Firebase was selected as the backend solution for its real-time database functionality, making it ideal for handling dynamic data exchanges between donors and recipients.

- Manage user authentication to ensure secure login/signup processes using Firebase Authentication.
- Simplify deployment and hosting of backend services for the mobile platform.
- Facilitate easy integration of cloud-based functions, such as notifications and data synchronization.

A piece of code demonstrating the implementation of this tool is presented in the appendix section.

4.1.4 Google Maps API

Google Maps API offers accurate geolocation services, which enable you to track a user's location in real- time, whether it's a donor or a recipient.

- Enable geospatial functionality to display the location of donors and recipients on an interactive map.
- Implement a matching algorithm that uses location data to pair nearby donors with recipients.
- Allow users to view available donation locations based on proximity to their current location(Distance Matrix API).

A piece of code demonstrating the implementation of this tool is presented in the appendix section.

4.2 Workspace Presentation

From the analysis phase of functional and non-functional requirements, through software implementation to deployment, we used several tools (software, hardware).

Hardware Environment

We can mention:

- **A Surface Book 2 laptop**, used for application development and testing. Its main specifications are:
  - Intel Core i7-9750H processor;
  - 16GB DDR4 RAM;
  - NVIDIA GeForce GTX 1650 graphics card;
  - 512GB SSD storage;
- **An Samsung Android smartphone**, used for deployment and testing of the application's mobile features.
- **A Wi-Fi router** for internet connection required for application development and deployment.

Software Environment

- **Android Studio**: IDE used for Android app development.
- **Visual Studio Code**: Code editor used for general development.
- **Visual Studio**: Tool used for testing REST API.
- **Git**: Version control system used for managing source code.
- **Firebase Console**: Web-based platform for managing Firebase projects, databases, authentication, and other services.
- **Draw.io**: Diagramming tool used for creating various system architecture diagrams and flowcharts.

Version Control Tools

To version our project, we used **Git**, a decentralized version control system. For hosting our code, we opted for **GitHub**[1], an online platform for hosting Git repositories. The complete source code for this project can be found at the following link: GitHub Repository[2].

4.3 Cost of Realization

Here, we will present the different costs that made it possible to carry out and deploy our project. These costs are distributed as follows:

4.3.1 Hardware Cost

Hardware costs include the purchase of testing devices, development computers, and any other equipment needed for application development. These costs have been carefully budgeted to ensure maximum efficiency.

Description	Quantity	Unit Cost (XAF)	Total Cost (XAF)
Windows Machine	1	500,000	500,000
Mobile Phone	1	90,000	90,000
Internet Connection	1	60,000	60,000
Modem	1	20,000	20,000
Screen	1	150,000	150,000
		Total Material Cost (XAF)	**820,000**

Table 4.1: Cost of Materials for the Food Waste Donation Project

4.3.2 Development Cost

Development costs include developer salaries, software license purchases, training fees, and any other costs related to the design, development, and testing of the application.

[1] Gudapati Greeshma, *Git and GitHub — Absolute User Manual for Novice*, 2021, `https://medium.com/cosc/git-and-github-absolute-user-manual-for-novice-part-1-553a29ea43d3`

[2] Ngopnang Laure, *Extract Code: Food Waste Reduction and Donation Platform*, 2024, `https://github.com/gabiLaure/Food-waste-reduction-and-donation-platform-`

Project Stage	Days / Developer	Total Cost (XAF)
Requirements Analysis	15	150,000
Design	20	150,000
Development	50	750,000
Testing and Bug Fixing	25	150,000
Documentation	12	100,000
User Training	10	150,000
Maintenance and Support	10	100,000
Total Development Cost (XAF)		**1,550,000**

Table 4.2: Cost of Development Labor

4.3.3 Total Project Cost

The total project cost is the sum of hardware and development costs. It is an overall estimate of the expenses associated with the creation and deployment of our Food waste Reduction and Donation Platform.

Item	Cost (XAF)
Materials	820,000
Development	1,550,000
Total Cost	2,370,000

Table 4.3: Cost Summary for the "Food Waste Reduction and Donation" Project

The implementation of the food waste reduction and donation platform successfully translates the design into a working system that meets the project's objectives. By leveraging modern development frameworks and tools, we have created a scalable, efficient, and intuitive platform. The integration of core functionalities, including geospatial matching and real-time notifications, enables the platform to facilitate seamless food donations. With the implementation complete, the system is now ready for testing and optimization to ensure its efficiency and reliability in real-world scenarios.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

This chapter presents the outcomes derived from the implementation of the Caritas platform. Through comprehensive testing and analysis, we assess the system's performance, functionality, and effectiveness in tackling the challenges of food waste management and donation coordination. Key metrics such as response times, user satisfaction, and the accuracy of geospatial matching are evaluated to determine the platform's success in meeting its objectives. Additionally, feedback from users and stakeholders is analyzed to evaluate the platform's impact on food donation processes and its potential to enhance food security within the community.

5.1 Tests

In this section, we outline the various testing methodologies employed to ensure the functionality and reliability of the food waste reduction and donation platform.

5.1.1 Test Scenarios

Several test scenarios were defined to validate the key functionalities of the platform:

1. **User Registration and Login** : Verification of the registration process for new users and login for existing users.

2. **Food Donation Listing** : Validation of the correct display of available food donations, including details of each donation.

3. **Donation Management** : Testing user management of food donations, including the ability to add, update, and remove donation offers.

4. **Recipient Matching** : Verification of the process for matching donors with recipients, including the management of recipient requests.

5. **Comments and Ratings** : Checking the functionality allowing users to comment on and rate donation experiences.

6. **Location and Route Tracking** : Testing location features for food donations and route calculation for donors and recipients.

7. **Integrated Messaging** : Validation of the messaging functionality allowing users to communicate with each other regarding donations.

8. **Profile Management** : Verification of user profile management, including updating personal information and donation history.

5.1.2 Testing Methodology

To ensure the robustness and reliability of the platform, we implemented a comprehensive testing strategy that includes unit tests to check each component, integration tests to examine interactions between modules, and end-to-end tests to simulate complete user scenarios, thus replicating real user experiences.

Types of Tests Performed

This section presents the different types of tests carried out to validate the proper functioning of the system.

Unit Tests: Unit tests check the correct operation of each individual component of the system, such as functions or classes. For example, it is essential to test the donation creation function to ensure that the donation is properly saved in the database.

Integration Tests: Integration tests aim to verify that the different parts of the system work correctly together. A relevant example would be testing the donation creation process and the notification sending to an orphanage in one sequence, ensuring that when a donation is created, nearby orphanages are properly notified.

Example: Ensure that when a donation is created, nearby orphanages are notified correctly and in a timely manner.

Functional Tests: Functional tests are end-to-end tests that simulate real-world usage scenarios to verify the overall functionality of the system. For example, in a scenario where a user creates a donation, an orphanage accepts it, and the user receives a notification, the entire process must be tested.

