Integration or Segregation? Reforming the Education Sector

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1. Introduction

Over the past ten years education reform has become one of the priorities of the international organisations active in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the immediate post-war period the Council of Europe (CoE), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and also UN organisations (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank) developed activities. Later on education became a focus of the Office of the High Representative (OHR). Additionally the European Union (EU) started reform initiatives within the Framework of the Stability Pact for South East Europe, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has taken over the mandate for supervision. The reason for this was frustration about two tendencies which still mark the current situation: firstly a trend for segregation of schools along ethnic lines; and secondly stagnation with respect to the development of a modern and effective education system which matches European standards and creates better professional prospects for future generations in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bosnia is a small country of 3.8 million citizens, with at least three separate education systems and a variety of authorities in charge of their administration. There seems to be consensus on the need for reforms among those groups of society who are most affected by this situation: youngsters and young adults at least see an urgent need for better coordination and modernisation.[1] There is also strong pressure for change from international organisations. But reforms to harmonise the Bosnian education sector have been postponed several times. It has proved to be highly difficult to agree on their extent, focus and direction due

1 According to a study by UNDP on youth in Bosnia in 2003, 74% of young people were in favour of a harmonised curriculum (UNDP 2003: 9).

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to numerous obstacles emerging from Bosnian politics and society: the field of education is highly contested and still in some cases dominated by nationalistic forces. So one of the key issues is the struggle between agreeing on common policies and structures to solve some of the most pressing problems of education, and the divergent forces that push for more autonomy and local arrangements to guard minority interests.

This article focuses on the following questions: 1) To what extent do the current reform approaches fulfil their aims? 2) Do they contribute to peacebuilding and conflict transformation? 3) Who are the key agents of these reform efforts, and who are "spoilers"? 4) Will education in Bosnia lead to segregation or integration in the long run?

The article first explores to what extent legacies from the Yugoslav era and from the recent war still influence education in Bosnia (section 2). It secondly investigates who is in charge of delivering changes in education – both within Bosnian politics and on the part of the international community (section 3). The article then deals with recent reform activities in primary and general secondary education (section 4). It focuses on legal, policy and capacity-building initiatives launched by the EU and OSCE, aimed at setting up a countrywide framework. The fifth section focuses on dilemmas and unsolved questions involving the most sensitive topics of national identity, the role of teachers and their training and qualifications. The sixth section reviews the benefits – and also deficits – of recent reforms and identifies some urgent needs and priorities for further education reform in Bosnia.

2. Legacies from the Past: The Yugoslav Education System and Consequences of the Bosnian War

In order to explain the current situation and challenges, legacies from the past have to be tackled – both those left over from the Yugoslav education system and those resulting from the Bosnian war. Domestically and internationally, the Yugoslav education system enjoyed a good reputation (Council of Europe 1999:7). Key advantages were broad access to pre-school, basic and secondary education and a high performance in knowledge dissemination. But education focused more on the acquisition of facts than on analytical skills. This legacy is still reflected in the current Bosnian curricula that can be characterised as "overloaded, encyclopaedic and mostly knowledge-based" (OECD 2001:23).

Education in the Yugoslav period was devised in accordance with the ideology and principles of the Tito regime. Curricula and teaching methods were

guided by socialist values, stressing collective solidarity and political loyalty over critical thinking (Council of Europe 1999:5f). The official ideology was particularly demonstrated in the teaching of 20th century history. The Second World War was portrayed as a heroic fight against fascism. Atrocities and crimes among Yugoslavs were overlooked in favour of an all-inclusive partisan perspective. This dependence on a "fragmented memory" that selects historic events and claims that there was only one "true" history is still apparent in textbooks across the entire post-Yugoslav region. It has been recycled now from a nationalist perspective (Low-Beer 2001:5).

In Yugoslavia, responsibility for education was assigned to the republics and, until the 1990s, no substantial differences concerning general structure or curriculum content could be identified between Bosnia-Herzegovina and other parts of Yugoslavia (Perry 2003:21). But already a controversy over a common core curriculum in the 1980s showed how education was to become trapped in the power struggles between central and federal authorities in the years to come. The first common "all-Yugoslav" core curriculum was introduced in 1987 as an attempt at centralisation in reaction to the rising of separatist groups. As Pavel Zgaga, researcher at the Centre for Educational Policy Studies at the University of Ljubljana recalls, "the centralist powers demanded stronger 'harmonisation' of mother tongue and literature, history, etc., across the entire [Yugoslav] federation – a demand which provoked fierce revolt" (Zgaga 2001:2). Also in Bosnia nationalist politicians dominated the debate on curricula, fostering cleavages between the three main groups (Perry 2003:22). In the republics, the ideological bias of the curricula changed tremendously, from a socialist, Pan-Yugoslav focus to nationalist concepts. So already in the run-up to the Yugoslav wars, education was gradually developing into an arena for conflicting nationalist forces.

