WWO Bulgaria
Annual Report 2015
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Life in a residential care institution affects children profoundly in a negative way. Deprived of a family environment, children living in an institution do not receive the love and individualized attention they need to develop and thrive. For every three months spent in an institution, they typically lose one month of their developmental skills and find it difficult to form attachment and integrate in society later in life.

When WWO began working in Bulgaria in 2009, most children without parental care were placed in residential care institutions. Motivated by the socio-emotional and developmental needs of these children, WWO set out to build a comprehensive model to address the challenges they faced. WWO’s goal was to introduce the concept of play as a key developmental tool and to train staff and caregivers working in residential care institutions in how to use toys to help children achieve developmental milestones. Within the next four years, WWO established partnerships with 11 residential care institutions in Bulgaria where our programs provided children with socio-emotional support and addressed their developmental needs.

The understanding of children’s needs and child care has developed significantly in recent years and these changed attitudes of professionals and society necessitate a shift in WWO’s focus in Bulgaria. In 2010, the Bulgarian government embarked on an ambitious plan to reform the protection system for children without parental care. The plan for reform was laid out in a National Strategy called “Vision for Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria 2010-2025”. The concept of deinstitutionalization is defined as a process of replacing institutional child care with family care or community-based care in a family-like environment while taking integrated measures across social services and social assistance sectors to prevent child abandonment by supporting vulnerable families through a network of community-based service providers.

The child and his/her family are at the core of this new philosophy and prevention of abandonment is the first pillar of the deinstitutionalization efforts. Supporting the family unit through the development of a network of community-based service providers is instrumental in the efforts to prevent child abandonment and protect a child’s right to a family.
The second pillar of the deinstitutionalization process is the provision of alternative care in a family or family-like environment for children without parental care and the subsequent closure of all residential care institutions. Thus, the development of a system of alternative forms of care, such as foster care, kinship care, and community-based residential care is another key element in the deinstitutionalization process. By developing a network of family and community support services in the country and placing children into alternative forms of care, the National Strategy aims to close down all of the Homes for Medico-Social Care for Children ages 0-3 years by 2025.

2015 was an important year for the implementation of the deinstitutionalization plan and, as a result, for WWO’s work in Bulgaria. Eight institutions for infants were closed down in 2015 as part of a pilot closure project. WWO partnered with three of these institutions. In addition, another two of WWO’s remaining institutional partners were closed down in 2015, requiring WWO to end these partnerships and seek ways to transition to partnerships with community-based organizations in these regions.

All of these transformations in the local context are necessitating a change in WWO’s work. In 2009, WWO was understandably focused on children in residential care institutions because of the great need these children had for programs supporting their development and psychosocial wellbeing. However, we are prompted to follow the dynamics of the deinstitutionalization process and continue to support the most vulnerable children wherever they live - Family Group Homes for children with disabilities, children living in remote rural areas, disadvantaged children from ethnic minorities. By supporting children and caregivers, WWO helps strengthen family ties and communities and thus prevents child abandonment and abuse.
II. WWO PROGRAMS

In recent years, WWO Bulgaria programs have naturally followed the deinstitutionalization process by increasing the scope of our partnerships to encompass more community-based work. WWO’s programs have been recognized as good practices and contribute to the deinstitutionalization process by helping to strengthen parent-child relationships and serving as resources in the work of community-based service providers. Currently, WWO operates three programs in Bulgaria under the umbrella of Element of Play® - the Toy Library program, the One-to-One Attachment Assistant program, and the Music in Motion program. In cooperation with our partners, WWO developed a mobile approach for the implementation of the Toy Library and the Music in Motion programs which allows children from remote, isolated, and marginalized communities to participate in our programs and helps guarantee their right to play and develop to their full potential. All of WWO’s programs support early childhood development, serving the needs of vulnerable children across Bulgaria.

WWO Bulgaria

Programs in 2015

Toy Library

Music in Motion

Attachment Assistants

Toy Library

The Toy Library program has been implemented in Bulgaria since 2009 and is the most widespread program of the Foundation. Initially designed to complement the work of the One-to-One Granny Program for children in residential care, the Toy Library program has become known as an unique and valued resource for children in residential care institutions as well as vulnerable children living in the community. In February 2015, WWO’s Toy Library program was recognized as a “good practice” by the National Network for Children and representatives of more than 20 organizations visited the Toy Library at the NGO Club in Targovishte.