Functional Scenario:

1. The user creates a food donation listing.
2. The system saves the donation in the database.
3. The system sends a notification to registered orphanages.
4. An interested orphanage accepts the donation.
5. The user receives a confirmation of the donation acceptance.

5.1.3 Test Results

The test results demonstrated that the Caritas platform operates correctly under normal usage conditions. The functionalities of registration, login, donation management, and recipient matching all passed successfully. Users were able to comment on and rate donations, and the messaging feature enabled smooth communication among donors and recipients. Location and route tracking tests showed that routes were calculated accurately, assisting users in managing food donations effectively. Minor adjustments were identified and will be implemented before the final launch to further enhance the user experience.

5.2 Analysis of Results

This section is critical for demonstrating the efficiency and reliability of the developed system. It involves a thorough analysis of the system's performance under real and simulated conditions. The results obtained must be measured, compared to the defined objectives, and validated.

5.2.1 Performance Analysis

Response Time

The *response time* is a key metric to measure the responsiveness of the application. It is the duration between when a user sends a request (e.g., creating a donation) and when they receive a response (e.g., confirmation or when the orphanage receives the request).
For this analysis, we focus on two main scenarios:

- **Donation creation**: The time it takes for a donation to be recorded in the database and made visible to orphanages.
- **Notification dispatch**: The time taken for a notification to be sent to the orphanage once the donation is validated.

Results:

- **Average donation creation time**: 2 seconds. This result includes the time required to interact with the database (Firebase), validate input information, and confirm the registration.
- **Average notification dispatch time**: 1.5 seconds. This time includes the transmission of the request via real-time messaging services (Firebase Cloud Messaging) and the reception of the notification by the orphanage.

Analysis:

- The results show that the system is *fast and responsive*. The 2-second delay for creating a donation is acceptable for an end-user and ensures a smooth experience.
- The 1.5-second notification dispatch ensures that orphanages are quickly informed about available donations, increasing the system's efficiency.

Potential Optimizations:

- **Caching static data**, such as user information, to further reduce response times when creating donations.
- Improve the **optimization of database queries** to minimize latency.

Results:

- **User satisfaction score**: 92% of users rated the app as *easy to use* and found it *highly effective* in facilitating donations.
- **Positive feedback**: Users appreciated the donation visibility for nearby users and the ease of selecting specific orphanages, contributing to an overall smooth experience.

Analysis:

- The high user satisfaction score indicates that the application oooh meets user expectations in terms of ease of use and functionality.
- Positive feedback on the location-based visibility feature reinforces the efficiency of the system in ensuring donations reach the right people promptly.

Potential Improvements:

- **Enhanced user interaction**: Incorporating more features like donation tracking and personalized notifications for nearby users could further increase user engagement.
- **Feedback improvements**: Refining the feedback collection process by adding more specific questions could help gather deeper insights into user experiences and areas for improvement.

5.2.2 Presentation of Results

The results obtained from various iterations have been captured in images and will be presented below.

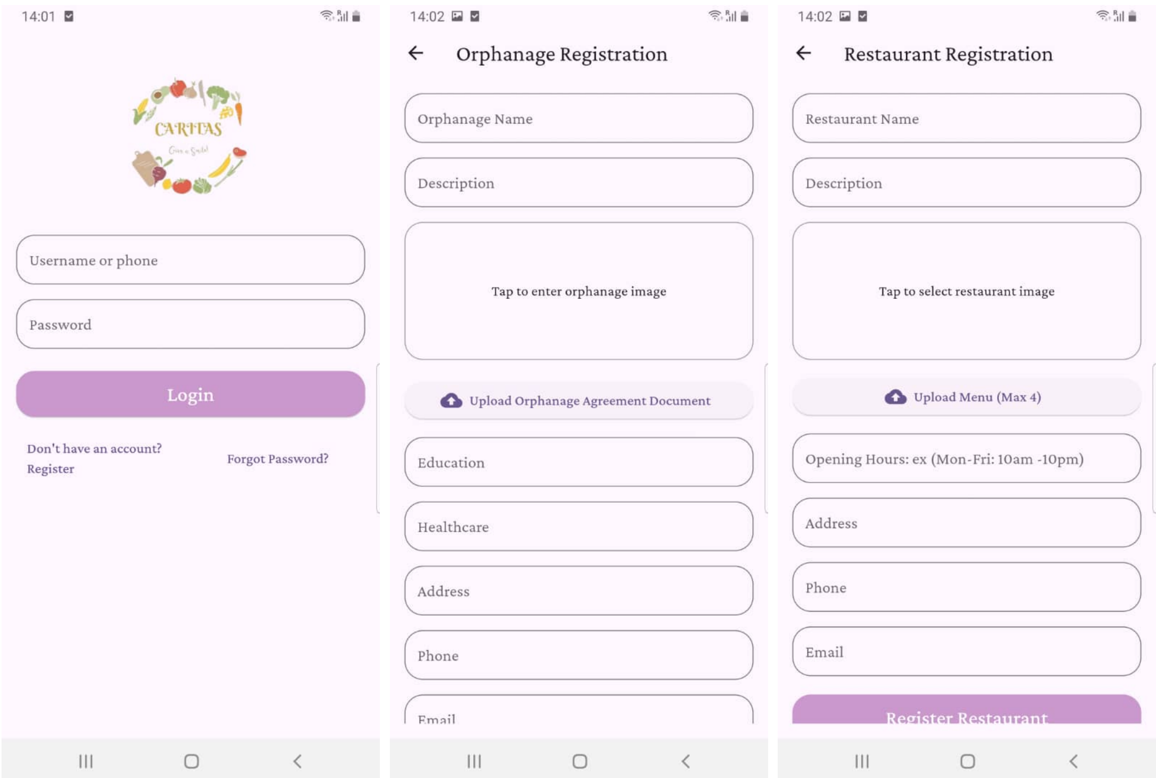

Figure 5.1: Login and registration page.

