



# Miracle Babies - Mora Thavmata

**The Road to Ithaca - Building a new NICU in Nicosia, Cyprus**

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**5<sup>th</sup> Parent Organisation Summit 2025 – Munich – 25 April 2025**





# The Road to Ithaca

*"As you set out for Ithaca, hope the voyage is a long one, full of adventure, full of discovery"*

*E.P. Cavafy*

## Our Vision

When we started our journey, we didn't know if we would reach Ithaca. But we knew why we started: for the premature babies. For those vulnerable, miraculous creatures that come into the world early—and need all the help to stay in it.

## Our Ithaca

It wasn't easy to reach the end but the road that led us to Ithaca was the most important and meaningful one.

**The vision of having a new, modern, safe NICU, according to the EFCNI and international standards has become a reality.**



# Prematurity in Cyprus

**13.3%**

Rate of premature births in Cyprus

**~9500**

Premature babies are born annually in Cyprus



**Highest**

Rate of premature births in Europe

**More than 1 in 10**

Babies are born prematurely in Cyprus

Premature babies require specialized medical care and extended hospitalization in the NICU level III - IV in Arch. Makarios III Hospital in Nicosia, the referral center of the whole island



# Miracle Babies – Who we are



"Miracle Babies" Association is a **non-governmental organization based in Cyprus**, member of GFCNI (Global Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants) which was **founded in 2015** by a small initiative group consisting of parents, grandparents and relatives of premature babies and infants. **An association that is more of a community than a charity that works closely with the scientific board to fulfilled its vision.**



# Miracle Babies – Our Vision

Our vision - to upgrade the NICU in Cyprus to reach the highest European standards, following internationally recognized best practices so that:

- 1 The premature and sick neonates have the best possible start in their lives
- 2 To enable the parents to be present at the Unit for as long as they wish, 24 hours per day
- 3 To have adequate staff and fully trained personnel working in a healthy and safe environment according to European standards



**A vision illuminated with love**



# Existing NICU in Makarios Hospital

- NICU in Makarios Hospital Nicosia is **the only referral centre for whole of Cyprus**. Based on international standards and guidelines for every 10,000 births, one NICU level III-IV is needed.
- NICU opened in 1985 with 18 beds (incubators/cots), and gradually increased to 48, as the prematurity rate continuously increased. Through the years and as the completeness reached to 120-150% the **space proved not to be enough**.
- The premises **are not designed for such a number** and it is obvious that a new, larger upgraded NICU is in need urgently.



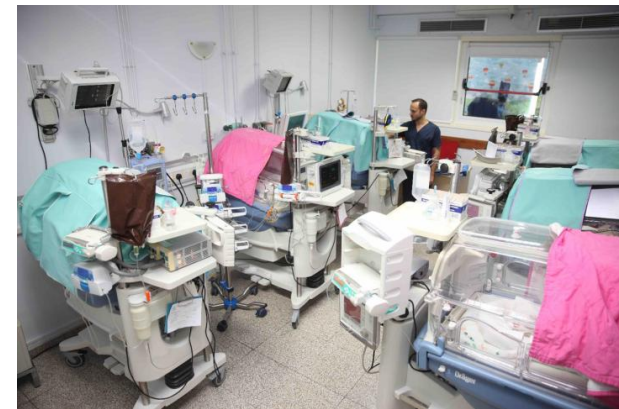


# NICU – Today's Reality



The existing NICU, due to superfluity, lack of space and numerically inadequate personnel **does not meet the International standards**. Specifically:

1. Parents cannot be present near their babies for as long as they like for family centered developmental care.
2. Not enough chairs for skin to skin/kangaroo care.
3. Not enough space for promotion of breast feeding.
4. Visiting hours for parents started by 2 hours per day and after great efforts and actions by our Association gradually have increased to 7 hours per day.





# Our fight for change

In 2019, we were the first NGO in Cyprus that started a strong and substantial campaign to convince the Government that the existing NICU had to be extended and renovated in an urgent way. Our inspiration was **ZERO SEPERATION.**

## OUR PROPOSAL



Increase NICU capacity



Improve infection control



Improve NICU Infrastructure



Reduce family separation during treatment



Build a family room



Establish a Breastfeeding room



Upgrade staff rooms



Healthy and safe working environment for staff member



Advanced medical technology



# The Road to Ithaca



Initiation of  
Campaign

2019



Submission  
of Proposal

2020

Approval of Project  
(foundation stone placement)



Commencement of expansion  
and renovation work

2025

Completion of  
Project (Target)

2027





# Ithaca – The new NICU is a reality

Our vision for the upgrade of the NICU at the Archbishop Makarios III Hospital has become a reality with the commencement of expansion and renovation work in January 2025.

## THE NEW NICU



cutting-edge facilities and services for the care of newborns. With a total area of 1,607 square meters



- 7 intensive care rooms with 26 incubators
- 4 isolation rooms
- intermediate care rooms with 24 incubators/cots



A family Room specially designed with upgraded spaces for parents to ensure that their presence in the unit is as comfortable as possible.