At the core of the Toy Library program is the concept of play as a key developmental tool and a universal right for all children. A WWO Toy Library is a safe space where children can explore their intrinsic desire for play and bond with their caregivers.
Given the variety of partner organizations who provide services to children, the Toy Libraries are used as a resource in a number of ways in Bulgaria. One of them is the mobile approach, which ensures access to quality educational toys for children living in remote and isolated communities, thus helping to guarantee their rights. Depending on the context in which it is implemented, a Toy Library serves as:

- A resource for spontaneous or guided play in pairs;
- An instrument for therapy, used by specialists;
- A resource for communication in play groups and workshops for children and parents;
- A mobile service in remote and isolated locations;
- A resource for play at home.

In 2015, Toy Librarians recorded 34,605 child visits by 2420 children in Toy Libraries across Bulgaria using the tracking forms rolled out in April 2015. In addition to children registered in the Toy Libraries in past years, a total of 516 children started using the Toy Library for the first time in 2015.
The goal of the Music in Motion program is to support early childhood development through positive social connections and a child-centered approach that gives each child the opportunity to participate fully and to be acknowledged and respected.

The Music in Motion program provides an opportunity to engage children and caregivers in the world of music and dance in an exciting way, fostering the parent-child relationship. The combination of music, movement and dance supports child development, self-expression and psychosocial well-being. WWO provides training for specialists on the use of the program to maximize the benefits for child development.

Music in Motion is a unique experience for children 0-7 which allows them to participate fully in a new and exciting activity for them. The program introduces children to music styles and musical instruments from all over the world and fosters their creativity, self-expression, and coordination skills while encouraging children’s social skills, such as giving and sharing.

The program has been used as a resource in WWO’s mobile work and community development efforts. Some of our partners have brought Music in Motion to remote villages and marginalized communities where children do not have access to services and lack the opportunity to engage in new and exciting activities that promote their development.

In 2015, 6 partner organizations reported carrying out 541 Music in Motion sessions with 1187 children using the monthly reporting form rolled out in 2015.

In October 2015, WWO organized 3 Music in Motion trainings for 48 specialists from 18 new and existing partners, including a training on adapting the program for children with special needs. Each training consisted of theoretical and practical sessions which allowed our partners to familiarize themselves with the program and prepare for implementing it in their organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015 At a Glance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>541 Music in Motion sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Music in Motion trainings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The One-to-One Program was launched in Bulgaria in April 2014 following WWO’s experience with the “Granny” program in residential care institutions. The program matched a child in an institution with a trusting adult who bonded with the child and helped him/her to form a secure attachment.

Similarly, the One-to-One Attachment Assistant Program aims to create an individualized relationship between a trusting adult from the local community and a child deprived of parental care, with the goal of supporting the child’s development through a consistent and caring relationship.

One adult is matched with one or two children (of chronological or developmental age 0 to 7 years) to provide 2 hours of individualized attention and care each day, for five days a week. The children live in alternative care settings with no identified primary care figure in the community or limited access to their primary caregiver.

In 2015, the program was implemented in two residential care institutions in Bulgaria and one community-based Day Center for Children with Special Needs. A total of 14 Attachment Assistants worked with close to 30 children four hours per day to provide them with the love and support every child needs.