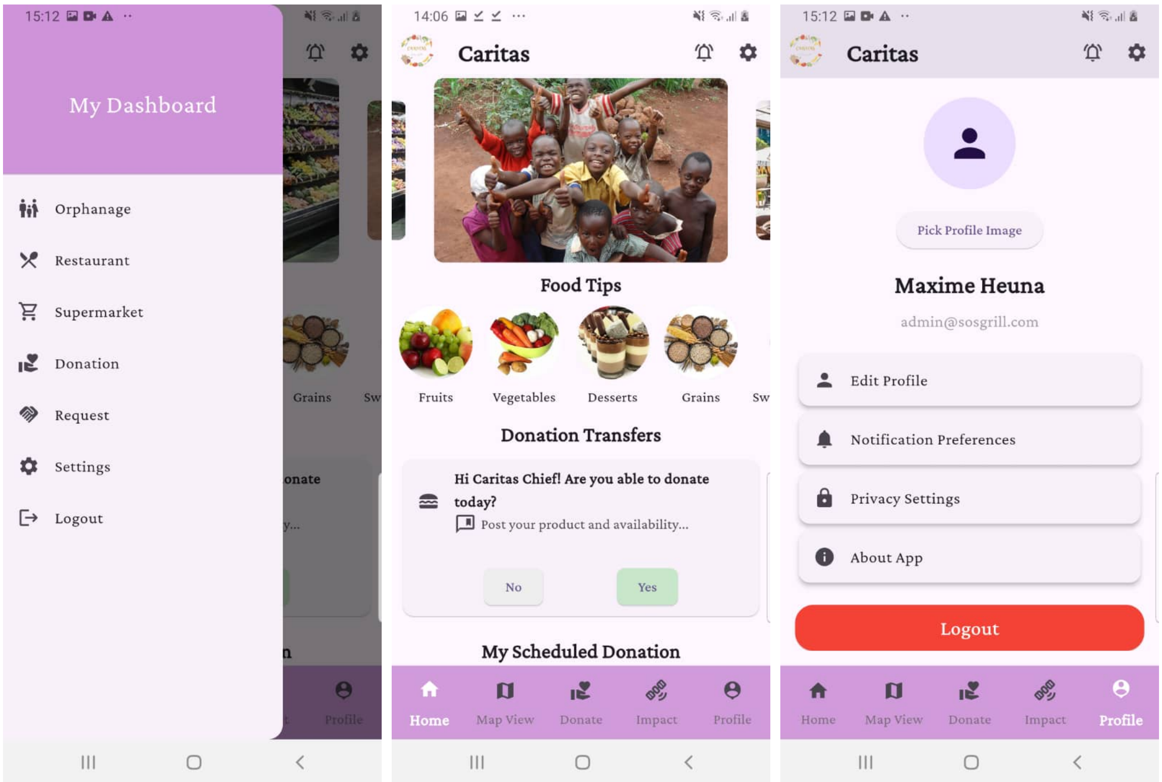

Figure 5.2: Home page.

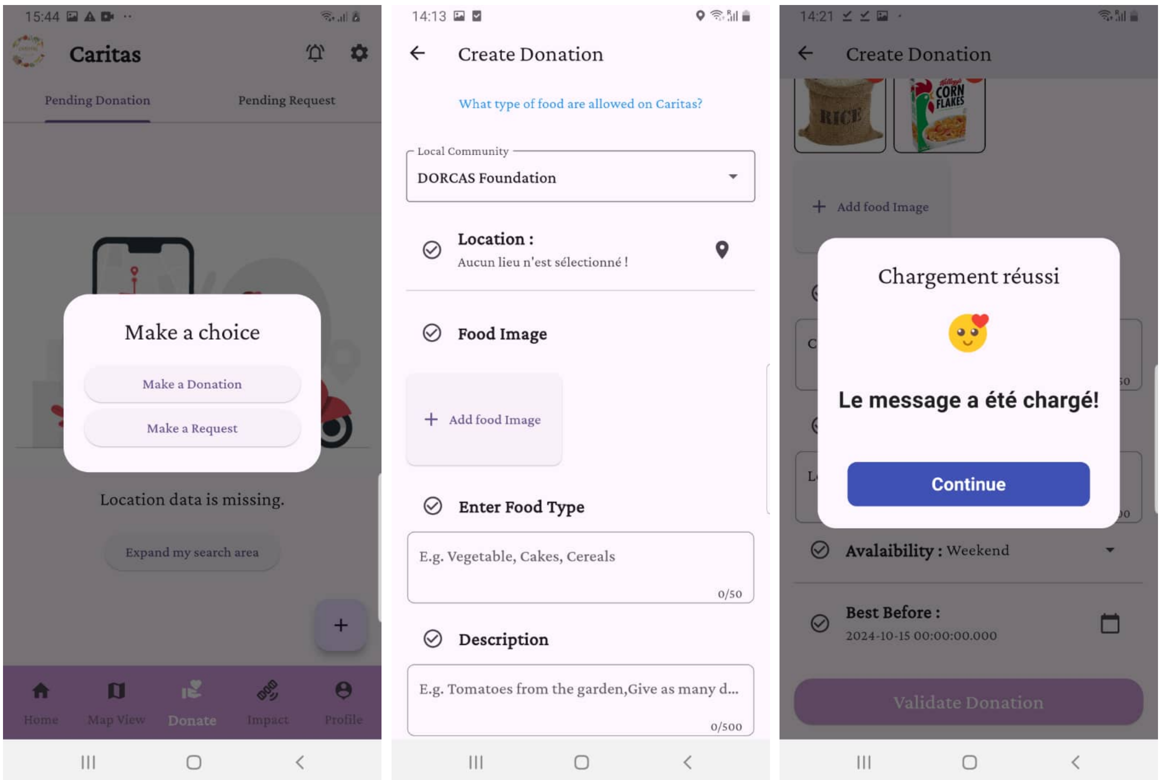

Figure 5.3: Donation pages.

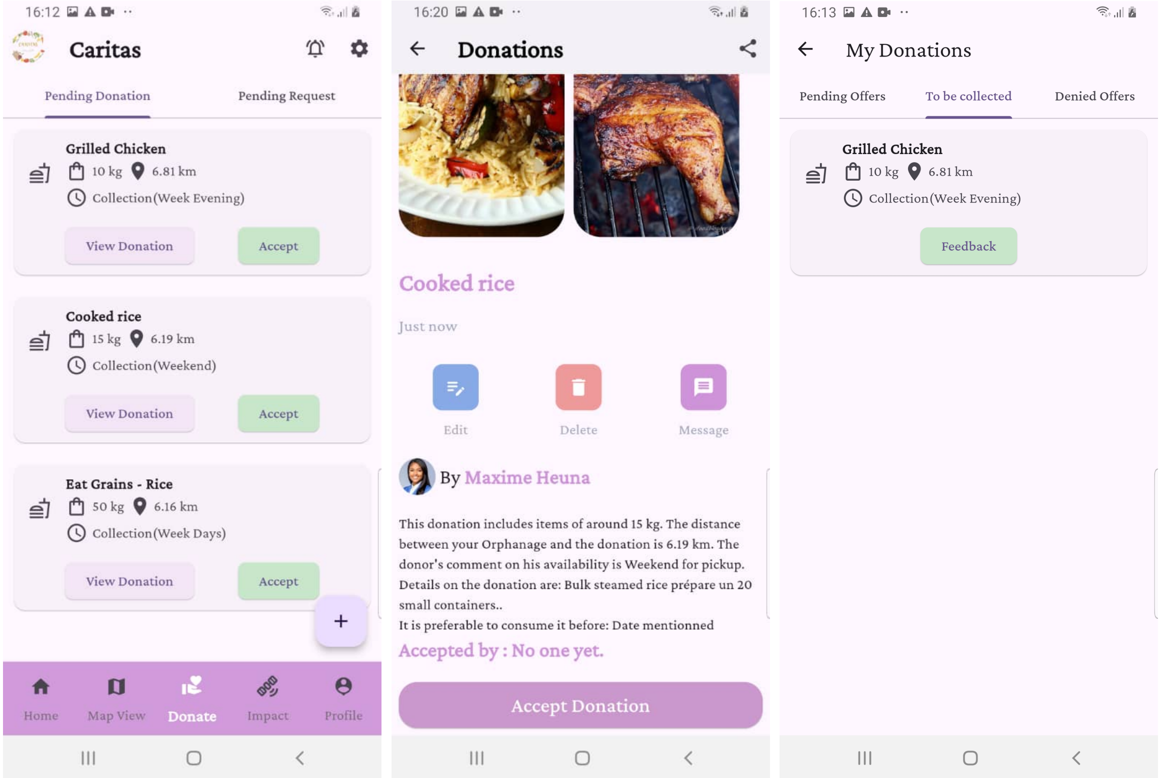

Figure 5.4: View Donation.

