



2014 Final Report

Dundee Foundation
Toy Library
&
Music in Motion

December, 2014

WORLDWIDE
ORPHANS

2014 Final Report for the Dundee Foundation

WWO Toy Libraries in Family Counseling Centers in Bulgaria have been a major success, thus far, thanks in large part to generous funds provided by Dundee Foundation.

On June 27, 2013 Dundee Foundation and Worldwide Orphans Foundation (WWO) signed a donation agreement based on a WWO Project Proposal submitted in May 2013 to establish three WWO toy libraries in Family Counseling Centers located in Shumen, Novi Pazar and Veliki Preslav. These centers are part of the new Bulgarian child welfare plan that includes the closing of institutions and the provision of health, education and social services to support family reunification and prevention of abandonment in underserved Roma communities. Approximately 50% of children living in residential care are of Roma origin and parents report relinquishing children due to poverty, lack of housing, lack of education or the inability to care for the child's health needs.¹

WWO toy libraries support early childhood development through play as well as increased caregiver involvement through education and training programs. Research suggests interventions during this critical stage in brain development (birth-seven years), contributes to greater educational success and better economic outcomes.² The launch of the toy library project included:

- 111 educationally based toys from  Toy Company for each center along with shelving and desk for toy librarian.
- Training for all staff on goals of the project and child development curriculum
- A toy librarian hired at each site and trained in toy library management and data collection.

The toy libraries officially opened the first week in January 2014. By the beginning of the third quarter, 2014, 150 children from the region were registered for toy library programming. After initial launch of the Toy Library, the Music in Motion program was introduced to each site through use of remaining funds. Staff and participants agree incorporating music and dance has helped to increase engagement with families.

Each site is also using an assessment tool called the ASEBA Child Behavioral Check-List® with caregivers in order to gather baseline data on children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors. At the close of this project, 111 questionnaires have been completed.

¹ EU Business. (2011) Abandoned Roma children fill Europe's orphanages: study. Retrieved April 26, 2013, from www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/bulgaria-minority.cbr

² World Bank. Early Childhood Development. Why invest in Early Childhood Development? Retrieved April 30, 2014 from : <http://go.worldbank.org/2A7YQDVXLO>

The research suggests that interventions during this critical stage in brain development (birth-seven years) contribute to greater educational success and better economic outcomes.³

Expanding Toy Library Inventory to include Music and Dance

In April 2014, the WWO program team met with Dundee Foundation to discuss the project timeline and use of remaining funds. WWO typically purchases an initial set of toys for the launch of a library and then allows for additional purchases after the launch to ensure each library meets the specific needs of their target population. Based on a mid-project review, staff at each site felt musical instruments to promote dance and movement would be culturally appropriate and highly valuable for these toy libraries. WWO created an addendum to the proposal budget to use the remaining grant funds to supplement the current toy library inventory with a WWO Music in Motion kit, curriculum guide and training.

The WWO Music in Motion resource kit allows infants to preschool age children and their caregivers to enjoy a playful and dynamic group experience with music and creative movement. The kit guides users through a series of movements that stretch small bodies and minds. The music is lively and engaging, and from all over the world. Activities include imaginative movement stories, i.e., getting ready for school; acting out the morning routine; moving like sea-creatures and dancing like flowers. Both children and adults march in a band and lead rhythm activities. Staff are trained to use the Music and Motion kit with caregivers and children.

Music in Motion Training

In July 2014, WWO Program Coordinator Velislava Hristova, and WWO Music in Motion Trainer Christine Hall traveled to each of the three toy libraries to train staff on how to use the music in motion resource kit to promote child development and support caregiver-child relationships. The training also included a mobile approach, increasing the project beneficiaries in two new communities. In total the three-day training impacted 18 staff members, 5 communities, 64 children and their caregivers. The training for staff was experiential and included debrief sessions on child development, group facilitation and caregiver support techniques. The staff are now prepared to continue offering music and dance sessions. During a final debrief session, the staff feels they can use the music and dance component to build trust with families and then use the toy library to move



³ World Bank. Early Childhood Development. Why invest in Early Childhood Development? Retrieved April 30, 2014 from : <http://go.worldbank.org/2A7YQDVXLO>

deeper into the connection of play and development.

From the Field: "I had the privilege to see how powerful this program is and how much happiness and joy our session brought to a group of poor and marginalized by the society children who probably have never seen any toys. Their serious faces lit up with smiles and their bodies were flying with joy together with the scarves and the parachute. Everyone was so excited and we were so touched. It made me think that music and dance are such an international language that nearly everyone "speaks" so easily. – staff, Novi Pazar

A Few Notes from the field...

Christine Hall writes during the training: I was struck by how the staff seemed engaged and connected in the mobile work. The facility was dark and uninviting, but the moment we began it was magical. The smiles and melodies chased away any gloom. There was a mother present with 3 of her 8 children. I believe that she is only 25 years old. Her children loved the program and engaged so sweetly in it, but I was most struck by her reaction: she had such a child-like joy as she danced and moved with her children, delighting in each instrument and activity. After the session finished she asked for more music so that she and her children could show us some of their dancing.

Music in Motion Notes from the field: Let me now tell you about our afternoon experience... We were brought to a small village not so far from Veliki Preslav, it was raining and we were invited to do the session at the entry space of the little local center for cultural events. There, in this old and simple but well maintained building I had the privilege to see how powerful this program is and how much happiness and joy our session brought to a group of poor and marginalized by the society children who probably have never seen any toys. Their serious faces lit up with smiles and their bodies were flying with joy together with the scarves and the parachute. Everyone was so excited and we were so touched. It made me think that music and dance are such an international language that nearly everyone "speaks" so easily. It would be great if we could make this happen to other places in the future. I'm delighted and happy to be part of it. It just reminded me that nothing brings more joy than the happy eyes of a child. I'm grateful for this experience.



Project Statistics to Date

Site	Toy Library	Mobile Toy Library	Music in Motion
Family Counseling Center Shumen	88	52	41
Family Counseling Center Veliki Preslav	229	70	17
Family Counseling Center Novi Pazar	82	61	10

Conclusion

WWO and staff at the Family Counseling centers have developed a strong partnership thanks to the generous funds from Dundee Mining Foundation. The programs are continuing and expanding through a 2015 grant from the Open Society Institute (OSI) in partnership with the EEA (European Economic Area). Under this project the mobile approach to the Toy Library has now been taken into new communities and into three preschools to reinforce the connection between play and school readiness.