2015 At a Glance

14 Attachment Assistants

30 children received individual love and support
III. WWO PARTNERS IN BULGARIA

WWO is not a direct service provider in Bulgaria but instead works in partnership with organizations providing services to vulnerable children. Our partnerships have developed throughout the years in parallel with the ongoing process of deinstitutionalization in the country. As the context in Bulgaria has been changing rapidly, our partnerships have evolved over time. In addition to working with state-run institutions for children, WWO partners now include schools as well as municipalities and nonprofit organizations providing community-based services to vulnerable children and their families. Table 1 below describes WWO’s partners by type, activity, and WWO programs implemented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner, City</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>WWO Programs</th>
<th>Unique children using WWO Programs in 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animus Association - “Mother and Baby” Unit, Sofia</td>
<td>Community-based NGO service provider</td>
<td>Provides temporary housing and support to mothers and children who have suffered domestic abuse. Toy Library used as a resource for spontaneous or guided play between mother and child supporting the development of a healthy parent-child attachment.</td>
<td>Toy Library</td>
<td>54 children 2259 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Our Children Foundation – Center for Community Support, Sofia</td>
<td>Community-based NGO service provider</td>
<td>Serves the needs of vulnerable children and families in the community through an early intervention program. Supports the deinstitutionalization process through a prevention of abandonment program. Works with children living in the Home for children ages 0-3 years “St. Sofia”, in Sofia. The Toy Library is used as a resource in the Early Intervention program, in therapy and in home visits.</td>
<td>Toy Library Mobile Toy Library Music in Motion (2016)</td>
<td>68 children 437 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Club, Targovishte</td>
<td>Community-based NGO service provider</td>
<td>A local NGO in the region of Targovishte which serves the needs of marginalized and vulnerable children and families through various projects. The Toy Library is applied mainly through the mobile approach.</td>
<td>Toy Library Mobile Toy Library Music in Motion (2016)</td>
<td>70 children 164 TL visits*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*between April and October, 2015
Table 1. WWO Partners (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>WWO Programs</th>
<th>Children in WWO Programs in 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karin Dom Foundation, Varna</td>
<td>Community-based NGO service provider</td>
<td>Provides specialized services to children with disabilities and their families. It is also a resource and training center that develops and disseminates good practices and provides specialists working with children with special needs with training and expertise.</td>
<td>Toy Library Attachment Assistant Music in Motion (2016)</td>
<td>116 children 116 TL visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Counseling Center, Veliki Preslav</td>
<td>Community-based service providers managed by the local municipality and funded by UNICEF</td>
<td>Three Family Counseling Centers were established in the Shumen region as part of UNICEF Bulgaria’s efforts to support deinstitutionalization. The centers work in the most vulnerable communities in the area offering a multitude of programs, such as counseling and individual support to families with young children at risk, services in the community and in maternity wards to prevent child abandonment and placement in institutions, family planning, facilitating access to health care services, developing capacity of families to support their children’s development, etc. The Centers implement WWO’s Toy Library and Music in Motion programs and reach the most marginalized and vulnerable communities through the mobile approach.</td>
<td>Toy Library Music in Motion Mobile Approach</td>
<td>603 children 283 stationary TL visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Counseling Center, Shumen</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Counseling Center, Novi Pazar</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Center for Children with Special Needs “Winnie the Pooh” - Weekly Care, Ruse</td>
<td>Community-based NGO service provider</td>
<td>Provides day care and weekly care services to children ages 3-16 years with various disabilities. Children are referred to the service by the Child Protection Department. The Day Center’s capacity is 20 children.</td>
<td>Toy Library Music in Motion Attachment Assistant</td>
<td>57 children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No information about TL visits available.*
<table>
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</table>
| Day Center for Children with Special Needs - Weekly Care, Ruse | Community-based service provider run by Child and Space Association | Provides weekly resident care for children ages 0-3 years with various disabilities. Early intervention program to support families of newborns with disabilities through psycho-social services and rehabilitation services. Supports the development of a healthy parent-child attachment. Its capacity is 10 children. | Toy Library | 19 children  
615 visits |
| School for Children with Special Needs, Pleven | State school | Provides education to children with special needs. The Toy Library has been integrated into the learning process completely. Toys are used for diagnostic purposes and to support the development of children in each developmental domain. The Toy Library is a classroom and the toys are used for educational purposes. | Toy Library | 51 children  
1803 visits |
| I Primary School, Targovishte | State School | A school for children from Grade 1 through 8. Toy Library is used by the Preschool group and children from the nearby kindergarten. | Toy Library | 33 children  
*No information about TL visits available |
| Home for Medico-Social Care for Children 0-3, Pleven | Residential Care Institution | An institution for children ages 0-3 years. The Toy Library is used as a resource for spontaneous or guided play in groups. Toys are also used by specialists working in the institution to support child development. | Toy Library  
Music in Motion | 99 children  
1859 visits |
| Home for Medico-Social Care for Children 0-3, Burgas | Residential Care Institution | An institution that provides various services for children: home for children aged 0-3 years, social services and therapy for children with special needs raised in family environment, medical care for children with severe disabilities, early intervention services, day care services. | Toy Library  
Music in Motion | 576 children  
4665 visits |
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Children in WWO Programs in 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home for Medico-Social Care for Children 0-3, Varna</td>
<td>Residential Care Institution</td>
<td>An institution for children ages 0-3 years. In addition, it provides other services to the local community, such as day care services for children with disabilities and a center for early intervention and rehabilitation for children with disabilities. The Toy Library is used as a resource for therapy by specialists. Music in Motion sessions are held weekly with children living in the Home, as well as children using the day care service.</td>
<td>Toy Library, Music in Motion</td>
<td>83 children, 4705 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home for Medico-Social Care for Children 0-3, Debelets</td>
<td>Residential Care Institution</td>
<td>An institution for children ages 0-3 years, which also houses a day center for children with special needs. The Toy Library is used as a resource for group play. Specialists also use the toys in their work with children.</td>
<td>Toy Library</td>
<td>116 children, 11760 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home for Children Deprived of Parental Care 3-7, Pleven</td>
<td>Residential Care Institution</td>
<td>An institution for children 3-7. In addition to being a home for children 3-7, it also provides Day Care and Weekly Care services to vulnerable children from the local community. The Toy Library is used as a resource for play in groups and in the work of six Attachment Assistants.</td>
<td>Toy Library, Attachment Assistants, Music in Motion</td>
<td>51 children, 3242 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home for Medico-Social Care for Children 0-3, Shumen</td>
<td>Residential Care Institution</td>
<td>One of our oldest partners, the Home in Shumen was officially closed down in December 2015 as part of the deinstitutionalization efforts. Our partnership with them will end and the Toy Library will be transferred to another partner.</td>
<td>Toy Library</td>
<td>20 children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home was closed down in December 2015.
<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home for Medico-Social Care for Children 0-3, Targovishte /currently Complex for Social Services - a community-based service/</td>
<td>Residential Care Institutions transformed into community-based services</td>
<td>Our partnership had to end in 2015 when the institution was officially closed down as part of the deinstitutionalization pilot project. The home was replaced by a Complex for Social Services for Children and Families which was supposed to provide various integrated services to children and families at risk, such as a Community Support Center and a Day Center for Children with Special Needs. Currently, the Complex in Targovishte only houses a Family Type Placement Center for children with disabilities due to lack of continued funding at the end of the project. The situation is similar in Pazardzhik, where only a Day Center for Children with Special Needs remained functional by the end of 2015. The Toy Libraries, which existed in the former Homes, remain in the Complexes but are not used. Given the uncertainty surrounding the future of the Complexes, a decision must be taken as to whether to begin a partnership with them or to relocate to new partners.</td>
<td>Toy Library</td>
<td>No information. Home was closed down in 2015.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. WWO BULGARIA IN 2015: KEY DEVELOPMENTS

