

**DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA**

- State Report -

**MINISTRY OF CIVIL AFFAIRS
OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Introduction

During the reporting period, in the area of education, Bosnia and Herzegovina made significant steps in terms of the legal regulation and institutional capacity building, all aimed at establishment of the relevant elements for the European dimension of education and training in BiH.

During the past four years, four framework education laws were passed at the state level, specifically, the Framework Law on Preschool Upbringing and Education in BiH; Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training in BiH; Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH; and the Law on the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education.

Some of the above mentioned framework laws envisage establishment of three education agencies at the state level: Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance, which has started operating; Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education, which is in the process of transformation from the Agency for Standards and Assessment in Education for the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska into a new organization; and the Center for Information and Recognition of Documents in the Area of Higher Education, which should start operating soon.

The strategic documents in the areas of preschool upbringing and education, secondary vocational education and training, and the Strategic Guidance for the Development of Education in BiH for the period of 2008-2015, have largely contributed to the implementation of the education reforms in the state.

The whole process is significantly supported through a large number of projects. In the period of 2004 – 2008, some 20 projects were implemented in BiH, for the most part focusing on the reform of secondary vocational education and training, and particularly of the higher education, which was aimed at initiate and continue the activities begun on approximation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina education to the European education space.

All of the efforts made constitute a precondition for further reform processes and a demonstration of the reform-oriented commitment on the part of BiH on its path towards full membership of the European Union.

1. EDUCATION SYSTEM AND CHANGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY: OVERVIEW OF SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

1.1. Reforms and Innovations Introduced into the Education System

Organization, Structure and Administration

Organization of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is based on the constitutional system. The constitution of BiH defines Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state consisting of two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republika Srpska, and of the Brcko District as a separate administrative unit. The entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina constitutes of ten cantons.

In addition to the state-level, entity-level and cantonal governments, there are also cities and municipalities as units of local self-administration.

Pursuant to the previously mentioned constitutional system, the area of education is in full and undivided competency of the entity of the Republika Srpska, ten cantons in the Federation of BiH and the Brcko District of BiH.

Each of the twelve aforementioned administrations has its own ministry of education, laws in the area of education, education budgets, it determines the education policy and has all other rights and obligations arising from the mandate of the competent education authority, responsible for organization and functioning of education in their proper scopes of competency.

At the level of the entity of the Federation of BiH, there is the Federal Ministry of Education and Science, with a coordination role over the cantonal ministries of education. This ministry has the budget for education and uses it mainly to ensure the entitlements to education.

At the level of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, since 2003, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH has received the competency in terms of „coordination of activities, harmonization of plans of the entity authorities and definition of international-level strategy in the area of education“¹. Pursuant to its coordination role, this Ministry has no established system for financing of some specific form of education activities. Pursuant to its competencies, since 2003, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH has been the initiator of adoption of five framework

¹ Law on Ministries and Other Administrative Bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, „Official Bulletin of BiH“, No. 5/03

laws in the area of education at the state level (the largest number of these was in 2007), while the lower government levels have the duty to harmonize their laws with the state-level ones. Prior to being sent into the adoption procedure, each text of law was to receive approvals from all of the 13 ministries of education (ten cantonal, two entity ones and one from the Brcko District of BiH).

At the level of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, some of the aforementioned framework laws adopted establish three agencies for education at the state level: Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (started operating); Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education (in the process of transformation from the old into the new organization); the Center for Information and Recognition of Documents in the Area of Higher Education, (to start operating soon).

The recent period has seen the establishment of the following senior advisory bodies for the area of education: Rectors' Conference of BiH, and Conference of Education Ministers in BiH, whereas the establishment of the Council for General Education in BiH is in due course.

Within the scope of the aforementioned organization of education, it is necessary to mention the significant institutions making up the **structure** of the education sector in the cantons, Republika Srpska, and the Brcko District of BiH: there are eight pedagogic institutes functioning (one in the Republika Srpska, two in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, and one each in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica, Bihac, and Gorazde).

They are tasked with development of education curricula, affirmation of new approaches and methods in the education process, organization of teacher training, counseling and assessment of performance for teachers, principals and schools in general, etc. Of the total number of pedagogic institutes, only three are autonomous organizations (the two institutes in Mostar and the institute in Bihac), whereas the rest perform under the ministries of education. Education inspections are active at each ministry of education, and they are mandated to oversee the enforcement of laws and bylaws, adopted at the level of the related ministries – the priority task lies in administrative supervision. The municipal governments are responsible for certain issues in the area of education, particularly primary education, according to the definitions from the laws of the competent education authorities, in appreciation of the local self-government principle.

Pursuant to the Framework Law on Preschool Upbringing and Education in BiH², the responsibility for determination and implementation of preschool institution policies, general

² „Official Bulletin of BiH“, No. 88/07

administration of preschool institutions and efficient utilization of human and material resources lies in the hands of the Administrative Boards. The principals of preschool institutions are appointed by the administrative boards based on the procedure to be determined in the laws or regulations of the Republika Srpska, cantons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or of the Brcko District of BiH, and in the general acts of preschool institutions.

Schools are mainly legal entities, save for district schools, mostly in rural areas, which are affiliated to their parent schools. According to the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH³, schools are administered by school boards, and pupils are entitled to form their councils, as well as parents, who are entitled to form parents' councils. School principals are appointed by school boards pursuant to the procedure regulated in the law applicable at that government level.

Pursuant to the Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH⁴, higher education institutions are administered by Administrative Boards, one third of whose members are appointed by the founder, whereas the rest are appointed by the Senate of the higher education institutions. The Rector manages the public university, and he is elected by the senate based on a public competition. The aforementioned law has introduced the principle of organization of integrated university and provided the end date by which the universities not so organized need to be restructured. A similar task is also awaiting the private universities in BiH.