The Bosnian war finally caused a fundamental division of the education sector along ethnopolitical lines within the entire Yugoslav region and also in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat hardliners developed education in close cooperation with the corresponding sectors in Croatia and Serbia. Still, all education systems that currently exist in Bosnia still suffer from strong political influence, unclear decision-making processes and organisational structures, outdated curricula and pedagogical principles. These problems can be partly attributed to the socialist past. The education sector, like most other social services or companies, was organised along the principles of a "self-management system", aimed at providing a participatory decision-making process (*see also the article on the development of the media by Tanja Topic in this book*). This concept proved to have its shortcomings in reality, acting as an obstacle to clear decisions because it blurred responsibilities and competencies. Moreover, it did not empower

people for decision-making and taking individual responsibility, but rather prevented them from developing these capacities. As Ann Low-Beer, an education specialist of the CoE, points out, "Communist didactic principles were authoritative, requiring teachers to direct the minds of the young according to the correct principles" (Low-Beer 2001:5). A report by the Council of Europe to the World Bank in 1999 still saw a direct link between the former self-management system and current problems of democratisation, as in this participatory system people were not encouraged to take "personal responsibility and defined accountability" (Council of Europe 1999:6). But a democratic society needs politically responsive members, i.e. citizens who are able to reflect on and scrutinise proposals, but at the same time respect different opinions. The post-war segregation of Bosnian society, as reflected in the education sector, is in clear contrast to this concept of democratic citizenship. Here, students are again treated as part of a righteous collective – but this time it is not a communist, but an ethnic collective.

The situation is even more complicated due to the separate structures set up during the war, which were also affirmed by the internationally brokered Washington and Dayton Peace Agreements. As a consequence, the education sector suffers from too much decentralisation and lack of coordination. The parallelism between different authorities and levels of administration is a problem that characterises most policy issues in Bosnia nowadays, but has had particularly severe consequences for the education sector.

3. Defining the Actors: Who is in Charge?

3.1. The Bosnian Arena: Lack of Coordination and No Will for Harmonisation

According to Bosnian regulations, education is a matter for the two entities, the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation (FBiH) which both embrace different political systems.[2] The Republika Srpska functions as a strongly centralised republic whereas the Federation consists of 10 extensively autonomous cantons which all have mandates to decide on education issues. The situation in the Federation is even more complex, as in some cantons competencies have been transferred to sub-canton authorities.

Far-reaching participation or autonomy for local authorities in education can have positive impacts in multiethnic societies, as various development actors have pointed out (Smith/Vaux 2002:23f; Perry 2003:17). But in the Bosnian

2 The district of Brcko is yet another independent administrative unit under international control.

case the concept of subsidiarity (the transfer of authority to a lower level) was not implemented and bureaucratic centralism has continued – albeit on a more local level. Those directly involved in education (school personnel, parents and students) are not included by the authorities.

Instead, the transfer of authority to lower levels in Bosnia serves to freeze the ethnic segregation developed during the war. When the Federation was founded in 1994 with the signing of the Washington Agreement, it was agreed that the territory should be structured into cantons, in order to reduce confrontation between Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks. The consequence of this was that administrative units were set up mainly along ethnic lines, which contributed to a situation in which monoethnic power structures resulting from the war could continue – like the all-Croat "Herceg-Bosna" (Bose 2002). Responsibility for education was transferred to the authority of the cantons. In the so-called "mixed" cantons, where clear "ethnic" majorities could not be identified (cantons of Zenica-Doboj, Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva), authority was shifted even further down to the local level, so that decisions could again be taken in a more or less monoethnic context. This allowed local authorities from all sides to strengthen their own power base within "their" areas and promote their own sectarian curricula. The only exceptions to this development were big cities with a continuously multiethnic population, like Sarajevo or Tuzla. Such structures ultimately reinforced the war-related segregation of the education system, since initially there was little need for compromise over any ethnic divide.

Clearly the controversy over checks and balances between different levels of government also has an ethnopolitical sub-context: Bosniak politicians mainly favour the strengthening of common institutions in order to integrate Bosnia further, whereas Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb representatives usually argue for more autonomy on the entity level or lower.

Due to the conflicting positions and interests of all sides, no institutional links of communication, or joint working groups, were set up. Consequently, there is a lack of coordination and political will for harmonisation. This has led to a situation where even simple questions, such as the mutual recognition of certificates and diplomas, have remained unresolved. Legally, the Minister of Civil Affairs has the authority to oversee education at the state level, as s/he is also responsible for fulfilling a range of international obligations. But according to a recent OSCE report, this Minister "does not have the substantive competencies in 'education', nor the authority ... , yet is nevertheless required to carry out all legal obligations" (OSCE 2005:5). Additionally, the role of the Federal Minister of Education (FMoE) is also rather limited (OECD 2001:12).

The segregation of the Bosnian education sector is also reflected in the organisational setting of the Pedagogic Institutes, which are in charge of teacher training, curriculum development and setting up and monitoring of teaching standards. Both entities and cantons are entitled to maintain a Pedagogic Institute, and so far these parallel institutions exist without agreed standards or sufficient cooperation procedures (Open Society Foundation 2003:29), such as those in other federal countries like Germany. Moreover, the work of these Institutes is still open to political influence, as their directors are, even today, appointed by the respective ministries of education (RS or cantonal) without any co-determination of an advisory board. The Pedagogic Institutes proved on various occasions that they had no interest in sharing experiences and developing common strategies (OSCE 2005:18). Their activities are still dominated by loyalties along ethnic lines. A federal-level Pedagogic Institute was abolished in 1997, "in light of Cantonal indications that under the Dayton Agreement, they did not wish a State Institute nominally over the Cantons" (Spaulding 1998:7).