A. Institutional Partners

The process of deinstitutionalization is an important external factor that defines to a large extent the direction of our future work in Bulgaria. 2015 was a year of transformation for many of our institutional partners and it is unclear what will happen to them in the near future. For example, five of our institutional partners, such as the Homes for Medico-Social Care in Vratsa, Pazardzhik, Ruse, Targovishte, and Shumen have been closed down as part of the plan for deinstitutionalization and are in a process of transformation into community-based services.

The restructuring of the former institutions led to two key developments concerning WWO Bulgaria’s work in 2015:

1. Our partnership with the Home for Medico-Social Care for Children in Vratsa ended due to the closure of the Home as part of the deinstitutionalization process. The toys from the Toy Library were returned to WWO and later transferred to the branches of Family Consultancy Center Novi Pazar in the village of Kaolinovo and Family Consultancy Center Shumen in the village of Venets.

2. Four of WWO’s remaining institutional partners were also closed down as part of the deinstitutionalization efforts and are currently in a process of transformation. While three of them have been converted into Complexes for Social Services for Children and Families, it is unclear whether they will continue to exist and in what form.

B. Community-based Partners

Expansion of Existing Partnerships

WWO expanded our partnership with the Family Counseling Centers in Novi Pazar and Shumen by opening a Toy Library in their branches in the villages of Kaolinovo and Venets thereby providing another resource to children and families in these isolated rural communities.

2015 At a Glance

2 new Toy Libraries in Kaolinovo and Venets

Toy Library in Kaolinovo
Between November 2014 and November 2015, in collaboration with the NGO Club in Targovishte, WWO implemented a project aimed at developing a mobile approach to using the Toy Library. The project was funded by the Open Society Institute, Sofia, as part of OSI’s Support Program for NGOs in Bulgaria. The goal of the project was to support the development of children living in distant rural areas, to provide capacity-building services to parents in order to deepen their knowledge about the role of play for child development, as well as to reinforce capacity building of specialists providing services to children and their families.