Reforms in Education

The goal of the current and forthcoming **reforms** is to build education as a generating factor for the total socio-economic development and its integration into the European education space. This integration in education is implemented through ensuring of legal, institutional and other standards in education, in compliance with the European principles.

The Framework Law on Preschool Upbringing and Education in BiH envisages mandatory attendance of preschool institutions for all preschool aged children for one year before enrollment into primary schools.

³ „Official Bulletin of BiH“, No. 18/03

⁴ „Official Bulletin of BiH“, No. 59/08

The adoption of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH back in 2003 started the reform of primary education ordering for introduction of mandatory nine-year attendance of primary education. During the school year of 2003/2004, the entity of the Republika Srpska began with full application of the aforementioned legal requirement, whereas in the Federation of BiH, its implementation began one year later, also noting that two cantons have not yet started implementing the aforesaid legal requirement.

The reform of vocational education and training in BiH has been implemented for almost ten years, and the EU VET III program is currently being implemented, aimed at rounding up the process. Over the past period, the new nomenclature of occupations has been prepared and harmonized, wherein their number has been reduced from almost 500 down to 100, and combined into 13 families of occupations. Of this number, 8 families of occupations have been included into the reform process, resulting in the education curricula made using modular methodology. The current EU VET III program envisages for the reform of the nomenclature of occupations in the remaining 5 families of occupations, including preparation and implementation of pilot project aimed at external evaluation and grading in the final classes of the VET schools for five groups of occupations, formation of virtual and real companies at all secondary vocational schools, and formation of career development centers at all vocational schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina, aimed at occupational orientation of pupils.

The reform of higher education has been implemented pursuant to the Bologna objectives, and it pertains, among other things, to introduction of recognizable and comparable study degrees, establishment of quality assurance mechanisms, maintenance of addenda to diplomas in order to promote employment, improvement of mobility and freedom of movement for students and teachers, overcoming of barriers to freedom of movement, recognition and valorization of study periods and results spent by students at other universities or in other countries, and promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance and curricula development.

On the path of BiH integration into the European higher education space, it is crucial to have many issues resolved in a single manner at the state level, through adoption of the Framework Law. Recognition of qualifications promotes mobility of students and academic staff, thus contributing to overall integration and further competitiveness on the labor market.

Under the document „Strategic Guidance for Development of Education in BiH with the Implementation Plan for 2008 - 2015“⁵, the competent BiH authorities have accepted the

⁵ „Official Bulletin of BiH“, No. 63/08

basis for further reform of education in BiH. This document also defines the priorities in development of education, pertaining to raising of education level among population and of competitiveness of the labor force, to improved efficiency of the education and training system, to prevention of social exclusion among children and youth, and to expand opportunities for adult education and training, as well as for quality assurance and revitalization of research in education.

In addition to creation of the institutional framework for reform implementation, the basic features of the current and forthcoming reforms are also reflected in the modernization and development of teaching and learning at all levels of the education system, equality of access and fairness in education, development of linkages between education and labor market, promotion of permanent occupational development for teachers, principals and other employees of the upbringing and education institutions, quality assurance, international cooperation, etc.

Goals and Purpose of Education

In terms of **goals and purpose of education** at every level, it is necessary to observe that there are clearly defined short-term (2008), mid-term (2008-2010), and long-term (2011-2015) goals⁶.

For **preschool upbringing and education**, the short-term goals set are implementation of the Framework Law enforcement process.

The proposal for the common core for integral development work programs at preschool institutions has been developed and is in the adoption phase. Increase of entry into preschool institutions to reach 20% of population, and increase of the number of school enrollment preparation programs to reach 40% of population constitute mid-term goals. As a long-term goal, it is necessary to increase the number of entries into preschool institutions to reach 50% of population, and to increase the number of entries for school enrollment preparation programs to reach 100%, as well as to accomplish the situation whereby all preschool institution principals possess the minimum degree of qualifications required for management of upbringing and education institutions.

The short-term goals in **primary education** are focused on conducting of evaluation in application of the nine-year mandatory education and the framework curricula. It is

⁶ Strategic Guidance for Development of Education in BiH with the Implementation plan for 2008-2015, „Official Bulletin of BiH“, No. 63/08

necessary to prepare the plan of activities aimed at reduction of school dropout rate in primary education, and to introduce external evaluation at all primary schools.

Mid-term goals envisage implementation of the nine-year education in all parts of BiH, development curricula for all classes/subjects of the nine-year primary education, and adoption of pedagogic standards and norms, as well as reduction of the school dropout rate. Long-term goals shall focus on increased enrollment and completion of primary education to reach 100%, and on ensuring learning of one foreign language for all pupils in lower grades of primary schools no later than from the third grade on, and in higher grades to learn even the second foreign language, no later than from the seventh grade on. Also, they shall focus on ensuring that all primary school principals possess the minimum degree of qualifications required for management of upbringing and education institutions.

Under its short-term goals, **secondary education** encompasses application and adoption of the plan for enrollment into comprehensive secondary schools, three-year and four-year secondary vocational and technical schools. Following 2009, enrollment of pupils shall be done based on the strategic documents related to education development and the data from the Agency for Labor and Employment of BiH, as well as based on the student enrollment plans at higher education institutions.

Mid-term goals are focused on increased enrolment into secondary education to reach 85%, on increased share of enrollment into secondary general education (comprehensive secondary schools) from the current 20% to 30%, and increased share of four-year vocational education from the current 30% to 40%.

Long-term goals are increased enrollment into secondary education to reach 90%, increased share of enrollment into comprehensive secondary schools and four-year vocational schools to reach 80%, ensuring of opportunity for switching from three-year to four-year secondary schools, and ensuring that all secondary school principals possess the minimum degree of qualifications required for management of upbringing and education institutions. Introduction of the external maturational examination at the end of the four-year secondary education is also one of the long-term goals.

The short-term goal set for general education secondary schools is development of draft plan for reform of general education secondary schools, and the long-term one set is development of the new curricula with optional subjects.