3.2. International Organisations and NGOs: Searching for Mandates and Concepts

The international community, though widely engaged in peacebuilding efforts in Bosnia, was initially rather hesitant to put education reform on its agenda. As education was not explicitly covered by the Dayton Agreement, no international organisation had a mandate in this area. Many international organisations therefore restricted their initial role to emergency relief and reconstruction of infrastructure like schools, kindergartens, etc.[3] Numerous NGOs have, however, offered broader assistance, for instance by sending donations in order to improve equipment and infrastructure (such as computers) and offering expertise and training (*see the article by Emrich/Rickerts on the experience of the NGO Schüler Helfen Leben in this book*). Some schools based in Western European countries have set up school partnerships for similar purposes. In 2002 almost 300 NGOs declared education and training among their areas of interest, according to Philip Stabback, former interim Director of Education with the OSCE's mission to Bosnia and consultant for UNESCO (Stabback 2003:1). International engagement has shown tremendous geographical variations. Urban areas such as Sarajevo or Mostar were the preferred recipients of international aid, while rural areas remained largely neglected for some time (UNDP 2004:50ff).

3 According to CoE figures, between 1996 and 1998, $172 million were spent on education (out of a total $3.8 billion) in this emergency-response phase (CoE 1999:20). The EU, for example, spent €15 million on reconstruction programmes in the education sector up to 2000 (European Commission 2000:12).

Education experts in the late 1990s called for a change in the priorities of international engagement (Stabback 2003:2; Spaulding 1998:11). Indeed, in 1999, key actors like the CoE grew increasingly concerned with the state of education in Bosnia and a more active international engagement seemed imminent. The CoE had already been monitoring educational developments in Bosnia during and shortly after the war, and frequently urged Bosnian authorities to increase reform efforts in this area. It offered assistance and frequently issued proposals to bring educational policies in Bosnia-Herzegovina into line with international standards, especially those agreed among CoE member states. When Bosnia-Herzegovina applied for membership in 2002, the CoE made the ending of segregation and harmonisation in the education sector prerequisites for accession.

The OHR also got involved, even though it had not paid much attention to education before.[4] In 1998, with its growing powers, OHR expressed increasing discontent at the continuing use of inflammatory wordings in textbooks, and at authorities which refused to reform and harmonise curricula. OHR issued several statements, but also increased the pressure by putting these issues on the agenda of the Madrid conference of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) in 1998, where entity authorities were called on to develop curricula "which meet international standards and contribute to tolerance and stability" (Peace Implementation Council 1998, Section II, point 7). As a result, OHR also initiated a highly disputed process of reforming textbooks (see 4.4). In the course of further developments, OHR rebuked Bosnian authorities several times for not implementing agreements, even imposing penalties on certain occasions.[5] Within the complex structure of the diverse responsibilities of the Bosnian education sector, these public appeals to central authorities were of limited success. Bosnian representatives may have signed new agreements and declarations, but progress at the chalkface has been slow and dependent on other factors, like the degree of commitment among school principals and teachers.

Most other international organisations instead concentrated on offering their expertise and assisting Bosnian stakeholders to approach obvious problems and begin reforms.

By 2001, 11 major conferences and reports had stressed the need for, and even drafted proposals for, education reform (Perry 2003:45). These large-scale

4 Before 1998 insufficient staff were recruited to even monitor developments in the education sector. Perry describes how OHR staff tried to get education further up the agenda (Perry 2003:47f).

5 OHR imposed necessary amendments for the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in one canton. On another occasion the OHR fined the ruling Croatian nationalist party (HDZ) in two cantons € 20,000 for not issuing relevant instructions to end the segregation of schools (Perry 2003:89).

initiatives mainly involved international organisations, dealing with education and youth issues globally, like UNESCO, UNICEF and the CoE, but the World Bank and the OECD also issued major reports. The World Bank and the OECD focused on education in line with economic recovery and development, whereas the CoE concentrated more on the question of how to adapt the Bosnian school system to European standards of human rights and democratisation. UNESCO got involved in the OHR-initiated textbook revision in 1999, and still promotes education for peace and other educational programmes. UNICEF was primarily engaged in emergency relief efforts, but now includes education in its general efforts to improve child protection and to lobby for children's rights. While these international organisations still play a role in development in Bosnia, hardly any of them is currently a key player concerning education reforms.

In 1999 the European Commission set up a major project aimed at modernising education and uniting all stakeholders in a substantial reform of primary and secondary education. Since 2001 the OSCE has been in charge of coordinating the different initiatives to reform the education sector.

4. Towards a Framework: International Attempts to Harmonise the Bosnian Education Sector

As previously noted, the federal system of Bosnia-Herzegovina does not sufficiently implement the concept of subsidiarity in the education sector: power is neither transferred to the local level sufficiently nor are there effective working structures between the different actors. This section focuses on the latter problem. "Harmonisation" in this context means any kind of agreement on cooperation procedures that may, but does not have to, lead to standardisation or integration.

The following section introduces reform efforts by the EU and OSCE aiming to improve communication, legislation and policy development on the national level. Both serve as examples of a pragmatic approach to balance the demands for autonomy – expressed by various Bosnian constituencies – with the needs for cooperation within a state.

4.1. Pooling Stakeholders and Establishing Communication

The EU first of all strove to set up a framework to facilitate reform in the education sector. The purpose was to improve communication between Bosnian education experts and those in charge of reform, and also to improve legislation and administration, including management and finances.