Through the project, WWO and the NGO Club achieved several important goals:

1. Strengthened the capacity of the NGO Club by providing them with trainings in Early Childhood Development and Developmental Domains, Play Observation, Support and Positive Reinforcement, and Monitoring and Evaluation - Structure and Assessment Tools.

2. Equipped the NGO Club with Monitoring and Evaluation tools and trained the team in their use - Child Status Index, Child Behavior Checklist, Indicator of Parent-Child Interaction.

3. Developed a mobile approach to using the Toy Library program in remote and isolated communities and organized 44 play groups in which 59 children and their parents participated regularly for the duration of the project.

4. In their regular interactions through the project, the NGO Club was able to successfully build trust with the Roma community in the village of Davidovo.
Joint Project: Toy Library Mobile Approach

5. Through the play sessions, parents learned how to support their children’s development through play and positive interaction. Parent-child interaction improved significantly over the course of the project, leading to a positive socio-emotional response in children and parent satisfaction with the program. At the end of the project, 80% of parents shared that they have noticed a positive change in their children’s behavior and they have learned to spend more time and play more with their children. Parents report using the knowledge they have gained through the project at home which is the ultimate goal of the program.

6. Strengthened the capacity of WWO Bulgaria through the creation of a website for the organization, which will lead to better recognition and popularize the Foundation’s work.

Caregivers and children in the village of Davidovo play together during the play group sessions.
Joint Project: Toy Library Mobile Approach

7. The results of the project were presented at a two-day conference with 64 participants from various organizations - representatives from organizations and institutions working in the field of early childhood development, local authorities and state institutions working with children and families at risk, as well as representatives of UNICEF Bulgaria, and the National Network for Children. The conference presented the mobile approach in the Toy Library service provision, analysis of the results achieved related to child development and parent-child interaction, difficulties and challenges. Within the conference we discussed ideas and suggestions for sustainable solutions for the continuation and multiplication of this approach in other regions and organizations.

*Children and caregivers from Davidovo demonstrate a play session during the conference.*

*Participants waive at the camera at the end of the Mobile Approach to Toy Library conference.*
Capacity-building trainings
Not being a direct service provider, WWO’s ultimate goal in Bulgaria is to strengthen the capacity of our partners to support children and families in the best possible way by providing them with innovative programs and capacity-building trainings. Therefore, in addition to the trainings under the Toy Library Mobile Approach project, WWO Bulgaria also organized 5 additional trainings for new and existing partners in 2015:

**Monitoring and Evaluation Follow-Up Training with the NGO Club in Targovishte:**

In July 2015, Dr. Anthony Salandy, WWO Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, visited the NGO Club in Targovishte, where he conducted working meetings with specialists from the Club. They reviewed the successes, difficulties and challenges which the team faced as well as the use of tools for evaluation and indicators for the Mobile Toy Library. A questionnaire for parents was developed to measure the satisfaction with the service and the development of their children.

**Music in Motion training for new partners**

In September 2015, WWO organized an introductory Music in Motion training presenting the program to 4 new and diverse partners in Western Bulgaria. The training’s practical sessions took place in the Refugee Center “Ovcha Kupel” in Sofia. Refugee children and their caregivers were thrilled to participate in the sessions which brought them joy and positive energy, allowing them to forget for a time the circumstances that brought them to the Refugee Center and enter the world of music and dance instead. Another practical session was held with children and mothers using the services of Community Support Center “St. Sofia” where the theoretical part of the training also took place. Through the training, the participants had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with another one of WWO’s programs and think about ways that they can best implement it in their work.
Capacity-building trainings

Music in Motion Follow-up Training

A follow-up training was also organized for our partners from the Family Counseling Centers in Novi Pazar, Shumen, and Veliki Preslav in October. WWO and staff of partner organizations reviewed the implementation of the program at each site and discussed successes and difficulties that they have encountered in their work. We had the opportunity to observe a Music in Motion session with children in the Family Counseling Center in Novi Pazar, as well as a Mobile Music in Motion session with children in a Veliki Preslav kindergarten.

Children in the Veliki Preslav kindergarten are enjoying the bells. ... and the parachute is always everyone’s favorite.

Music in Motion teaches children valuable skills, such as sharing and cooperation.