As a short-term goal aimed at development of vocational education, the Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been

adopted⁷. The Law envisages establishment of tripartite advisory councils at the level of the entities and the Brcko District of BiH, composed of the representatives of employers, trade unions and competent education authorities, aimed at improving linkages between the education and labor market sectors.

Mid-term goals for vocational education are: at the state level, conclusion of agreements between the main actors on the procedures for identification of occupation standards, development of curricula and competence-based qualifications.

Long-term goals characterize development of the quality assurance framework in vocational education and training, development of the qualification framework for life-long learning, reflecting the principles of the European qualification framework, streamlining of the vocational school network and interconnection of vocational education and training with the labor market.

Within the scope of its short-term goals, **higher education** defines the implementation of the Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH. It also encompasses development of the study on the reasons for a large number of school dropouts and low rate of completion of higher education, as well as design of the mandatory diploma addendum.

These further encompass establishment of the master's studies in compliance with the Bologna principles and development of the institutional network for research and development at all higher education institutions.

Mid-term goals include establishment of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance, and of the Center for information and Recognition of Documents in the Area of Higher Education, as well as the functional integration of universities, full implementation of the Lisbon Convention and establishment of the doctoral studies.

The long-term goals in higher education are based on finalization of the process for integration of BiH into the European Higher Education and Research Space, including efficient enrollment and completion rates, as well as sufficient funding for research and international educational and scientific cooperation and exchange. One of the long-term goals is also to increase the enrollment of students to 32% by 2015, in relation to the current 22%.

⁷ „Official Bulletin of BiH“, No. 63/08

Education Curricula

The education curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina are passed by the related ministries at the level of the entity of the Republika Srpska, 10 cantons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and at the level of the Brcko District of BiH.

Education curricula are designed and developed at the pedagogic institutes. The existing pedagogic institutes in BiH also perform the tasks related to introduction of new principles and methods in the upbringing and education process, training of teachers, control and grading of the teacher and school performance, and the like. The curricula are prepared by the subject related working groups, and are then approved by the ministries. The members of the working groups are mainly the subject experts from schools, pedagogic institutes and university faculties.

Based on the provisions of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, the common core curricula have been adopted and have been applied at all public and private schools in the state. The common core curricula are a group of subjects, subject contents and topics relevant and mandatory for all pupils in BiH. The consent for application of the common core curricula has been granted by the ministers of education in BiH, by conclusion of the Agreement in 2003.

The European Union project „Reform of General Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina“, implemented from January 2004 through January 2006, prepared the Model of the Framework Curricula, Model of Subject Curricula for Mother Tongues and Mathematics for the 3rd, 6th and 9th grades of primary education, and for the 4th grade of the general secondary education, and the Draft Guidelines for Curricula Implementation. The Framework Curricula cites the core principles of the Curricula organization in BiH based on contemporary pedagogic approaches to the teaching and learning processes. It provides the guidance for development and upgrading of the common core curricula, parts of the curricula decided about by the Republika Srpska, cantons in the Federation of BiH and the Brcko District, and parts of the curricula decided about by each school within the scope of its autonomy.

Pursuant to the Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training in BiH, the education curricula for secondary vocational education and training consist of the common core developed in compliance with the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, curricula for vocational subjects and parts of the curricula designed at schools. Under the scope of the common core curricula, public and private schools have the

freedom to create and implement teaching contents at their choice. The curricula at secondary vocational schools are developed as much as possible through application of modular methodology. The EU VET III program shall develop the qualification framework, develop modular curricula for the remaining 5 occupation families, including the training of teachers.

Pursuant to the applicable laws, the primary and secondary schools in BiH enjoy autonomy, which particularly includes the freedom of schools to develop and implement **education contents** according to the requirements of the local labor market, which contains not more than 30% of the overall curricula. Schools also enjoy an appropriate degree of autonomy in terms of hiring teachers and other staff, and freedom of work for teachers. Also, schools respect the freedom of teachers to teach using methods they deem appropriate, in appreciation of the standards and sustainability of the existing forms and methods in the teaching process and application of new ones.

The senate of the higher education institutions decides on any academic issues, including passing of education curricula for undergraduate, post-graduate and doctoral studies.

Legal and Institutional Frameworks

The legislation in the area of education in BiH governs the principles of preschool, primary, secondary and higher education and upbringing, adult education, and establishment and functioning of the education service providers, as well as supplementary educations for the children of BiH citizens abroad.

During the reporting period, four more laws were adopted⁸:

- Framework Law on Preschool Upbringing and Education in BiH;
- Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training in BiH;
- Law on the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education;
- Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH.

Through an agreement between the governments of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska, in 2001, the Agency for Standards and Grading in Education was established as an expert service providing expert support to education

⁸ The text of the framework laws is available on the website of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, at <http://mcp.gov.ba>

grading, that is, determination and definition of standards for pupils' accomplishments. This was an independent institution supported by both entity budgets.

The cease of operation of the Agency for Standards and Grading in Education for the Federation of BiH and the Republika Srpska was established in the Law on the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education⁹.

The Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education in BiH is competent to establish standards of knowledge, grading of the results accomplished and developing of the common core curricula in preschool, primary and secondary education.

The Agency shall be a factor of cohesion and shall provide services to pedagogic institutes, ministries in charge of education, Department for Education of the Government of the Brcko District of BiH, Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH and to schools, based on the joint activity framework but in appreciation of the competencies and responsibilities of these institutions. A CARDS project shall soon start aimed at contributing to the functional strengthening of the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education and at ensuring of quality assurance in education through reform of pedagogic institutes.

The Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance¹⁰, as an autonomous administrative organization, shall among other things assist the relevant education authorities in the process of accreditation and licensing of higher education institutions, establish criteria and standards for quality assurance, provide advice and recommendations for removal of drawbacks in the quality of studies and higher education institutions, and the like.