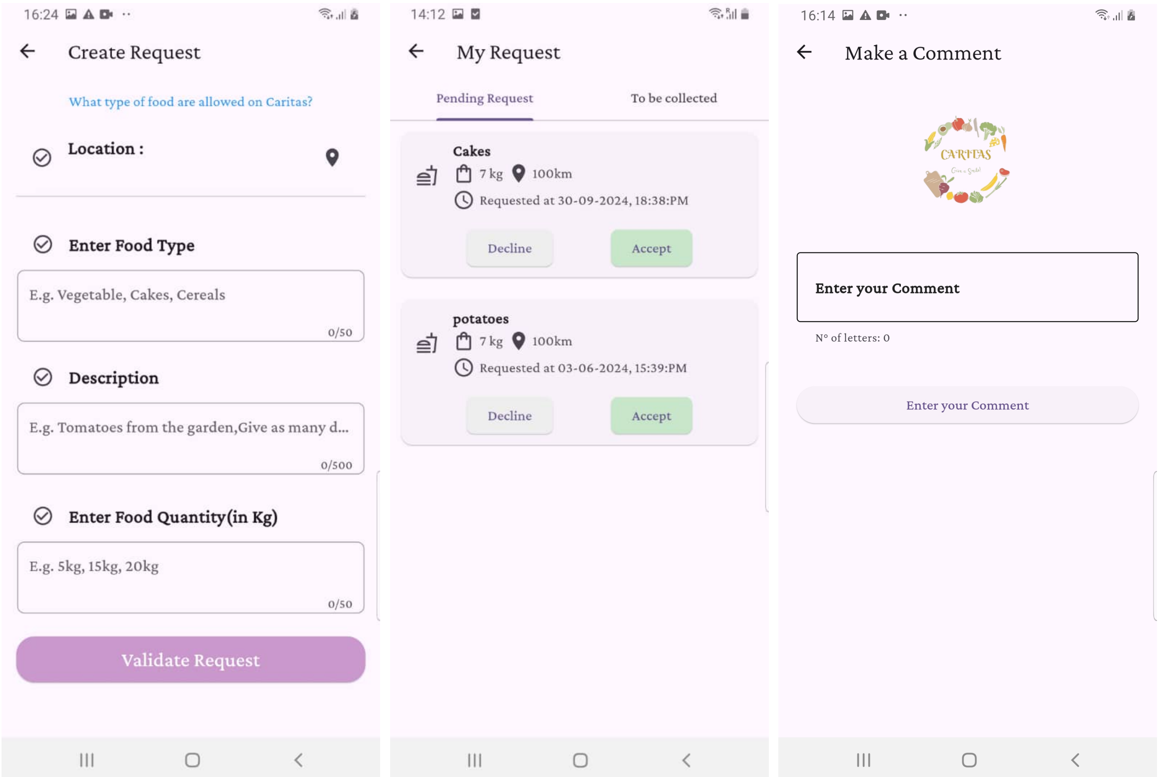

Figure 5.5: Request Donation.