In 2001/02 the European Commission set up the Technical Assistance for Education Reform Programme and the Shared Modernisation Strategy (EC-TAER SMS). The idea was to establish cooperation for reform by bringing together government representatives and stakeholders from all three constituencies in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bosniaks, Bosnian Croats and Serbs) along with international experts and donor organisations. Within half a year, six multi-day workshops were held to define goals, suggest strategies and develop plans for implementation. Twelve working groups consisted of teachers and education specialists from all over Bosnia (altogether over 100 participants), supported by national and international facilitators. The plan was to develop a final report of recommendations for the Ministers of Education. The organisers' idea was to involve the ministries as much as possible in order to guarantee ownership and to reduce the risk that they would obstruct or boycott the reform process at a later stage (Perry 2003:59ff). Therefore, the ministries were responsible for identifying participants, but it later became apparent that for the most controversial workshops (e.g. on refugee return) ministries had chosen not to send the most appropriate and talented personnel (Perry 2003:62f). Moreover, the techniques used within these workshops were new and unfamiliar to most participants, which added to the problems. Nevertheless, EC-TAER provided the basis for the drafting of the Shared Modernisation Strategy for Primary and General Secondary Education, which later led to the Framework Law (see section 4.2).

In 2001 the OSCE was entrusted by the international community with educational reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The mandate was to coordinate the different initiatives and to include all stakeholders.[6] The OSCE largely took on the structures and principles (and also staff members) from the previous EC-TAER project. Working groups focus on:

- access to education for all, and non-discrimination
- improving quality and modernisation of pre-school, primary and secondary education as well as improving vocational training and higher education
- structures for financing and management of education
- reform of the legal framework for education.

OSCE has established the Education Issue Set Steering Group (EISSG), as a coordination board including members of all relevant international organisations dealing with education.[7] Its main task is to exchange ideas and to advise the

6 Besides this pooling of experts and policy advice, the OSCE has also initiated public campaigns, trying to engage public debate and therefore include parents and students further into the process.

7 Members are Heads of OSCE (Chair), OHR (Chair), UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNMIBH, CoE, European Commission, World Bank, 'others as appropriate' and OSCE Education Director (Executive Officer); www.oscebih.org.

meetings of Ministers of Education. The process of drafting and implementing new legislation on primary and secondary education started in 2002.

4.2. Initiating New Legislation and Preparing for a Shared Policy

In late 2002 a strategy framework document, the *Shared Modernisation Strategy for Primary and General Secondary Education,* was presented to the Ministers of Education, summarising the findings of the workshops of the EC-TAER project. The paper included proposals on curriculum development, teacher training reform and ways to introduce participatory models for including parents and communities. It also tackled the question of special needs education for disabled but also returnee children. The proposal was drafted by the British non-profit organisation Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) and formed the basis of a paper presented by the Bosnian Ministers to the Peace Implementation Council in Brussels later that year.[8]

These initial steps resulted in the drafting of joint policy commitments on primary and secondary education: the Green and White Papers in 2003. Compared to the EC-TAER framework paper, these put the emphasis on technical issues of modernising education in Bosnia such as curriculum development, teacher training and standard-setting for evaluation and monitoring. More political issues, like the implications of refugee return for education, were not explicitly mentioned.

In the same year, the first post-war nationwide law on education was passed by the national parliament, the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education (hereafter Framework Law). It was influenced by the still ongoing debates over the formulation of the White Paper on a shared modernisation strategy. Among other provisions it confirmed respect for human rights (such as the rights of the child to education, freedom of religion, freedom of movement), which are also safeguarded by international conventions as basic principles in education. The Framework Law also incorporated two major reforms demanded by international actors – the removal of offensive content in textbooks (Art. 10), and a harmonisation of curricula (Art. 7).

The controversial issue of segregated schools was tackled, though not sufficiently resolved (see section 5). The law imposed a single system of certificates and diplomas, thus facilitating exchange between schools within the country, which is particularly important to refugee children. It also provided for a common core curriculum for all schools. The Framework Law also clarified

8 In the TAER programme, different international actors and Bosnian authorities are involved. The programme was financed by the European Union, under the overall coordination of the OSCE and supported by the CfBT, which took on 'advisory and capacity-building services, organisational support and training in assessment and analysis'. www.cfbt.com/whatwedo/international/bosnia_taer.html.

the roles and rights of the different stakeholders (the two national institutions, the Standards Assessment Agency and the Curriculum Agency, authorities at entity and cantonal level, schools, teachers, parents and pupils). It was also decided that the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH should monitor and supervise its implementation (Art. 56).

The law became effective on 1 July 2003, serving as a legal basis for the passing of similar laws on lower levels (in the entities and FBiH cantons). According to the Framework Law this was scheduled for the 2004/05 school year so that all corresponding legislation at the entity, cantonal and Brcko District level should have been harmonised by 1 January 2004. But according to an assessment conducted by OSCE, this was impeded, either because the canton legislation was not amended or because the necessary by-laws were not passed (OSCE 2005:6).

The Framework Law can be interpreted as a "code of conduct stipulating non-discrimination" established at state level.[9] But it was the sensitive issue of the equal use of all 'three' official languages in Bosnian schools that caused fierce opposition. Five cantons initially refused to adopt laws in line with the Framework Law, claiming that it was not in line with the Bosnian constitution that ruled education to be a matter for the entities or cantons respectively, and not the central government.[10] The Central Bosnia canton appealed to the Constitutional Court of the Bosnian Federation. The Court rejected the invocation of a "vital national interest". Instead, it agreed with the opinion of international organisations that cantons refusing to implement the law brought themselves into direct conflict with the State of BiH and its international obligations, in particular the CoE post-accession commitment to adopt legislation on education within two years of accession, i.e. 24 April 2004 (CoE, 18 June 2004, para. 42). In July 2004 the OHR imposed the necessary amendments to the Framework Law in the Central Bosnia canton. Now, after the implementation of all amendments, the Framework Law should be effective countrywide, but some cantons still refuse to pass the relevant by-laws, therefore again postponing its full application (OSCE 2005).