The Center for Information and Recognition of Documents in the Area of Higher Education (CIP)¹¹ is an autonomous administrative organization in charge of information and tasks related to recognition in the area of higher education under the framework of the Convention on Recognition of Diplomas in Higher Education – the Lisbon Convention. Prior to establishment of the Center, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH intermediated in provision of information and the scope of work of the CIP.

The Rectors' Conference of BiH, established in the Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH (until adoption of the Framework Law, it operated based on the agreements among public universities), as an advisory body for implementation of reform in higher education.

⁹ "Official Bulletin of BiH", No. 88/07

¹⁰ Decision on the beginning of work and determination of the seat of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance, "Official Bulletin of BiH", No. 10/08

¹¹ Decision on the beginning of work and determination of the seat of the Center for Information and Recognition of Documents in the Area of Higher Education, "Official Bulletin of BiH", No. 9/08

The Rectors' Conference establishes and represents the common interests of the universities in BiH and cooperates with the institutions in the area of higher education in the state.

The Memorandum of understanding¹² established the Conference of Ministers of Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a permanent and highest advisory body in charge of coordination of the education sector in BiH.

The forthcoming period is expected to see establishment of the Council for General Education in BiH, as an expert and independent advisory body for decision makers related to action policy in the areas of preschool, primary and secondary general education in BiH.

In addition to the state-level laws, the following documents and strategies were also adopted:

- „Strategic Guidance for Development of Preschool Upbringing and Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina“, from 2005;
- „Strategy for Development of Secondary Vocational Education and Training in BiH for the period 2007-2013“, from 2007¹³;
- „Strategic Guidance for Development of Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina with Implementation Plan 2008-2015“, from 2008;
- The joint project by the European Commission and the Council of Europe in 2006-2008 „Strengthening of Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina“ has contributed to development of important instruments for application of the Bologna principles. More precisely, these are seven significant documents, required for accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Higher Education Space, specifically: Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in BiH, Recommendations for Implementation of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in BiH, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education in BiH, Recommendations for Implementation of Quality Assurance in BiH, State Action Plan for Recognition of Qualifications in BiH, model of the Addendum to Diploma, and the Manual for Users of the Model of the Addendum to Diploma¹⁴

¹² „Official Bulletin of BiH“, No. 19/08

¹³ „Official Bulletin of BiH“, No. 65/07

¹⁴ According to the European area of higher education: 7 core strategies and guidelines for implementation of the Bologna process. Joint project in 2006-2008 „Strengthening of Higher Education in BiH“

- The joint project by the European Commission and the Council of Europe in 2003-2005, “Modernization in Administration and Management of the Universities in BiH” developed the document Prototype of Statutes for Integrated Universities¹⁵.
- Document “Development of School Management in BiH”¹⁶, drafted under the CES project in 2006, is a compilation dedicated to inclusive education, aimed at contributing to improved quality of education in BiH through development and creation of education policy, administration and school management. Apart from this document, other relevant documents in this area were also developed under the same project.¹⁷
- The document adopted, „Roadmap and Plan of Activities for Inclusion of Bosnia and Herzegovina into EU Programs for Life-Long Learning and Youth in Action for the Period 2007-2013”¹⁸ envisages establishment of a state-level agency to be responsible for administration of the Community programs (Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius, Daphne, Grundtvig, Erasmus Mundus, ...). The Agency shall also be responsible for ensuring of successful implementation of the program in the state and for financial administration of all funds available.

It should be noted that activities have begun on development of the Feasibility Study for Adult Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to provide guidelines for development of a strategic document as well as the legislation, and establishment of institutions for this area.

Soon the work will begin on the Feasibility Study for the Reform of Financing of the Higher Education in BiH, which is an exceptionally important matter, given the fact that the state law on this education level does not contain these issues.

Provided that the institutional structure is in place, all of the aforementioned documents constitute a legal framework with clear guidelines for action in order to implement reforms at all education levels.

¹⁵ Reform of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Prototype of Statutes for Integrated Universities – version with commentaries

¹⁶ Development of School Management in Bosnia and Herzegovina – In-Between Theory and Good Practices, Sarajevo – CES Program, Sarajevo, October 2006

¹⁷ Manual for Training of School Management Teams in “Democratic School Management”, part one: School Management and Good Governance, CES-Program, Pedagogic Institute in Tuzla, 2005-2006.; Manual for Training of School Management Teams in “Democratic School Management”, part two: Quality, CES-Program, Pedagogic Institute of Tuzla, 2005-2006.; Manual for Training of School Management Teams in “Democratic School Management”, part three: Staff Development, Communication, Financing and Democracy at Schools, CES-Program, Pedagogic Institute in Tuzla, 2005-2006.; Basics of Democratic School Management, Sarajevo, October 2006

¹⁸ „Official Bulletin of BiH“, No. 74/08

1.2. Main Policies, Accomplishments and Lessons Learned

Access to Education

For all education levels, the legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina allows each individual to have equal right of access and equal opportunities for participation in appropriate education, without discrimination on any basis.

Incorporation of the preschool upbringing and education into the integral part of the overall upbringing and education system has provided support to development of children, but it has also opened up opportunities for various forms of intervention at an early age. The Framework Law on Preschool Upbringing and Education in BiH points out that children with special needs shall be included into preschool education institutions and shall follow programs adapted to their individual needs. This means that they need to be created for each child, including the determined development status of the child on a mandatory basis.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, regular primary schools educate children without mental or physical handicaps, but they also educate children with special needs, providing them with individual education programs adapted to the needs of the child.

Secondary schools may organize adult training within the scope of their registered activities, according to the curricula for adult education and training, which is to be approved by the competent ministry. The centers for adult education and training in BiH offer programs for acquisition of secondary degrees, retraining and supplementary training programs, as well as programs for development and enablement for work.