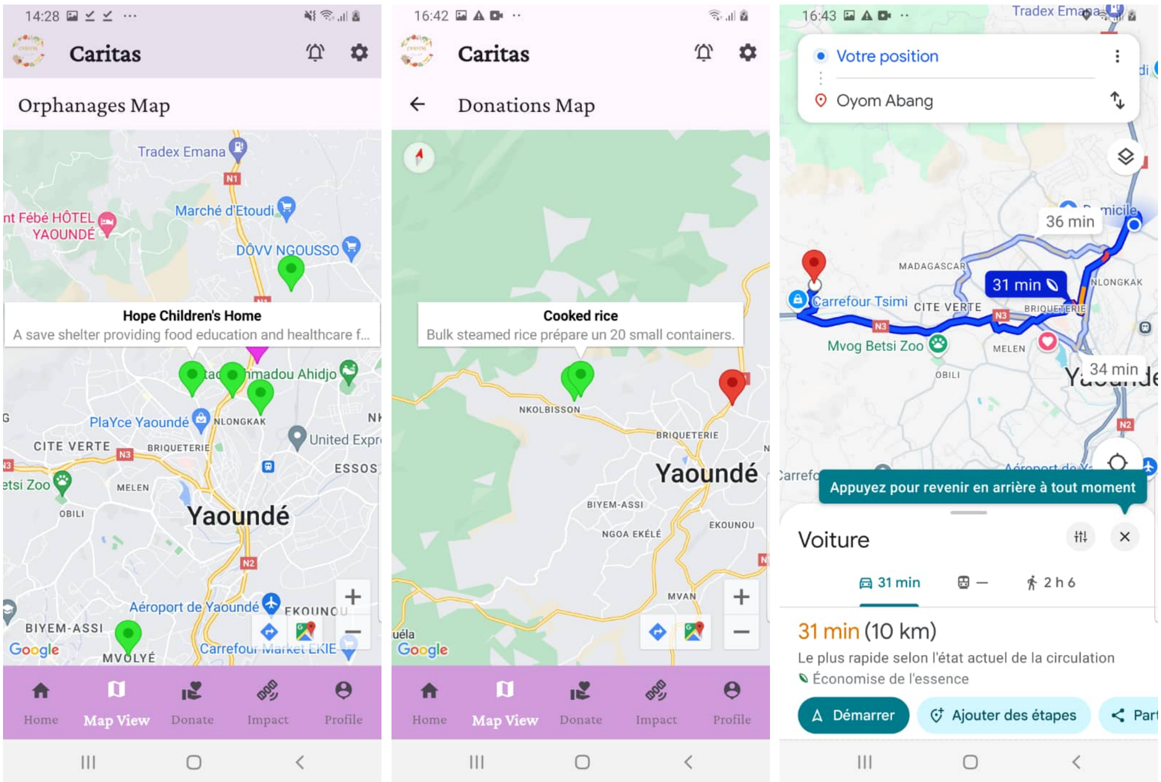

Figure 5.6: Map View

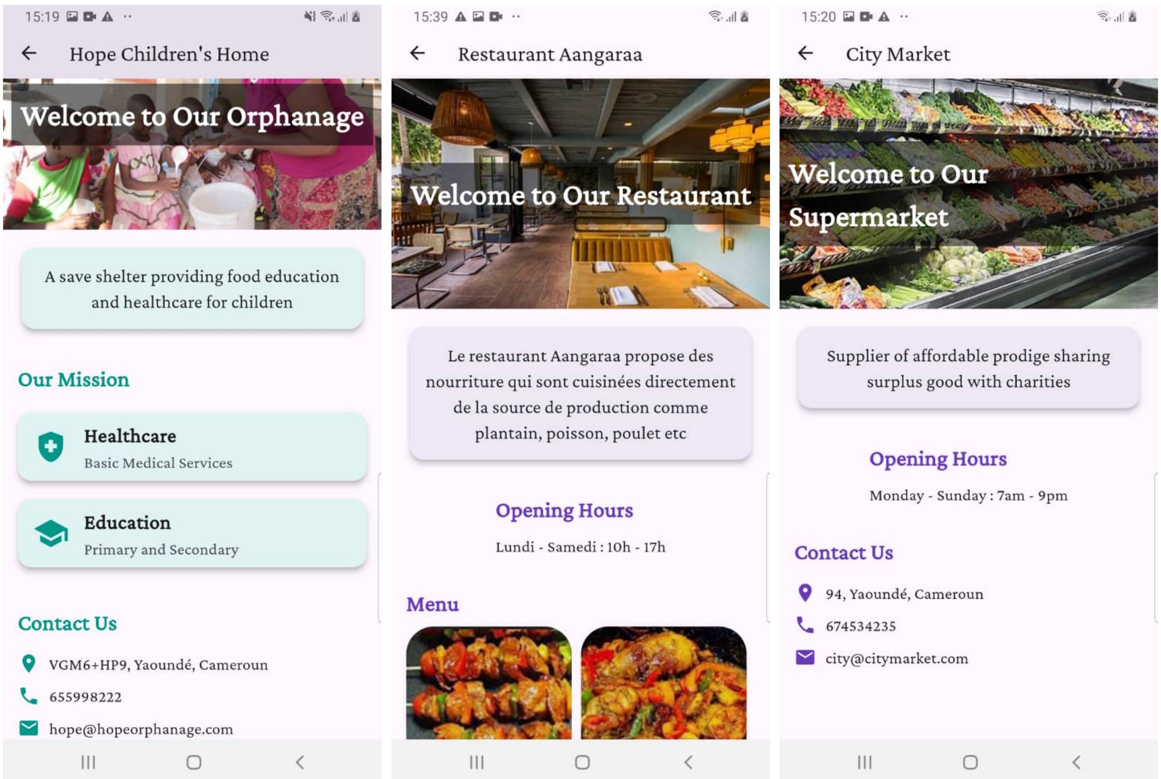

Figure 5.7: Profile Pages.

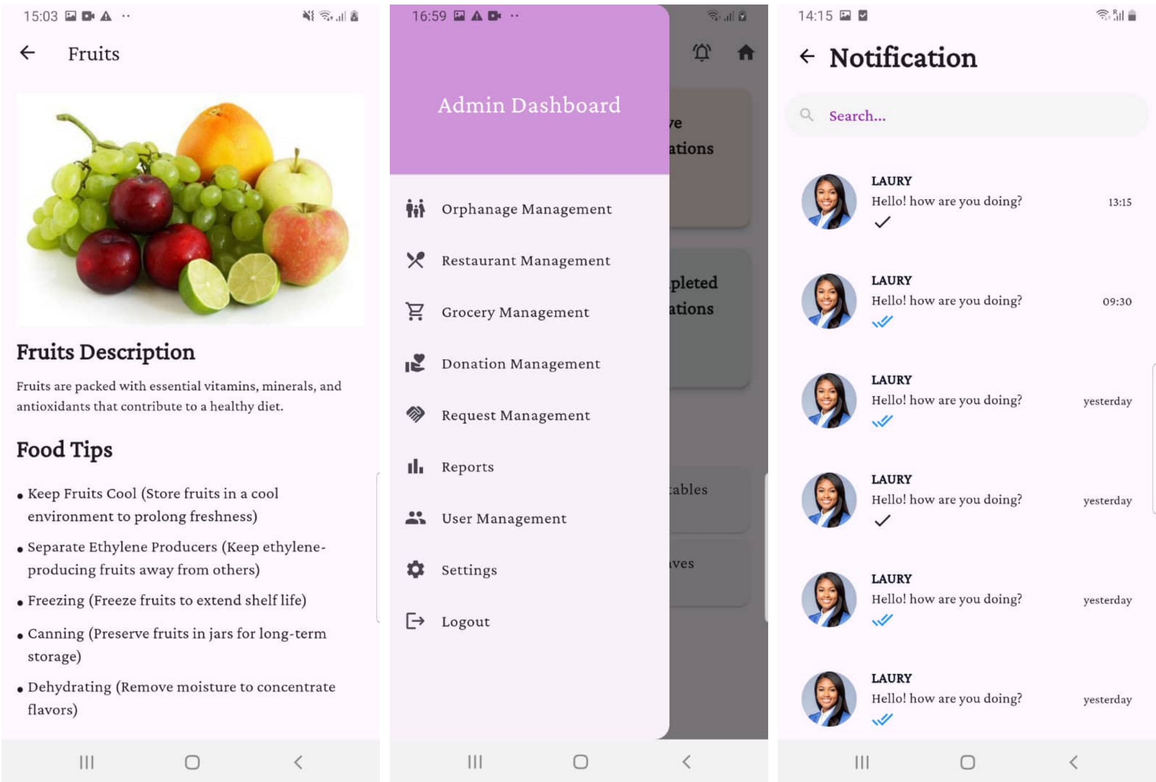

Figure 5.8: Other Pages.

The testing and evaluation of Caritas demonstrate its effectiveness in streamlining the food donation process and addressing food waste. The analysis of system performance highlights fast response times and reliable geospatial matching, which enable timely connections between donors and recipients. Feedback from users indicates a high level of satisfaction, emphasizing the platform's user-friendly design and its impactful features. Overall, these findings confirm that the platform not only achieves the initial project goals but also has the potential to drive significant positive change in reducing food insecurity and promoting sustainable practices within the community.

CONCLUSION

This project aimed to design and develop a platform to address food waste by connecting surplus food from restaurants and supermarkets with orphanages and individuals in need. By creating an efficient and user-friendly solution, we sought to reduce food waste while fostering meaningful connections between donors and recipients. Through rigorous needs analysis, a robust platform architecture, and the use of modern technologies such as Flutter for the frontend and Firebase for backend services, we developed a platform integrating features like food donation management, recipient matching, and user communication. Additionally, we conducted comprehensive testing, including unit, integration, and end-to-end tests, ensuring the quality and reliability of the application. The successful deployment of the platform showcased its effectiveness in managing donations and facilitating connections, meeting the project's objectives.