A Framework Law on Higher Education did not pass due to similar reasons, but might be implemented soon. The situation for universities is to some extent even more complex than for primary and secondary schools, as Valery Perry points out: "The university system in BiH consists of approximately 70 component institutions or faculties, each of which has significant autonomy" (Perry 2003:26).

9 Esma Hadzagic, former education minister of Sarajevo Canton in an interview for IWPR Balkan Crisis Report No. 427, 2 May 2003 (www.iwpr.net/).

10 IWPR Balkan Crisis Report No. 501, 4 June 2004 (www.iwpr.net/).

The creation of common national institutions for coordination of the education sector in BiH remains highly controversial among Bosnian politicians. When the OHR tried to establish a Curriculum Harmonisation Board (CHB), attendance by representatives from all sides was poor. Obviously Bosnian politicians were not committed to the reform, and the CHB was perceived as an instrument of political pressure to be exerted by OHR and the CoE (Perry 2003:56f). With the Framework Law the Education Ministers nevertheless agreed on the establishment of several new units that relied on the support of international experts:

- a Standards and Assessment Agency
- a Curriculum Working Group
- a Primary Education Quality Fund and
- an Evaluation Board.

These bodies became operational only gradually, due to the slow process of implementing the Framework Law. The need for a Curriculum Working Group became especially apparent in the course of implementing the Common Core Curriculum (see section 4.4). Once in place, these institutions will coordinate, and indeed take over, some of the tasks of the entity and cantonal Pedagogic Institutes.

4.3. Challenges Rising from Refugee Return

During the refugee return process various problems and dilemmas became apparent (*see the article by Monika Kleck on refugee return in this book*) which had strong implications for the education sector. As municipalities in all parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina had to manage schooling for returning refugees, there was a need for a basic general agreement on that matter. With former residents returning to their pre-war homes, the by now predominantly monoethnic municipalities faced the problem of having to accommodate substantive ethnic minorities. Some returnees refused to send their children to schools teaching a curriculum that favoured the majority's preferences in subjects which had been developed along ethnic lines, such as literature (i.e. Cyrillic or Latin alphabet), religion and history. In many cases people were even reluctant to return to places where their children had no option to be educated in a "likeminded" school.[11] Returnees who agreed to go to "majority schools" faced severe problems of adaptation. Children have learned according to other curricula, subjects and content in their former

11 In a survey conducted by UNHCR on displaced persons in the Tuzla Canton in 2003, as many as 62% of the parents stated "that one of the reasons for not returning yet was that their children are at school in the Federation" and that in most cases there was no school in their pre-war villages or towns or the school was too far away (UNHCR 2003:14).

schools and now had to follow a different curriculum. Often, certificates or diplomas were not accepted, and students had to re-sit exams (OECD 2001:17). So in a lot of communities, parallel schools were set up for returnee children (especially in the FBiH). In other areas, parents sent their children to schools in areas of "their" ethnic majority (cross-entity bussing of children from, for example, RS to schools in Tuzla was a serious problem, and also a strain on the children; see OSCE 2005:13f).

In the Framework Law, this problem was reflected and addressed. Article 12 ruled that all schools should have a so-called "catchment" area, meaning that all students within the vicinity of a particular school should attend that school (with only few exceptions: either because they went to a private school or because they were exempted on exceptional grounds by the minister in charge). But the law did little to improve the situation, as it put the responsibility exclusively on parents, irrespective of whether the authorities implemented the relevant provisions (i.e. guaranteeing the use of an "acceptable" curriculum or eliminating symbols or texts offensive to minorities).[12]

In 1998, what is known as the Sarajevo Declaration (Spaulding 1998:9) was signed by the cantonal authorities, which constituted the first document to address the return of former refugees and displaced persons. It was warmly welcomed, indeed it was brokered, by international organisations such as OHR and OSCE. Working groups were to be appointed by Sarajevo education officials and the Federal Ministry of Education "on issues of curricular content and textbook evaluation ... to develop projects that foster democracy and ethnic tolerance" (quoted in Low-Beer 2001:3). The declaration was more a symbolic gesture than a substantive policy initiative, as its formulations were rather vague. Besides, the declaration covered only Sarajevo, which was in a unique situation.[13] Still, the controversy over the textbook reform proposals (see section 4.4) proved how sensitive the issue is.

In 2002, the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children finally formed a country-wide legal basis for refugee returns. It allowed parents to opt for the teaching of controversial subjects following a different curriculum. The concept was intended to integrate returnee children into ordinary classes, while giving them the opportunity to be taught the "national" subjects (language, history, etc.) according to the curriculum decided

12 A 1999 report by the Council of Europe criticises difficulties for returnee children, but also finds that access to education was assured, as long as students accepted the majority curriculum, etc. – suggesting indirectly that the main problem of integration was the reluctance of parents (CoE 1999:12).

13 One can distinguish between those who left the besieged capital during the war and those (mainly Bosnian Serbs) who left Sarajevo districts and suburbs (like Grbavica or Ilidza) in early 1996 before the handover of those quarters to the Federation.

by authorities of "their ethnic group". The Interim Agreement also contained provisions for the increased employment of returnee teachers and for the ethnic composition of school boards to reflect the school population where the schools were located.