Access to higher education is ensured to all students who have completed four-year secondary schools, regardless of their age.

In order to implement the envisaged legal provisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina governing equal access to education, the competent education authorities at the level of the entity of the Republika Srpska, cantons in the Federation of BiH, and of the Brcko District of BiH, have been intensively working on their implementation.

Determination and definition of detailed policies is complicated by the lack of adequate state-level statistical data for the area of education. The lack of statistical data and appropriate indicators on education in BiH constitutes a major obstruction in setting concrete goals in development of education and its monitoring.

According to the data provided by the Statistics Agency of BiH¹⁹, which during performing of its coordinating role compiles and combines data from the statistics institutes of the Republika Srpska and the Federation of BiH, and from the Statistics Department of the Brcko District of BiH, during the school year of 2006/2007, according to education levels, the numbers of enrolled and completed students by levels of education were as follows:

School Year of 2006/2007	
Level of education	Number of enrolled students
Preschool upbringing and education	13 384
Regular primary education - eight-year	8 670
Regular primary education - nine-year	7 921
Primary education for children with special needs - eight-year	120
Primary education for children with special needs - nine-year	81
Secondary education	160 497
Higher education	99 557

Table 1 – Number of enrolled students by education levels in BiH for the school year of 2006-2007

School Year of 2006/2007	
Level of education	Number of completed students
Regular primary education - eight-year	201 572
Regular primary education - nine-year	164 457
Primary education for children with special needs - eight-year	634
Primary education for children with special needs - nine-year	468
Secondary education	42 373
Higher education	12 199

Table 2 – Number of completed students by education levels in BiH for the school year of 2006-2007

The education statistics in BiH is not in compatible with EU standards, and therefore, under the European Union project „Institution and Capacity Building in the Education System in BiH, the document has been prepared under the title „Lines of Reporting, Statistics and Indicators of Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina“, according to which compilation of data on education in BiH should be harmonized with ISCED levels and EUROSTAT requirements.

¹⁹ Education statistics, Communication No. 1, Statistics Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 23, 2008

Also, within the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, under the Education Department, the Unit for Statistics and Informatics has been established and has, among other things, been put in charge of coordinating activities and data exchange with the entity authorities competent for education, and of conducting statistical analyses and reports based on the data obtained, in order to allow for better quality planning and conducting of education policies in BiH, as well as opening of opportunities for comparison of the BiH education indicators with international ones.

Accomplishments in Learning

Until the establishment of the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, the definition of standards and education accomplishments for specific teaching subjects at specific education levels, as well as grading of the degree of their accomplishments were in the competency of the Agency for Standards and Grading in Education for the Federation of BiH and the Republika Srpska.

The Agency for Standards and Grading developed and administered tests for state-level grading of mother languages and mathematics in the 4th/5th and 8th/9th grades of schools across Bosnia and Herzegovina. It established standards which on the one hand maintain the current situation in the educational system and the curricula in various entities and cantons, and on the other hand, it also maintains skills, competences and knowledge needed by the society. This is the way to provide feedback to those who are responsible for design and implementation of curricula at schools, while various methods for acquisition of knowledge and skills receive their evaluation in the results of such tests.

The Agency has established standards based on the existing curricula. The standards have been revised according to the students' results and may be used for analysis and design of curricula. The standards pertain to what students are expected to know, what skills and competences they are expected to have, rather than to the contents learned at schools.

The Agency for Standards and Grading has introduced variety into its activities over the past two years. It has joined the TIMSS international study – study for testing of students' accomplishments in mathematics and natural sciences. During 2006, a pilot testing was made, and during 2007, the main research was done resulting in internationally comparable results of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian students. Under the preparations for future maturational examinations, during 2007, external grading was implemented for mother tongues and mathematics in the first grades of comprehensive secondary schools.

The Agencies for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education at the level of the state of BiH shall continue activities towards establishment of the standards for knowledge, grading of the results accomplished and development of the common core curricula for preschool, primary and secondary education levels.

Training of Teachers

All completed students of teacher faculties in the state are entitled to receive the title of teachers. This means, students who complete pedagogic academies and faculties which give the titles of graduated teachers. As an exception, such students who complete technical or other non-teaching study groups, but wish to work in teaching, are required to pass the pedagogic and psychological or didactical and methodical group of subjects. The same rule also applies to persons who have working experience in other areas, but who have no working experience in teaching. Educators at preschool institutions, institutes and student homes, teachers and expert associates at primary and secondary schools who are to be employed for the first time are required to pass expert examinations after the expiry of one but not more than two years of working directly in upbringing and education.

In order to ensure equal pedagogic and material conditions at all preschool institutions, primary and secondary schools, pedagogic standards and norms are determined as a common core in ensuring of conditions for the upbringing and education work and for success in completion of goals and tasks arising from the curricula at education institutions.

Pedagogic standards and norms govern the standards for educational and occupational competences of teachers, the quotas on the volumes (teaching quotas and working quotas for all employees at schools) and conditions of work, as well as the numbers of children at preschool institutions and of pupils in classes at primary and secondary schools. These norms and standards are determined for each level of education authorities by themselves, specifically based on the general standards contained in the state-level laws.

At preschool institutions, the educators in the upbringing and education process must have completed the first cycle of higher education. The same requirement has been also imposed upon all other teachers working in primary and secondary education.

Grading, promotion and acquisition of occupational titles of educators/teachers/professors and expert associates at preschool institutions, primary and secondary schools and students' homes have been regulated in rulebooks on grading, promotion and acquisition of expert

titles of educators, teachers, professors and expert associates as passed by the competent education authorities in the Republika Srpska, cantons and the Brcko District.

In order to keep up with developments in specific scientific disciplines, pedagogic theory and practice, to ensure deepening and acquisition of new knowledge and their practical application in work, educators/teachers/professors and expert associates are required to pursue occupational development, as defined and regulated in the aforementioned rulebooks.