Despite our achievements, several areas for future improvement have been identified, including expanding the platform to new geographical markets, enhancing user engagement with advanced features like analytics and notifications, integrating with social media and communication tools, and refining the mobile application for better usability. Scalability and performance optimization present opportunities to support increased usage. With these prospects, our platform demonstrates significant potential for growth and continuous improvement, validating its feasibility and impact in reducing food waste through geospatial matching.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX

A.1 Main Content

This section serves as a detailed overview of the supporting materials provided in the appendix, offering insight into the structural and operational components that make up the Food Donation Platform. In the appendix, various key resources have been included, such as UML diagrams and code snippets, which not only represent the architecture and the core processes but also provide clarity about the way different elements of the system interact. The goal of this section is to give a contextual understanding of the diagrams and code snippets that illustrate how the platform was designed and implemented.

A.1.1 Purpose of Supporting Materials

The supporting materials presented in this appendix aim to provide a thorough understanding of the platform's design, highlighting the underlying architecture, functionalities, and the interactions between different components of the system. These materials are crucial for:

- Demonstrating how the system has been modeled using UML diagrams to showcase static and dynamic behavior.
- Offering insights into specific code implementations through code snippets to highlight key features of the platform.
- Clarifying the connection between different entities such as Users, Donations, and Orphanages, along with their respective processes.

By analyzing these resources, readers will gain a deeper understanding of both the system's conceptual design and its technical implementation.

A.2 UML Diagrams

In this section, we present the UML diagrams that illustrate the structure and design of the system.

A.2.1 Use Case Diagram

Here is the Use Case diagram, which describes the interaction between users (donors and recipients) and the system.

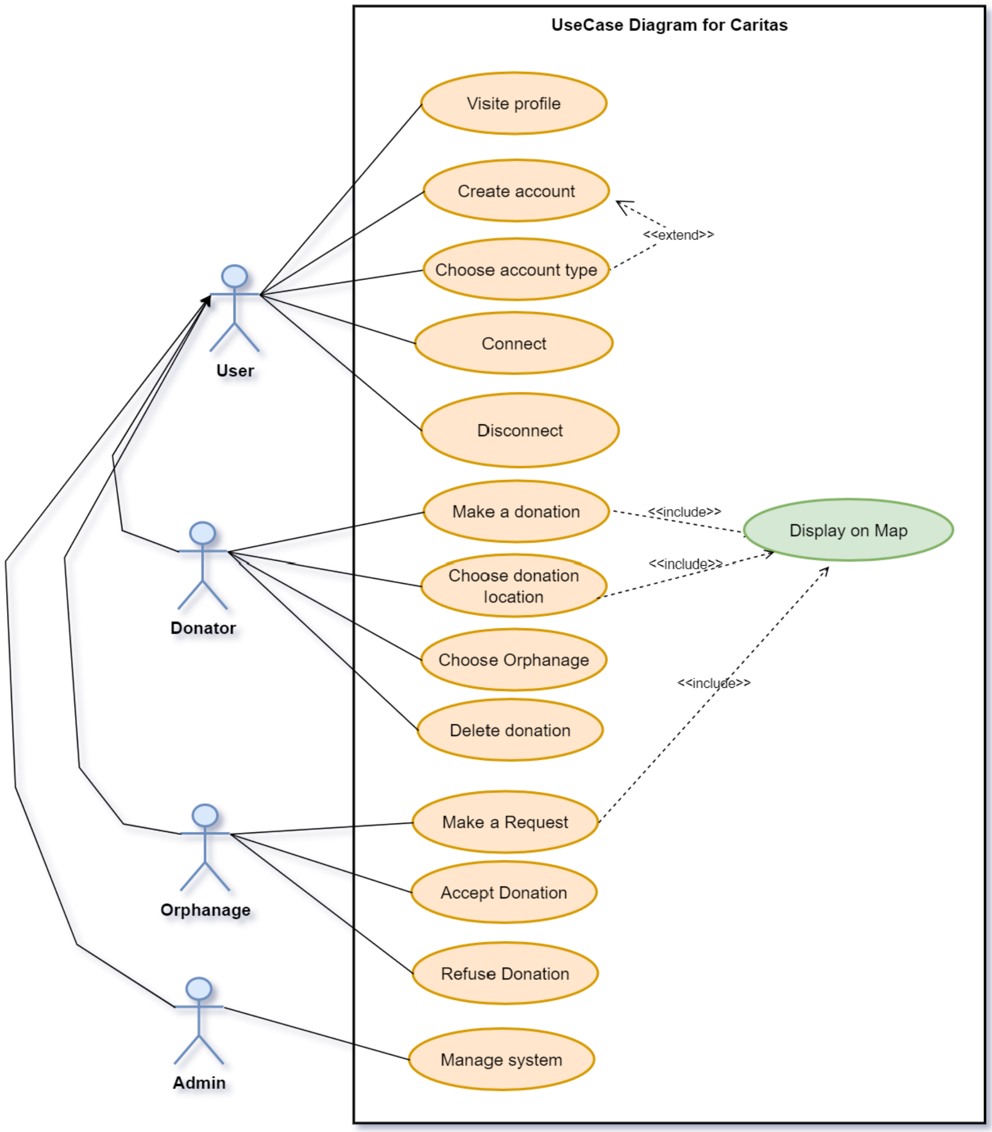

Figure A.1: Use Case Diagram for the Food Waste Donation Platform

A.2.2 Class Diagram

Below is the Class Diagram that shows the relationships between different classes in the platform, such as User, Donation, and Location.