A breastfeeding room



Upgraded staff rooms for medical and nursing staff





Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία



# ΕΠΕΚΤΑΣΗ ΤΗΣ ΜΟΝΑΔΑΣ ΕΝΤΑΤΙΚΗΣ ΝΟΣΗΛΕΙΑΣ ΝΕΟΓΝΩΝ

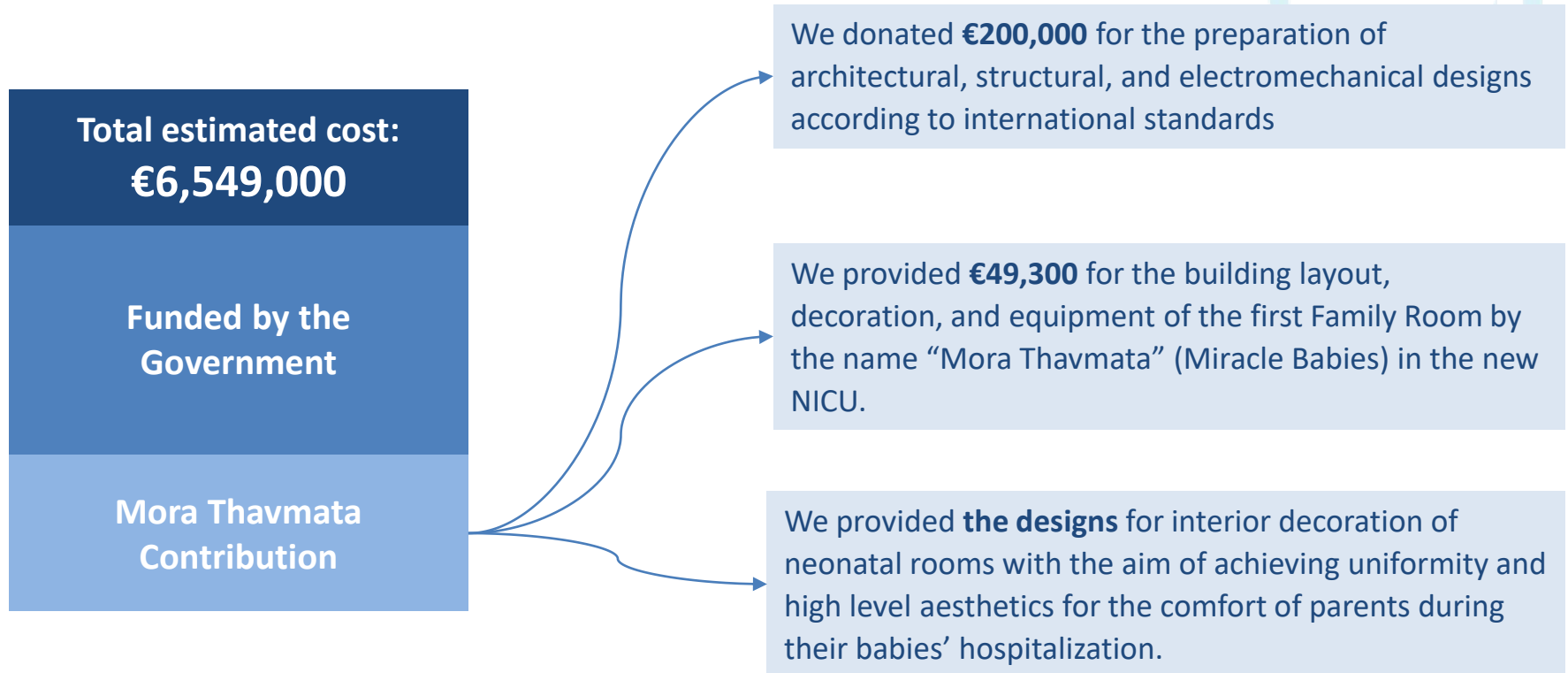
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Νοσοκομείο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Μακάριος III



# New NICU – Our contribution

The contribution of the Association to the initiation of this project has been crucial





# New NICU – The first Family Room

FAMILY ROOM



FAMILY ROOM - FRONT VIEW



FAMILY ROOM - INTERIOR VIEW

MARIA KYTHREOTOU INTERIORS



# 10 Years Mora Thavmata

2025 marks a milestone—a decade of dedication, advocacy, and progress for premature babies in Cyprus. Over the past ten years, we have worked tirelessly to fulfill a promise: **a better future for every preemie**

## Collaboration with Medical Professionals



## Family Support Programs



## Equipment and Facility Upgrades



**EFGNI** european foundation for the care of newborn infants

## Awareness Campaigns





# 10 Years Mora Thavmata - Achievements

**Expansion & Renovation of the NICU –**  
Donation of **€200,000** for the  
preparation of architectural, structural,  
and electromechanical designs

**Donation** of a specially designed  
**Neonatal Ambulance** worth **€300,000**

**Educational Seminars & Awareness  
Campaigns**

**Successfully advocated the increase of  
maternity leave for mothers of  
premature babies**—an essential step  
toward recognizing and addressing the  
unique challenges these families face

*Over  
€772,000  
in Donations*

**Funded the first Family Room** in the  
new NICU

Provided **funding for Advanced Training**  
of NICU Nurses

Ongoing Support for NICUs in Nicosia &  
Limassol – **€262,000 worth of  
specialized medical equipment**  
provided for neonatal care

**Parental Psychological Support** and  
free provision of the **book “The Miracle  
Baby & his Journey”**



# Future goals

While we celebrate our successes, we recognize that our journey continues. Our future holds new goals, new aspirations, new initiatives, and new milestones. Our next objectives include:

- 1 Parental Education & Support Expansion
- 2 Legislative Advocacy
- 3 Further NICU Enhancements
- 4 Scientific Research & Data Collection
- 5 Strengthening European/Global Collaborations

## In the Pipeline

Development of a medical registry system for premature babies to improve data collection and care

Creation of a calendar application for mothers, to document their emotions, experiences within the NICU, and their baby's health progress

Open the first family room in the new NICU, a space where parents can rest and find comfort during this challenging time



# Conclusion

*“Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage. Without her you would not have set out. Ithaca has nothing left to give you now.”*

*E.P. Cavafy*

Our journey was not easy. However, it was a long one full of truth, full of adventure, full of discovery. The creation of the new NICU is a beacon of hope, for premature babies and their families.







**Μωρά-θαύματα**