Occupational training and development of teachers are regulated in a set of regulations and bylaws. According to the regulations, the holders of such development are schools and students' homes, pedagogic institutes and higher education institutions for training of teachers.

The forms of expert development for teachers include individual and collective ones. Teachers are required to attend expert seminars in their area of expertise as organized by pedagogic institutes on a regular basis, and at least once per year.

Special emphasis should be put on the fact that mandatory certification of teachers in democracy and human rights at secondary schools in BiH has been introduced as a mandatory part of their expert development, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding signed by all ministers of education in BiH in 2006. Only such teachers who possess certificates confirmed by the competent ministry may teach the subjects of civil education, democracy and human rights at secondary schools. The certification process has been largely completed.

In order to ensure the best quality implementation of the reform process, there is an idea in place for studying of management in education through programs/modules in the area of school management, thus enhancing the initial education and training of teachers at teaching faculties.

Role of the Education System in Fight Against Poverty

Education is highly affected by human, social and economic change in the country and environment. Although the BiH laws grant equal rights to education to all, there are obstacles in exercising of such rights, the major of them being related to financial opportunities.

The defined education goals aimed at fighting poverty have been detailed in the document „Mid-Term Development Strategy of BiH 2004-2007 (MTDS)“, as well as in its revised

version. According to the aforementioned Strategy, individuals are supposed to use the education system to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and competences in order to meet the needs of the labor market. Intensification of social dialogue among employers, competent education authorities and trade unions is supposed to allow for development of education and training pursuant to the market needs, thus directly influencing economic and social development. All of these are supposed to contribute to social integration of individuals, their proactive roles in the society, increased flexibility at work, more comprehensive personal fulfillment and complete self-realization.

There is an ever rising awareness that it is necessary to adapt the changes in education with changes on the labor market, and that every development strategy should include adequate education.

This may also be accomplished through facilitation, guidance and promoting of various forms of learning and their recognition. Formal education needs to be supplemented by non-formal and informal learning, as well as their synthesizing in the context of life-long learning, which will be further developed under the scope of the State Qualification Framework.

Support to the education sector in BiH in fighting poverty is provided by non-governmental organizations, social work institutions, employment institutes and international organizations. In appreciation of the fact that primary education in BiH is free and compulsory, one of the measures to fight poverty and raise education levels as offered by the competent ministries of education is provision of free textbooks for lower grades of primary schools. Children from socially disadvantaged families are provided with free textbooks throughout their primary education. In some places, there are some serious thoughts taken about provision of compulsory status to secondary education as well, which among other things involves higher allocations for education from public budgets.

The Economic Planning Directorate of the Council of Ministers of BiH has begun work on preparation of two important development documents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, specifically:

1. Development Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period of 2008-2013, and
2. Social Inclusion Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The human development report for 2007²⁰, analyzing the so-called Leaken indicators or social exclusion indicators in the EU (population below the poverty income line, long-term unemployment, population without health insurance, population above 15 of age without primary school or with incomplete primary school, ...), determines the **index of social exclusion, according to which 50.32% of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina** is socially excluded on some basis. It should be noted that there are no significant differences between the entities, nor between the rural and urban population in terms of social exclusion.

The key causes for social exclusion are poverty, unemployment and inadequate access to education, and the most vulnerable categories are: youth, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, persons in social need, the Roma and elderly persons.

Inasmuch education may more or less be ready to address the changeability of needs on the labor market; the fact is that such activities have been largely neutralized by poor demand or fall of demand for real labor force in general.

²⁰ National Human Development Report 2007, Social Inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina UNDP BiH

2. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE PATH TO FUTURE

2.1. Approach, Scope and Contents

Concept and Challenges of Inclusive Education

In BiH, inclusive education is understood as a pedagogic, humanistic and reform movement. It is designed by introducing of new approaches into the education system, based on the experiences from the neighboring countries and on the European good practice examples.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the **concept** of inclusive education seeks to remove and has been removing barriers to equal life-long learning and participation of all individuals in the education system, meaning that there are no rejected, segregates, stigmatized or handicapped persons, but that all exercise their right to education under regular and other forms of education.

The concept of inclusion in BiH includes differentiation and individualization of teaching. Differentiation of teaching means allowing each person to establish their own pace of learning, to use methods they find most appropriate, so that all students could use their own ways to reach the same goal. Individualization of teaching includes planning, programming and implementation of teaching work in line with the capacities and limitations of individuals, their foreknowledge, and general and specific needs.

In order to allow access to education to all age groups, in the context of life-long learning, and approximation to the European Union standards in terms of inclusion, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been gradually pushing forward in this direction. The Council of Ministers of BiH has adopted the Roadmap and the Plan of Activities for Inclusion of Bosnia and Herzegovina into EU Life-Long Learning and Youth in Action Programs for the Period of 2007-2013. The document describes activities related to upgrading of the education system, particularly in terms of improved life-long learning program for all potential beneficiaries and youth activities aimed at preparation of young people in order to take the proactive role in the society. Acceptance of participation in life-long learning programs allows individuals at all stages of life to accept the motivational opportunities for learning.

On the path towards meeting of European standards, BiH must overcome the difficulties in terms of surmounting obstacles and coping with new **challenges** in ensuring of educational and social inclusion. In those terms, the dissemination and raising of awareness on the

concept of education as a life-long process is a first step towards solution of this problem. The more so because in BiH the notion of inclusive education is still being preferentially associated to education of children with difficulties in development and children with special needs.

This first and foremost requires harmonization of the education system on the whole territory of BiH. The fragmented education system in BiH has been partially addressed through formation of agencies and institutions in education at the state-level, as well as through passing of framework laws.