The implementation of the Interim Agreement was to be overseen by a Coordination Board comprising representatives of all entity and cantonal Ministries of Education, OSCE and OHR. Progress has been measured mainly by statistical data (Perry 2003:86) resulting initially in the Statistical Report on the Progress of the Implementation of the Interim Agreement on the Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children in 2003. More recently the OSCE has been more outspoken on developments so far (OSCE 2005): although substantive progress has been made in some areas, there remains fierce resistance in other cantons/municipalities, even despite sanctions imposed by the OHR.

This is particularly true for the question of uniting schools and therefore ending the practice of "two schools under one roof". The first major controversy over the segregation of schools between the OHR and local authorities took place in 2001 in Stolac, a town in Herzegovina, where a school, built with World Bank funding, was used exclusively for Bosnian Croat children, with Bosniak children having to be schooled privately.[14] Protest by OHR resulted in a situation where both communities got access to the school, but not to integrated classes. For the municipal authorities the solution was simple: costs on infrastructure would be reduced, since only one building was used now, but neither teachers nor pupils would really have to cooperate, since they would use different rooms (or the same rooms at different times, if necessary), follow different curricula, etc. The "two schools under one roof" model has become an almost common phenomenon in Bosnia-Herzegovina, especially in some areas of the Federation. In July 2003, 52 schools in the so-called "mixed" cantons (Zenica-Doboj, Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva) were organised in that way. International organisations like OHR are strictly against this policy and have continually demanded a real integration of schools, whereas local NGO representatives, working on interethnic cooperation projects, have signalled the need to plan and initiate this controversial reform with great sensitivity (Fischer/Fischer 2003:20).

Technical prerequisites, like a single school building or a common curriculum would be one thing, the transformation of mindsets is clearly another, and is even more complicated. Although youth is obviously an important target

14 The phenomenon of segregated schools was not limited to municipalities to which DPs or refugees returned, but also related to towns like Mostar and Gornij Vakuf/Uskoplje, where the war has caused an almost complete segregation along the former demarcation lines (for a close analysis of the developments in Mostar see Bose 2002:95-142).

group in order to initiate societal changes, one should not overload children by expecting them to be the pioneers in such fundamental transformation. Changes may more effectively come from within rather than being imposed from above, which leads to the question of reforming structures at the school level.[15]

4.4. The Controversy over a Common Core Curriculum

Curriculum reform has been an issue of ongoing controversy in Bosnia. It came to the attention of international actors for two reasons. First, parts of the teaching materials proved to be offensive, encouraging stereotypes, and likely to increase divisions between the Bosnian ethnic communities. Second, the fact that the different curricula were incompatible caused severe problems to Bosnian pupils, especially those returning to their pre-war areas of residence (these are discussed in detail in section 5).

Discussing curricula in Bosnia, one may distinguish between subjects that are highly contested between the three different constituent peoples (i.e. humanities like history and literature) and those like natural sciences, where the content is rather similar almost everywhere in the world.[16] Advocates of a more technical approach to reform have pointed out that agreement on how to teach natural science subjects might be easier to achieve. Of course, there can also be different opinions on specific aspects of the non-contentious subjects, as for instance the question at what grade certain elements should be taught, and on teaching methods in general. But these questions are likely to be less controversial than reaching agreement on how to teach the history of World War II, for example (see below). So in order to initiate reforms, the international organisations need to focus on modernising these uncontested subjects. A study in 2003 found that indeed, more than 90% of the content of the different curricula for these "non-contentious" subjects was alike (Stabback 2003:2).

So, apart from rhetoric, it should have been easy to agree on common guidelines for the curricula on teaching natural sciences, for example. But the overall goal, especially of the international organisations involved, was to achieve a comprehensive reform and to agree on common parameters as much as possible, as this was seen as an important prerequisite to push for the integration

15 One may argue that by focusing on the return process the situation of other marginalised groups may have been ignored (Perry 2003:39). Initiatives to integrate disabled children into ordinary school life in Bosnia have been rare so far and not surprisingly, progress on improving their situation is even slower than for other minorities (OSCE 2005:14). Bosnia, like other countries in the region, also faces the challenge of integration of substantive ethnic minorities, such as Roma.

16 There are six different curricula in use in Bosnia-Herzegovina as the cantons of Tuzla, Zenica-Doboj and Sarajevo have developed their own curricula. In the other regions of Bosnia, classes follow the curricula developed by the FBiH Ministry of Education, the Mostar Institute for School Affairs and the RS Ministry of Education and Culture, depending on their ethnic background.

of ethnically divided schools (see section 4.3). OHR and OSCE were quite clear that to them, "getting politics out of the classroom" was a priority of education reform, and an agreement on how to teach the controversial issues therefore had to be pushed for right from the beginning.

In the end it took more than four years and several severe setbacks to agree on a common core curriculum, as it was decided to develop "a modern curriculum for each subject in close consultation with the education authorities and using appropriate expertise in contemporary principles of curriculum development" (OSCE 2002). In 1998, the Federal Ministry of Education proposed a common core curriculum for the federal entity that was agreed by cantonal ministries, but not fully implemented. In 2003/04, a Common Core Curriculum (CCC), comprising 70% of the curricula of Bosnian elementary and secondary schools, was developed. This meant that not one curriculum was agreed for the whole of Bosnia, but that "for each of the 18 subjects covered by the CCC, a certain percentage is the same for all pupils, with the remaining percentage varying depending on the curricula" (OSCE 2005:11).

