



OPEN DAY

on 28th March 2014

ASSOCIATION OF
BULGARIAN
ERGOTHERAPISTS



**Ruse University 'Angel Kanchev'
Association of Bulgarian Occupational Therapists
and Frontline Partnership**

Celebrating...

'NEW FRONTIERS IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY'

EU Leonardo da Vinci Mobility programme

March 2013 – March 2014

FRONTLINE

Project Management and Long-arm Support

In partnership with

RUSE UNIVERSITY

Professional Support

and

FRIENDSHIP CHURCH

Practical and Pastoral support

Funded by

**EU LEONARDO da VINCI PROGRAMME – funding for travel and living expenses
'FRIENDS OF BULGARIA' – funding for work-related expenses**



Project Partners...

UNIVERSITY OF RUSE 'ANGEL KANCHEV'

Occupational Therapy Programme



FRIENDSHIP CHURCH

Social action based in Baba Tonka house and in Ruse community

- Daily soup kitchen
- Kindergarten
- Activities for young people with disabilities
- Cooking course at 'Atanas Burov' school
- Youth camps
- Pastoral and spiritual care
- Humanitarian support



Project Content...

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Recent UK graduates

- Sophie Goodfellow BSc OT
- Claire Heffernan BSc OT
- Natasha Holt Garner BSc OT
- Amy Wood BSc OT

Working in Baba Tonka house, small group homes, schools, day centre and family homes

March – December 2013



Amy Natasha Claire Sophie



GROUP WORK

Interactive activities, games and visits based on students' studies and interests

- Teamwork and group cohesion
- Social integration
- Expression and communication
- Motor planning, movement and co-ordination



EATING AND DRINKING

For maximum independence at meal times

- Eating and drinking aids
- Seating and positioning
- Method and techniques
- Guidelines for carers



SENSORY

Developing sensory processing skills

- Visual, tactile, proprioceptive and vestibular
- Sensory Integration techniques for
 - Calming and alerting
 - Reducing sensory-seeking behaviours
 - Developing postural mechanisms



POSTURE and POSITIONING

For maximum comfort and function

- Adapted seating
- Postural stability
- Varied positions
- 'Tummy Time'



EQUIPMENT SERVICE

Mobility, daily living and therapy

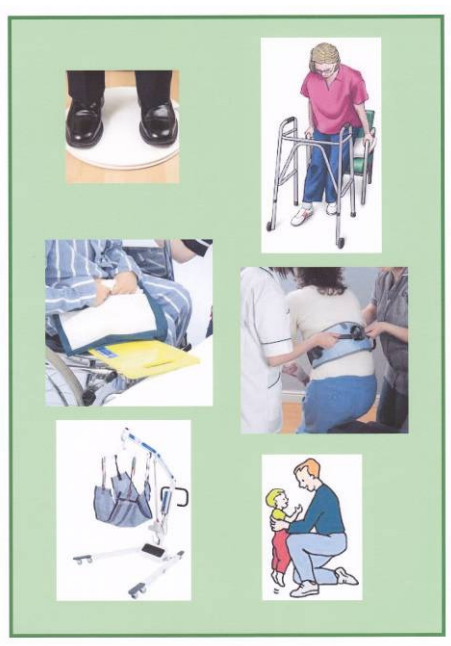
- Equipment
 - Donated by UK health and social services
 - Purchased from Motivation Romania
- Individual assessments
- Selection and adaption of equipment
- Information and training



PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Sharing knowledge, skills and experiences
with Bulgarian colleagues

- 'On the job' collaboration
- Supervision and mentoring
- Reflective practice
- Training sessions



SAFE MOVING and HANDLING

For maximum comfort and safety

- Assessment of individual needs
- Selection of equipment
- Demonstration of techniques
- Information and training



PROJECT OUTCOMES

Brief Summary

General

- Promoted the OT profession in Bulgaria
- Supported Ruse OT students & graduates
- Supported development of local services
- Positive impact on participants' professional practice and personal development

Records

- Clinical reports
- Project SWOT analyses
- Articles

Sustainability

- Continuing support for children and young adults with disabilities through referral of all contacts to:-

'Association of Bulgarian Occupational Therapists'
Child Centre, Ruse

ASSOCIATION OF
BULGARIAN
ERGOTHERAPISTS



Comments from the Project Participants...