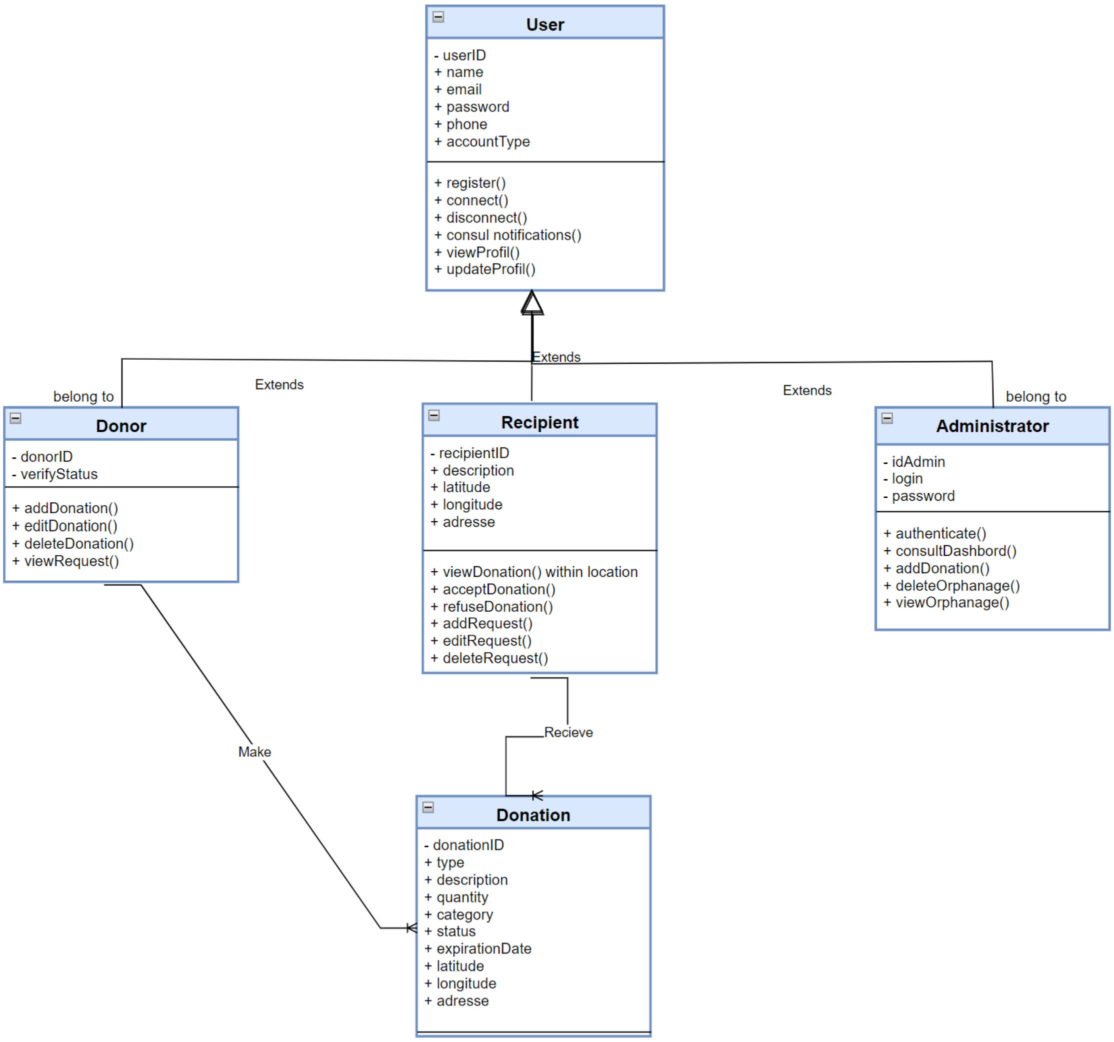

Figure A.2: Class Diagram for the Food Waste Donation Platform

A.2.3 Sequence Diagram for Authentication

The following sequence diagram demonstrates the interactions during the authentication process.

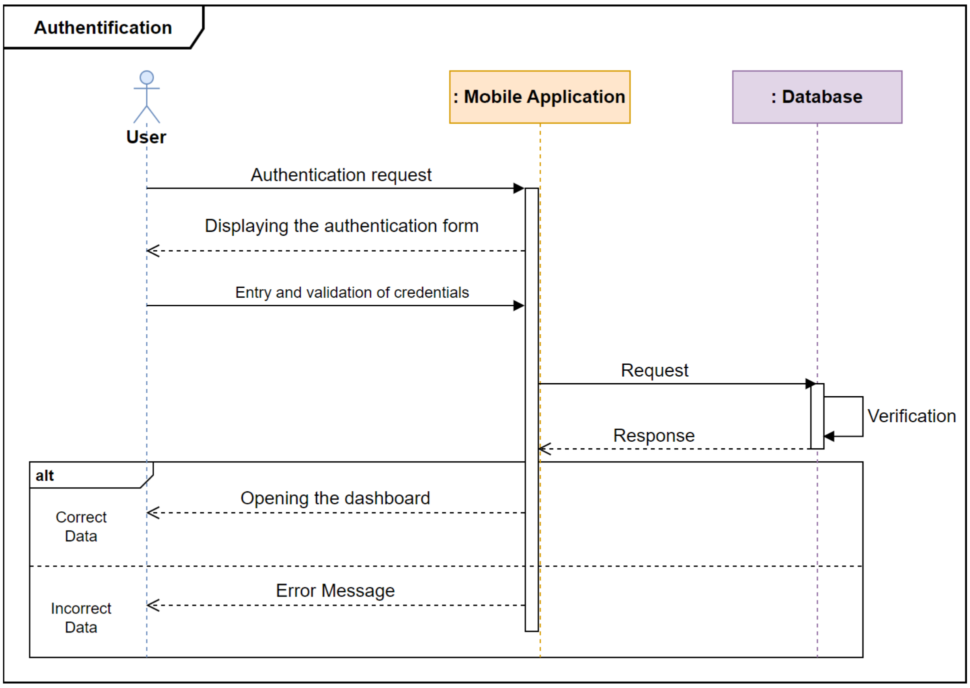

Figure A.3: Sequence Diagram for Authentication Process

Sequence Diagram for Donation Process

The following sequence diagram demonstrates the interactions involved in a donation.

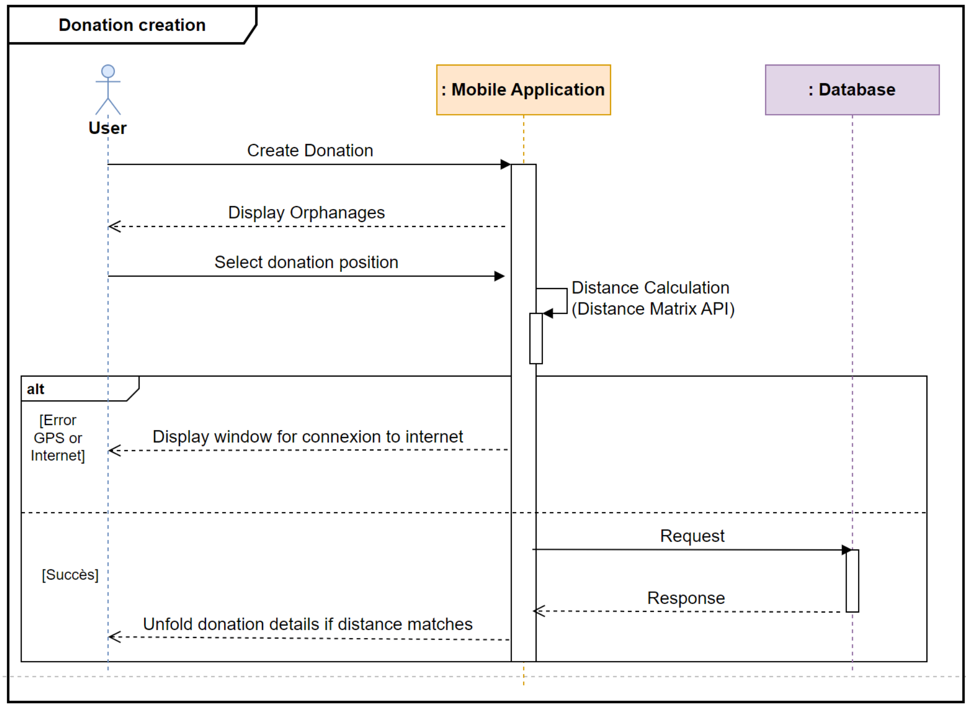

Figure A.4: Sequence Diagram for Donation Process

Sequence Diagram for Orphanage Existence Check

The following sequence diagram shows how the system verifies orphanage existence when adding an orphanage.