International organisations also admit that the current curriculum is only a starting point and needs further reforms. In its latest report on education, the OSCE suggests changing this in favour of a framework curriculum "which would be considered as a model curriculum and still allows for regional differences" (ibid.). This proposal seems to reflect lessons from the implementation phase, which faced some technical difficulties, arising mainly from a tight timeline[17] but also from the lack of a "model curriculum" which could have served as an example for orientation. Teachers, on the other hand, argued that the 70:30 ratio was too rigid as they were allowed to choose only 30% of the curriculum, which was too little to really have an impact, especially concerning controversial subjects like history (Low-Beer 2003:4; see also section 5.1).

The implementation of the CCC also led to the introduction of a new subject called "human rights and democracy" for students of the 7th and 8th grade in primary school. The European Union also started to train teachers in this new subject. With the establishment of the subject, civic education was introduced compulsively to all schools in BiH where previously it had been taught in only some.[18] The subject aims to enhance knowledge of human rights, understanding of democratic principles and respect for different opinions. Given the limited

17 The introduction of a common core curriculum for the school year 2003/04 was already mandated by the Framework Law (2002), but all Bosnian Ministers of Education adopted it only in August 2003. This proved too short a time to implement all relevant changes and train teachers.

18 For example, civic education has been a subject in primary schools in Tuzla canton since 2001. The American organisation Civitas has organised courses in civic education at Bosnian schools since 1999 and developed a training book for high school students.

time (1 hour per week) devoted to these topics, this will probably not lead to revolutionary changes in education. But at least it is a first step to counterbalance the effects of so-called "national subjects", which are still open to influence from nationalist hardliners and separatist ideologies.

While this agreement on the broad content of school subjects is clearly a success, it can only serve as a starting point for further discussions on the controversial details. The critical question remains how things are communicated in the classroom: this largely depends on the attitudes and skill of school personnel, but also on the quality of teaching material, including textbooks.

The main controversy among the different constituencies which has provided a continuous obstacle to the reform process is the question of how to teach language, religion and history. Although the differences between the Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian language are said to be minimal (less than American and British English)[19], the question of which language was to be used at school is highly political in post-Dayton Bosnia and, as previously mentioned (section 4.2), was even taken to the Constitutional Courts of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Federation. Both judicial authorities confirmed the equal use of all three languages and ruled: "On the contrary, any other legal position, e.g. a solution that would allow a possibility of teaching exclusively in Croatian or Bosnian or Serb language, would represent a violation of the constitutional principle of equality of all official languages ..." (decision of the Constitutional Court of FBiH 3 November 2004, quoted in OSCE 2005:6f).

But how is this principle put into practice, and what safeguards assure compliance? A student who achieved a lower mark because s/he handed in a paper in a language other than the "dominant language" of the school is unlikely to file a court case. It is more likely that s/he will change school in order to avoid further disadvantages. Also the question on the use of the two different alphabets in Bosnia, Latin and Cyrillic,[20] was a relevant issue, and the need for a country-wide arrangement became even more pressing during the return process when children re-migrated from the RS to the Federation or vice versa. In the post-war period, schools in the RS started to teach the Cyrillic alphabet exclusively, while most cantons in the Federation promoted the Latin alphabet. Currently, all Bosnian schools must teach both from the 3rd grade on. So children who (have to) change schools earlier still face severe problems in their schoolwork.

19 The linguist Svetlana Durkovic suggests that the "three official languages" in Bosnia "resemble approximately 5% differentiation from one group to the next (less than American and British English)" (Durkovic 2003:1); see also Malcolm 1996.

20 In Yugoslav times both alphabets were used on an equal basis for Serbo-Croat, but with the politically motivated differentiation between Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian, Cyrillic is mainly used in Serbian while for both others the Latin alphabet is preferred.

Religion, on the other hand, has been completely left out of the agreements on the Framework Law and the CCC. Initial proposals by OHR to introduce a new subject, "Culture of Religions", which would teach students about different religions, their practice and traditions, met with severe criticism, as it was seen to be a replacement for religious instruction. Only the Tuzla canton followed this proposal, and schools in this area offer "Culture of Religion" as a subject. As a result, OHR took the topic off its agenda and the issue was not discussed further on the national level. In theory, religious education in public schools is optional, but in practice children who do not attend these classes may face pressure or discrimination (Russo 2001:965). Due to the lack of national agreement it is up to the local authorities whether religious instruction is also offered for minorities.

5. Dilemmas and Unsolved Questions

5.1. Tackling a Sensitive Issue: Teaching History in Bosnia-Herzegovina

One of the most sensitive subjects in post-Dayton Bosnia is history teaching. Historic perceptions and myths often play a leading role in the construction of ethnic identities (Anderson 1991) and this is all the more true in former Yugoslavia. The wars of the 1990s were depicted as sequels to earlier battles, and atrocities were often justified by recalling what "Turks", "Ustasa" or "Cetniks" had committed – a clear indication of how deeply historical myths have influenced the collective memories of the peoples in the region. Apart from this abuse of history for political reasons, historians have pointed out that historiography in the region was also extensively politically motivated ("the Partisan cult") and research into some particularly controversial incidents was insufficient (Malcolm 1996; Sundhausen 1993).