Adult education in BiH is a process started in the twenties of the past century, but which is now marked with lack of bodies and legislation to define this area in more precise terms. In practice, there is a large number of educational programs and projects intended for adult persons, but their work has not been integrated by way of commonly defined standards and principles, or by legislation applicable in the whole of BiH. Thus, the challenge for the forthcoming period is to pass the legislation, develop the strategic document and form the institutions for adult education. Activities have already started related to the Feasibility Study for Adult Education in BiH, which shall set forth the next steps on this issue.

Among the problems is the phenomenon of prejudice existing against persons with various forms of disabilities, and towards ethnic minorities, particularly the Roma. During 2004, the Action Plan was adopted on the education needs of the Roma and members of other ethnic minorities in BiH, signed by all ministers of education in the state. The ban against all forms of discrimination on any basis at all education levels has been prescribed in the **legal framework and regulations** contained in the framework laws on education in BiH.

There is intensive work underway through various projects to raise the level of awareness and knowledge on the nature of various difficulties and disabilities, in order to prevent the exposure of persons with difficulties and members of ethnic minorities in BiH to inappropriate treatment by the society, local community, peers, schools, ...

2.2. Public Policies

The phenomenon of exclusion from education in BiH is underpinned by the scarce financial capacities of citizens, which is complicated by the fragmentation of its education, where every level of the competent education authority is responsible for the whole of this sector on its territory. The fact is that 4.3% of the adjusted BDP²¹ is allocated for education would mean much more if the BDP itself were to be higher than the present one. Conscious policies for inclusive education are made through use of the experiences and good practice examples taken from others, international agreements and signed human rights documents. These documents are incorporated into strategic documents and legislation on education in BiH.

Ensuring of high quality education for all students, both for those with difficulties in development as well as for those gifted at all levels of education constitutes one of the most pressing issues related to inclusion in BiH.

The preconditions have been created in Bosnia and Herzegovina for implementation of the inclusion process, through adequate training and support to educators, teachers, lecturers and professors in the form of assistance by experts (medical doctors, psychologists, general and speech defectologists, and the like) during development of individualized curricula. They have also been offered assistance in their practical work, including implementation of rehabilitation programs and provision of medical examinations and assistance by the aforementioned experts, as well as assistance by volunteer assistants, and provision of additional teaching tools adapted to working with students with difficulties in development and with gifted students.

Within the education system, additional training has been organized for teachers in development of individualized curricula and teaching in heterogeneous groups and classes, and the competent education authorities have strived to provide methods for financing of additional training for educators, teachers, lecturers and professors. Many initiatives have also been implemented for training of school management teams in the sphere of inclusive education.

²¹ The report "Bosnia and Herzegovina – Coping with Fiscal Challenges and Strengthening of Growth Perspectives – Overview of Public Expenditure and Institutions", World Bank, June 2006; Source: OECD Education at a Glance 2005 and LSMS BiH 2005

Although much has been done on the issue of architectural adaptations in the existing preschool, school and other facilities (installation of elevators, building of toilets for pupils with bodily disabilities), further methods have been also devised in order to allow students to have unprevented access to education institutions and contents.

It should be noted that children and youth with special needs have increasingly been acquiring education at regular schools and according to the programs adapted to their individual abilities and capacities.

A special aspect also lies in raising of awareness among parents and children without difficulties in development, and in dissemination of information on the nature of specific difficulties in development, in order to remove any prejudices or misperceptions on persons with difficulties. Through proper dissemination of information, efforts have been made to avoid situations in which children with difficulties in development are inadequately treated by their peers. In addition, the Bosnian and Herzegovinian society, as an open society accepting and fostering diversities, also fosters upbringing of children from their youngest age to accept, understand and appreciate children and adults who are different from others.

The **currently existing policies**, honoring the principles of life-long learning, efforts have been made to include all age groups into the education process. However, groups that are deemed to be the most sensitive to various forms of exclusion from education and within it are: children with special needs (physical or mental disabilities), the Roma children, children from other ethnic minorities, children of returnees, socially disadvantaged children, children coming from rural areas, children and youth who are drug addicts, children with problems in learning and behavior, children and youth in conflict with the law, as well as particularly talented and gifted children. However, children with multiple obstacles may be those that are most disadvantaged. They mainly belong to separate special and social institutions. There are a small number of them at regular schools.

Efforts have been made to take into consideration all special needs of children, youth and adults in the currently existing policies, as well as in policy creation. The **excluded groups** yet to be taken into consideration are: abused children, children with chronic diseases, epilepsy patients, children with metabolic disorders, sleeping and eating disorders. Given the developments over the past period in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a separate effort in considering the concept to include the population of demobilized soldiers into the education process in order to enable them to acquire additional qualifications or prequalification for inclusion into all forms of human activities. This initiative also covers persons who have

remained jobless in the transition process for various reasons, who were not disabled in that process in terms of the modern labor market requirements.

2.3. Systems, Links and Transitions

Although significant shifts have been made in terms of inclusive education in BiH, it is necessary to point out some of the **obstacles**.

First of all, the problem lies in insufficient financial allocations required for increased hiring of experts (general and speech defectologists, medical doctors, psychologists, pedagogists) for assistance to educators/teachers/lecturers in development of individualized curricula and their implementation, and for direct work with students in implementation of individual general defectology and speech defectology treatments.

Although much has been invested into training of pedagogic workers, additional efforts are required in order to ensure continued training for work with children and pupils with special educational needs.

The school infrastructure oftentimes is not adapted to students with difficulties in movement and poor sighted pupils. Therefore it is necessary to adapt school building entrances, install elevators and make classes, cabinets and toilets accessible where this has not been done, in compliance with architectural standards, for children, pupils, youth, and adults with physical disabilities.

There is an evidently poor cooperation of education institutions with health care and social institutions, entailing the lack of early phase diagnosis and treatment, and the problem related to categorization that can be viewed in a number of ways. The categorized children are in fact „marked“ children; categorization is done far away from school and rather late, so that precious time is lost that would otherwise be used for work with children and for treatments. All of the aforementioned reasons contribute to the fact that parents are hesitant in opting to have their children assessed - categorized.