Still having fun at the end of the session.
Capacity-building trainings

Play the Story Training

In response to the Family Counseling Centers’ request to provide them with programs for older children, WWO organized an introductory training to the Play the Story program, which supports child development in a fun and creative way through literature, creative movement and arts. The training consisted of a theoretical session and a practical session. In the theoretical session, partner staff familiarized themselves with the program and the methodology for its implementation, while the practical session gave them an opportunity to witness a Play the Story session with the children from a school in Veliki Preslav. The partners are very enthusiastic about the program and expect a more detailed training in order to begin to implement it in their organizations.

FCC staff improvise during the Play the Story training.

Schoolchildren listen with interest to the story of Little Katie. Everybody is busy drawing their dream world.

Time for a “power pose”

“The Land of Goodness” - this is how one little girl depicted her dream world.
Capacity-building trainings

Music in Motion training adapted for children with special needs

Responding to partner requests, WWO Bulgaria organized a Music in Motion training adapted for children with special needs for representatives of 9 institutional and community-based partners. A practical session with children with special needs demonstrated that every child has unique abilities and regardless of their condition, can participate actively and develop his/her skills while having fun.

Our wonderful trainer, Christine Hall, demonstrates how we can successfully include all children in the Music in Motion sessions.

Every child has unique capabilities and, regardless of his/her condition, can participate actively in WWO Programs and develop while having fun.

Toy Library training

A Toy Library training also took place in October with staff of Day Center for Children with Special Needs “Kashtichkata” in Novi Pazar. The training covered the following subjects: an overview of WWO work abroad and in Bulgaria with a focus on the importance of investing in early childhood development. Five modules were presented including: Playfulness; Child Development Domains, How to Observe Children in Play, Support and Positive Reinforcement during Play, and Guidelines for Toy Librarians. The training methodology was experiential with time for staff to participate in play activities and understand how to support child development through play.

Toy Library Training in Novi Pazar
In December 2015, WWO Bulgaria held a Strategic Planning meeting with the participation of key strategic partners in order to receive feedback, share ideas and draw together a picture of our future work in Bulgaria. The meeting was facilitated by a representative of the National Network for Children, of which WWO has been a member since 2013. Together we laid the foundation for an Action Plan with specific goals for the 2016-2018 period using a professional approach to strategic planning - analysis of WWO’s past, present and future work, SWOT analysis, and partner participation. In this way we were able to outline a plan for WWO’s development in the next 3 years. As a result of the discussions, three main goals for future development were identified: capacity-building, establishing a network, and increasing recognition of WWO in Bulgaria.

Three broad goals for the 2016-2018 period:

1. **Capacity-building** - certifying the EOP program and the partners who can use it in Bulgaria, training trainers, setting up methodological guidelines to be used by all our partners, providing quality services for children and families, building the capacity of the local team;

2. **Establishing and maintaining a network** of WWO partners across the country sharing a common understanding of the importance of play for early childhood development and working to improve wellbeing of vulnerable children based on the CRC principles;

3. **Making WWO more recognizable** in Bulgaria - promoting its positive image, raising the profile of the organization, entering into strategic partnerships.
Strategic Planning Partner Feedback

Participants were happy to be involved in our strategic planning process and shared that they value our programs highly because they are unique for Bulgaria. When asked why WWO is an important and valued partner for their organizations, they identified capacity-building as a key reason. WWO’s programs are seen as innovative resources in our partners’ work with vulnerable children and families. Given that WWO is not a direct service provider, building the capacity of partner organizations is the best way we can contribute to promoting children’s well-being in Bulgaria.

Plan for 2016

- Reviewing existing partnerships - motivating partners to participate in our programs not so much for financial reasons but for personal and professional growth and development;

- Entering into new partnerships - local NGOs sharing similar principles of work and motivated to contribute with their own resources to WWO programs;

- Gradual transition towards more focused approach to work - a proactive rather than reactive approach to new partnerships, selection of Toy Librarians, Music in Motion specialists and One-to-One Attachment Assistants in accordance with unified criteria;

- Reviewing and improving the M&E system - introducing an in-depth qualitative approach to gathering and analyzing data;

- Identifying training needs and providing on-going trainings for partners;

- Introducing and piloting additional components of Element of Play in Bulgaria;

- Continuing the mobile approach to TL and MiM in the Targovishte region by increasing the target groups - provision of the programs in the children’s hospital ward and in a nursery group of the local kindergarten.

- Building a strong professional WWO team with diverse transferrable skills to support local partners, develop the work of the organization, look for funding and training opportunities, and contribute wholeheartedly to the WWO mission and vision.