



# Child Wellness Center

A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE, LONG TERM  
REHABILITATION AND PROSTHETIC CARE FOR CHILDREN SUFFERING  
LIMB LOSS IN THE 2023 MARAŞ EARTHQUAKES IN TÜRKİYE

**ÇUKUROVA UNIVERSITY & PARTNERS**  
**JUNE 2023**

## Background

On February 6, 2023 eleven provinces in Southern Türkiye were devastated by two massive earthquakes resulting in the loss of over 50,000 lives, destroying tens of thousands of homes and impacting millions of people. The most vulnerable group as always were children who had to endure the worst. Many lost their parents, homes, schools and communities but one of the most heartbreaking outcomes of the Maraş earthquake was also the large number of amputations and limb loss suffered by children. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, doctors at Çukurova University in Adana were treating patients from the whole region and reported unprecedented numbers of amputations. Although official figures are not known, specialists in the field have estimated around 500 children to have suffered limb loss in Türkiye as a result of the earthquake.

## Child Wellness Center Project

The Child Wellness Center Project is an initiative to provide comprehensive, long term rehabilitation and care for children suffering limb loss in the Maraş 2023 earthquakes and to establish a Center of Excellence in pediatric orthopedic rehabilitation at Çukurova University. While the immediate scope of this initiative is focused on Maras Earthquake victims, the long term vision of this initiative is to develop the Center of Excellence as a national and international model center for children's rehabilitation and general purpose medical care.

The Child Wellness Project was developed initially by volunteer doctors in Türkiye and United States to provide comprehensive rehabilitation and care for affected children - including prosthetic limbs, physical therapy and psychological support - to enable them in leading dignified, fulfilling lives. Through the leadership of Çukurova University and the support of multiple partners, the vision for the project quickly evolved into establishing a permanent, dedicated center for child rehabilitation in Adana with the aspiration to become a clinical Center of Excellence in the region.

## Project Objectives and Activities

The project sets out to meet both the immediate needs of child amputees as well as establish a comprehensive, permanent and sustainable model of rehabilitation specifically designed for children. It has three major objectives to be achieved over the short, medium and long term:

### **1. Provide prosthetics and comprehensive rehabilitation including educational financial aid for at least 200 child amputees affected by the Maraş earthquake**

The first and most immediate action of the project will be to reach at least 200 children who have suffered limb loss in the Maraş Earthquake. The project will provide comprehensive and multidisciplinary rehabilitation services tailored to meet the unique needs of each amputee child. This includes provision of prosthetics or other devices, physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychological counseling, and assistive technology to promote their overall well-being and functional independence. All services will be conducted or supervised by Çukurova University Hospital medical staff and a Scientific Board. In addition, all amputee children will be provided with financial aid for their continuing primary, secondary and higher education. This component of the project is underway with 76 prosthetics approved for 65 children as of June 2023.

## **2. Construct and operate a dedicated Child Rehabilitation Center**

Türkiye does not have a dedicated, specialized pediatric rehabilitation facility that provides multidisciplinary care on one site. The complex and multiple needs of child amputees require the collaboration of orthopedics, pediatrics, physical therapy and rehabilitation, child psychiatry, child psychologists as well as other medical disciplines dictated by the unique needs of the child. There is an acute need for a child centered medical facility, designed for the needs of the amputee child, that will enable multidisciplinary treatment with quality and efficiency in the most humane way possible.

Unfortunately, Çukurova University Hospital was also severely impacted by the earthquake and the building has had to be vacated. Currently the Child Wellness Project is providing medical services in temporary facilities under sub optimal conditions that is only adding to the trauma of child amputees and their families. Given the urgency of circumstances it has been decided to have a two phased approach to the construction and operation of a dedicated rehabilitation center.

Phase 1: Construction of a temporary (prefabricated) 750 m2 building

Phase 2: Design and construction of a permanent 2400 m2 building

All medical services in the Child Wellness Center will be provided as an extension of Çukurova University Hospital and doctors and staff will be deployed by the university. In addition, all operation expenses such as auxiliary staff, maintenance and utilities will also be assumed by ÇU Hospital which will ensure an efficient and sustainable model for the Child Wellness Center. Moreover, the temporary building is designed to be portable so that it may be repurposed or relocated for future needs.

The permanent Child Wellness Center will enable recruitment and training of a multidisciplinary team of medical professionals, physiotherapists, psychologists, and social workers. It will be positioned to provide comprehensive medical care, including prosthetic limb fittings and post-operative care to develop individualized rehabilitation programs. Moreover, it will provide the basis for the longer term Center of Excellence vision and objectives of the project.

## **3. Establish a Center of Excellence in pediatric rehabilitation for child amputees in the region**

The longer term vision of the project will seek to establish the Child Wellness Center as a research, training, development and innovation hub for the pediatric rehabilitation and care of amputee children who have suffered from both natural and unnatural disasters in Türkiye and the region. In addition to amputee children this comprehensive rehabilitation center will also serve children who are born without limbs, children with mobility issues such as post ICU syndrome, trauma, complex neurological disorders. Through strategic partnerships with both national and international stakeholders, it will engage in activities that will further the field and the specialized care of children. Activities will include research studies, clinical trials, training programs for healthcare professionals, outcomes measures developments, education and awareness programs, technological innovations and adaptations, continuous professional development and advocacy for amputee children.

In engaging in these research, training, and development activities, a child rehabilitation Center of Excellence would not only provide excellent care to amputee children but also

drive advancements in the field, improve treatment outcomes, and contribute to the well-being of amputee children in the region.

The project is a multi-year, multi partner initiative designed and implemented by world leading experts and institutions. Partners have embarked upon a fundraising drive to secure the forecast budget of approximately 11 Million USD to establish the Child Wellness Center and assure its sustainability over the next ten years. Funding of just over 4 Million USD has already been committed which has enabled immediate treatment for amputee children and the construction of the temporary rehabilitation center.

## Project Governance

The project will be led and implemented by Çukurova University and its subsidiaries Çukurova University Industry Collaboration Foundation (ÇUSİVAK) and Çukurova University Teknokent. All financial and operational responsibilities will be distributed among these three entities to meet legal, regulatory and financial requirements. ÇUSİVAK will be the fiduciary entity and Çukurova University the operational entity. The project also has a wide range of implementation and funding Partners including Hüsnü Özyeğin Foundation, Turkish Philanthropic Funds, Bridge to Türkiye Fund and Banks Association of Türkiye.

## Budget Summary

CHILD WELLNESS CENTER BUDGET FORECAST 2023 -2032		
	Total	% of Total
Prosthetics & Rehabilitation	4,847,077	45%
<b>Capital Investment</b>	Provisional Building	800,000 7%
	Permanent Building	4,100,000 38%
Center of Excellence	550,000	5%
Project Management	564,064	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,861,141</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Funds Committed</b>	<b>4,095,455</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>6,765,686</b>	<b>62%</b>