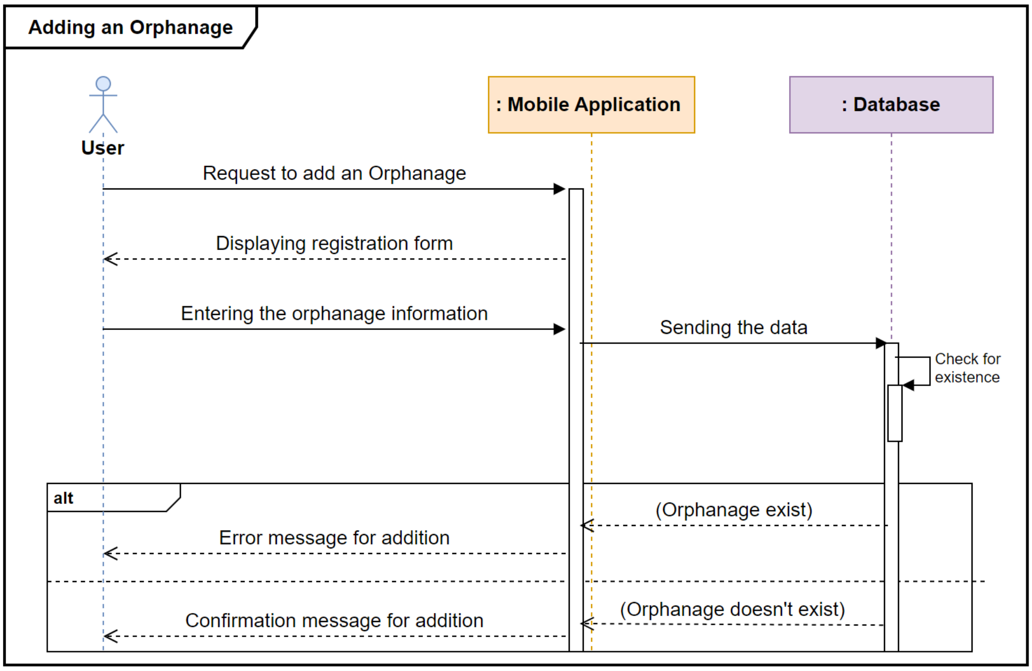

Figure A.5: Sequence Diagram for Orphanage Existence Check

A.3 Code Snippets

In this section, we provide important code snippets used during the development of the platform.

A.3.1 Flutter Implementation for Donation Creation Page

The following code snippet demonstrates the structure of a 'Scaffold' widget that includes various elements for creating a donation. It provides navigation, location input, community selection, and a validation button:

```dart
Widget _buildScaffoldWithDetails() {
  return Scaffold(
    appBar: AppBar(
      title: Text('Create Donation'),
    ), // AppBar
    body: ListView(
      padding: EdgeInsets.all(16),
      children: [
        GestureDetector(
          onTap: () {
            // Navigate to the WhatTypeOfFoodPage when the text is tapped
            Navigator.push(
              context,
              MaterialPageRoute(builder: (context) => WhatTypeOfFoodPage()),
            );
          },
          child: Center(
            child: Text(
              'What type of food are allowed on Caritas?',
              style: TextStyle(color: Colors.blue),
            ), // Text
          ), // Center
        ), // GestureDetector
        SizedBox(height: 10),
        _buildLocation(),
        orphanages.isNotEmpty
            ? _buildLocalCommunity(orphanages)
            : Center(child: CircularProgressIndicator()),
        SizedBox(height: 16),
        _displayDistance(),
        _buildPhotosContainer(),
        _buildTitle(),
        _buildDescription(),
        _buildQuantity(),
        _buildAvailabilities(),
        Divider(),
        _buildBestBefore(),
        SizedBox(height: 24),
        SizedBox(
          width: double.infinity,
          height: 50,
```

Figure A.6: Flutter Code

A.3.2 Firebase Firestore Integration for Donations

Below is a piece of code of a Firebase Firestore implementation to add donation details into the database. The code also validates user inputs and handles error messages appropriately:

```dart
// add donnation to firestore with multiple images
Future<void> addDonToFireStore(List<String> imageList) async {
  FirebaseFirestore.instance
      .collection('donations')
      .doc(donationID)
      .set({
        'donationID': donationID,
        'userInfos': userInfos,
        'orphanage': selectedOrphanage,
        'donationTitle': _controller.text,
        'quantity': _controllerQuantity.text,
        'donationDescription': _descriptionController.text,
        'donationDate': "$formattedDate, $formattedTime",
        'donationImages': imageList,
        'donationStatus': 'Pending',
        'donationBestBefore': selectedDate,
        'donationAvailability': selectedAction,
        'latitude': _latitude,
        'longitude': _longitude,
        'distanceBetweenUs': _distanceBetweenUs
      })
      .then(
        (value) => sendSuccessCode(),
      )
      .catchError((error) => sendErrorCode(error.toString()));
}

void validateDonation() {
  if (_selectedImages.isEmpty) {
    ToastMessages().showErrorToast('Please select at least one image');
  } else if (_controller.text.isEmpty) {
    ToastMessages().showErrorToast('Please enter a title');
  } else if (_descriptionController.text.isEmpty) {
    ToastMessages().showErrorToast('Please enter a description');
  } else if (selectedAction.isEmpty) {
    ToastMessages().showErrorToast('Please select an availability');
  } else if (selectedDate == null) {
    ToastMessages().showErrorToast('Please select a best before date');
  } else {
    setState(() {
      isStartToUpload = true;
      circularProgressVal = 0.8;
```

Figure A.7: Firebase Code

A.3.3 Google Maps API Integration

The following Flutter code demonstrates how to use a dropdown form field to select an orphanage from a list and calculate the distance between the user and the selected orphanage:

```
Widget _buildLocalCommunity(List<Map<String, dynamic>> orphanages) {
  return DropdownButtonFormField<Map<String, dynamic>>(
    value: selectedOrphanage,
    onChanged: (newValue) {
      setState(() {
        selectedOrphanage = newValue!;

        // Logique pour "All Community"
        if (newValue['name'] == 'All Community') {
          _distanceBetweenUs =
              0.0; // Pas de calcul de distance pour "All Community"
        } else {
          // Calculer la distance pour les autres communautés

          _distanceBetweenUs = calculateDistance(
            _latitude!,
            _longitude!,
            newValue['latitude'],
            newValue['longitude'],
          );
        }
      });
    },
    items: orphanages.map((Map<String, dynamic> orphanage) {
      return DropdownMenuItem<Map<String, dynamic>>(
        value: orphanage,
        child: Text(orphanage['name']),
      ); // DropdownMenuItem
    }).toList(),
    decoration: InputDecoration(
      labelText: 'Local Community',
      border: OutlineInputBorder(),
    ), // InputDecoration
  ); // DropdownButtonFormField
}
```

Figure A.8: Geotargeting Code

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