The main factors **facilitating inclusive education** are: the framework laws for the area of education in BiH, prescribing equal opportunities for all children, youth and adults, as well as recently formed relevant institutions and the ones that will be established soon.

Non-governmental organizations are a key factor in design and organized approach and in monitoring of application and evaluation of inclusive education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

(DUGA, EDUCAID, Save the Children, ...). In this context, there is also an extremely significant influence coming from international organizations (OSCE, UNICEF, ...).

The curricula at primary and secondary schools in BiH also include education on human rights and democracy, thus significantly contributing to removal of stereotypes and deep-rooted opinions.

In order to make the education system more flexible in order to offer additional opportunities for education to those who have given up a certain level of qualification or have not accomplished it at all, many opportunities exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Primary schools in all areas of BiH, among other things, also provide adult education services. Under the reform of secondary vocational education and training in BiH, modular curricula have been developed, allowing students to have easier horizontal and vertical movement. Through extraordinary lessons and extraordinary examinations, secondary vocational and technical schools in BiH enable all students to acquire specific qualifications, as well as provide them with an opportunity of prequalification and supplementary qualification in certain occupations. In addition to the aforementioned, in order to acquire primary and secondary vocational education for adults, centers for vocational education and training of human resources are also active in BiH.

For all students who opt to acquire qualifications at higher education institutions, access is not limited by age. The flexibility in terms of switching and transfer of credits during the study periods in between the higher education institutions has been allowed through the ECTS system introduced at all BiH universities.

There are also a large number of non-governmental organizations organizing courses, mainly computer and foreign language ones. A smaller number of such organizations also include vocational education and training in other areas, particularly manufacture. The social partners seldom take part in the training. Since recently, employment institutes have been attaching increased attention to the market, organizing courses, similarly to non-governmental organizations. On the other hand, enterprises in the privatization process express demand for skills, mainly for management, for which currently a small number of courses exist. Some successful enterprises (although a small number of them, due to the underdevelopment of the market) have developed some exceptionally high quality training courses through their training centers.

2.4. Pupils and Teachers

Education curricula in BiH are analyzed and developed on a permanent basis. Much significance in amendments to curricula lies in the suggestions and observations of teachers in practice who are both participants and creators of curricula, as well as in the instructions and recommendations from various projects implemented by international and non-governmental organizations addressing the inclusion issues.

In the Entity of the Republika Srpska, special curricula have been made for children with special educational needs, specifically for children with impaired sight, hearing, slight and moderate mental difficulties (retardation). In secondary vocational schools in the Republika Srpska, new curricula have also been developed for 12 professions and 15 occupations for the pupils with impaired sight, hearing and slight mental retardation. These curricula, for primary and secondary schools, are compatible with the regular curricula, allowing for education of children at both regular and special schools.

In the Entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the approach to teaching students with slight mental difficulties is based primarily on creation of individual curricula for each child, adapted quantity- and quality-wise to their mental and physical abilities. This also includes cutting of some subjects from the curricula, thereby also reducing the number of teaching lessons, and in this way curricula are adapted to the mental capacities of specific pupils. It is also important to shorten the duration of a teaching lesson by 5 to 10 minutes, because such pupils tend to tire more quickly, exhaust and become more easily de-concentrated.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, **learning to read** is addressed differently during the first four or five grades of the primary school, depending on the level of the government.

According to the curricula in the Entity of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the following is dedicated to reading and writing:

- 1st grade: initial reading and writing: 33 lessons (reading and writing is not segregated);
- 2nd grade: writing 22 lessons, reading 28 lessons;
- 3rd grade: writing 33 lessons (introduction of Cyrillic print), reading and writing 22 lessons;
- 4th grade: writing 53 lessons (introduction of the second alphabet), reading 10 lessons (Cyrillic script).

In the Entity of the *Republika Srpska*, reading and writing is not taught in the first grade at all, but in the next grades, the curricula envisages as follows:

- IInd grade: exercises in reading and writing 10 lessons. Improvement in reading and writing 75 lessons;
- IIIrd grade: reading 28 lessons;
- IVth grade: reading 20 lessons;
- Vth grade: reading 10 lessons.

In order to increase the educational opportunities for all and improve the learning results of students, the new curricula have been applied, as well as methods and approaches, such as step by step, interactive methods, individualization of contents, procedures and methods in teaching, ...

In order to meet the varying pupils' expectations and needs, educators/teachers/lecturers are trained in a planned and organized manner, through various seminars, training workshops, and through projects at local and state levels, to enable a better approach and higher quality implementation of the inclusion process in the education system.

In improvement of accomplishments in learning and definition of outcomes, educators/teachers/lecturers at preschool institutions and at regular schools are assisted by expert teams, if institutions have them, and defectologists in mobile teams (teams for support to inclusive education).

One may say that one of the major methods in which teachers may acquire the knowledge and competences required for work in heterogeneous classes including pupils with varying abilities, affiliations, foreknowledge and personal properties, is observation by specialized experts during implementation of the additional general and speech defectology and other programs with individual pupils.

It is noteworthy that pedagogic institutes also hire expert advisors for special education and inclusion, who provide a significant contribution to implementation of inclusion through their advisory and instructive work. Given the competencies of the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, its establishment shall largely contribute to monitoring and quality assurance in education. The upcoming reform of pedagogical institutes in terms of focusing, instead of their current dominant activities involving expert supervision, on support to development of quality in education, shall significantly further the whole process. One may conclude that in the forthcoming period, the aforementioned Agency and the pedagogic

institutes shall be the major institutions in charge of quality assurance in preschool, primary, and secondary education.

Through organized work and workshops, seminars at the local and state levels, and through various manifestations organized by various associations, as well as through media – particularly via printed materials, better information dissemination is enabled thus increasing access and heightening rate of inclusion into the education system for all.

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