Project Partners

'Friendship Church supports community inclusion and values diversity. It challenges the deeply ingrained and restrictive beliefs surrounding disability in Bulgaria' CF

'Ruse University is the only university in Bulgaria to offer a course in Occupational Therapy that is recognised by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists' CF

'Since Frontline has been well established in Ruse for many years there were lots of contacts and friendly faces for us to meet' CH

'We were based in Baba Tonka house which provided living accommodation, an assessment/sensory room and an equipment storage area' SG

The task

'Our main aim was to develop an occupational therapy service for children and young adults - an exciting venture but a daunting challenge for a new graduate' SG

'Living and working in a challenging, and often low-resourced, environment required us to rely on our core skills and increase our capacity for innovation' AW

'I used all the skills I had learnt from my degree course to identify problems, be creative, and choose suitable interventions' NHG

Baba Tonka House and the families

'Each family had a unique story of how caring for a child with a disability had affected their relationships, often leaving one relative as sole carer, with little practical or financial support' SG

'We carried out assessments and interventions at Baba Tonka house, the child's home and anywhere that was most suitable for the child, including a local playground' SG

'We set up a weekly pre-school group for children aged 2 – 7. The aim was to provide fun activities to increase core stability, sensory input and social interaction' SG

'We offered parents advice to make daily activities easier, and ideas for therapy sessions at home' SG

Equipment service

'Many families travelled for hours in the hope of obtaining suitable equipment and advice. Their gratitude was often overwhelming' SG

'We adapted seating with foam padding or anything else that worked! This helped me gain a practical understanding of the equipment and become more resourceful' AW

'I enjoyed providing something that could make such a difference to a child's life and seeing the families' reactions. Their gratitude was extremely humbling' AW

Small group homes

'The staff were extremely hard working and did their best to meet the needs of the children and young adults' SG

'We completed individual assessments and set goals. Perhaps the most obvious need was for meaningful activities and sensory stimulation' SG

'The occupational therapy students were a great help and embraced the opportunity to develop their practical skills by continuing the interventions in our absence' SG

Supporting students and OT's

'One of the greatest challenges Bulgarian OT students face is the small number of qualified therapists' AW

'We developed a clear pathway and paperwork system for the evolving multi-disciplinary team (in the day centre), to be implemented alongside the role of the OT' AW

Special schools

'The children were struggling with the sedentary nature of their lessons (at school). They and their teacher fully embraced the programme and will continue to adopt the principles' AW

Sensory

'Effective sensory integration-based activities demonstrated positive functional outcomes. One child responded so well that he has begun to go to school because his concentration has improved so much' AW

'We created an 'under the sea' theme day and considered specific sensory activities for each individual child' NHG

'We used sensory lights, objects with different textures and colours, finger painting and music. Meaningful activities have such a positive effect on individuals' NHG

Final comments

'I could never have imagined how much I would gain from this fantastic experience. It has given me professional and personal skills for the future and fantastic memories I will never forget' SG

'I have had amazing opportunities and have learned so much, both professionally and personally. I have made great friends' CH

'This project has given me valuable knowledge and skills that I can use in future jobs. It has ignited my passion to promote OT and work in other countries' NHG

'This experience has been an eye-opening, humbling, gratifying and intense rollercoaster adventure but one that will shape my future for the better' AW

'I am proud to have achieved what I have, and so grateful to have been given the opportunity to do so' AW

'It would not have been possible without the continued support of Frontline, Ruse University, Friendship Church and all our friends and colleagues who have helped us through this fantastic journey' SG

With thanks to all our friends and colleagues in Ruse, Bulgaria