So far, the debate on history teaching has focused primarily on the question of textbook reform for most subjects, but especially the "national" ones. Since 1998 the issue of textbook review has been high on the agenda of international actors. Examples of offensive content of school books, especially history books supporting prejudices towards other ethnic groups, are documented extensively (Höpken 1993; Torsti 2003) – in fact, it was this issue which brought education onto the agenda of the OHR, which set up a joint working group together with UNESCO (Perry 2003:9ff). This pilot project, closely linked to the Sarajevo Declaration on refugee return, was intended to review textbooks in use in the Sarajevo Canton. Although the meetings of the working group initially did not result in any action, the impact of this endeavour was very negative

when findings were leaked to the press. Bosniak media and politicians, who had previously been more open to international interventions than their Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat counterparts, accused the international community "of seeking to take away Bosnia's history, teach children lies, and prepare the ground for further genocide". Newspapers claimed that schools were being told to erase words like "crime" from school books and replace it with the word "error" (Low-Beer 2001:3). Even though these accusations were false and vociferously rejected, the scandal caused much damage to international engagement, as later initiatives were also suspected of imposing "wrongs" and neglecting "the truth", not only from the Bosniak viewpoint but from all three sides. To date, then, the issue of contested, and even offensive, textbook content remains unsolved.

When Bosnia-Herzegovina was applying for membership of the CoE in 1999, the withdrawal of potentially offensive material from textbooks was made one of the minimal requirements for accession. In the same year two agreements were supposed to ensure compliance, albeit under enormous time pressure.[21] Objectionable material, as identified by an international team of experts, was supposed to be either removed or annotated. Compliance was again to be monitored by "verifiers" from various international organisations (OHR, UNESCO, UNICEF, CoE and World Bank). Non-compliance could be sanctioned: for example, the headteacher of a school could be sacked. One of the international observers later recalled the resistance this initiative caused with Bosnians who wanted to argue over the content, concluding: "The case of the blackened textbooks could have many repercussions. Not the least is that it may well be that it may undermine respect for the international authorities" (Low-Beer 2001:4).

When the OSCE got involved in education reform in 2003, one of its tasks was to set up a review commission to remove objectionable and inappropriate material from textbooks. The commission comprised 24 textbook specialists from BiH, supported by international experts.[22] After examining some 250 textbooks for the 2003–2004 school year, the OSCE has recently suggested to the education authorities the setting up of a commission to develop guidelines for authors, "to ensure that new textbooks address the need for an inclusive, non-discriminatory education" (OSCE 2004:14). Up to 2005, the EU has extended its training programme for history teachers (EUROCLIO) to Bosnia, in order to support the qualification of history teachers according to these standards. The

21 The first agreement was signed in Mostar in July 1999 and demanded compliance by the 1999/2000 school year.

22 The commission was headed by the then newly assigned head of the Education Department, Dr Falk Pingel, a specialist on textbook research from the Georg Eckert Institute in Germany.

project is in line with the EU's aim to promote Bosnia's alignment to European, or EU, standards in general and an integration of the region in particular (the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe). Education is perceived as one of the key areas, with history teaching as a focal point since 2000. Activities are concentrated on the regional level with the priorities as follows: training of new methodologies, development of teaching resources (textbook development or new media) and networking of experts (www.see-educoop.net; www.stabilitypact.org/education/). The Thessaloniki-based Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in South East Europe has conducted a project to develop alternative educational material (history workbooks) for history teachers, which was closely linked to the Stability Pact's activities (Perry 2003:46).

The example of history teaching shows the limits of top-down approaches in education reform – one can ban certain statements or impose general principles, but one cannot fully control what is happening in the classroom. Textbook review is clearly important, and it might be argued that because of the urgency of reaction the "blackening" of textbooks was necessary before one could start an overall reform. But one can only support Ann Low-Beer's view that democracy calls for "independent thought, reasoned argument, recognition of diversity of views. This requires a revolution in methods of teaching and learning, and in the minds of teachers, a much longer and slower process than changing textbooks" (Low-Beer 2001:5).

5.2. Training Teachers as a Key Challenge

Teachers are the ones to implement each new reform, but the question remains whether they receive enough support (training and counselling) and recognition for the task.[23] Indeed, teacher training has been one of the key components of almost every reform proposal and policy statement on education in Bosnia so far. In contrast, resources provided to achieve progress have been limited and temporary.

Shortly after the war, capacities for training were completely nonexistent in Bosnia. The high demand for in-service teacher training was mainly covered by NGOs and international organisations, since the Bosnian institutions in charge (the Pedagogic Institutes) were not capable of providing adequate services. Only a few of these programmes were integrated (Spaulding 1998:7), and an overall coordination of efforts is still lacking to date, even though most initiatives by

23 According to OSCE sources the average salary of teachers is currently approx. €250 per month (OSCE 2004:10). In its 2001 report the OECD also criticised the fact that there were no financial incentives for teachers applying new teaching techniques and fully participating in reforms (OECD 2001:28).

now are somehow linked to the OSCE approach. Critics argue that several of these programmes were fragmented and followed concepts that were "imported and implemented without the necessary adaptations to local conditions" (OSF 2003:30; see also Pasalic-Kreso 2004:198).[24] The state of initial teacher training is currently also far from ideal. In BiH teachers can enter their profession by four different methods: a) straight after secondary school; b) with a secondary school qualification and two years studies in the Pedagogic Academy; c) with secondary school qualification plus four years' studies in the Pedagogic Institute; or d) with a university degree. While the quality of the training of the Pedagogic Institutes seems to vary widely, all university students face the problem of scarcity of skills in developmental psychology and pedagogy.

Teacher training is only one of several tasks of the Pedagogic Institutes, which are also in charge of monitoring the reform of curricula, inspecting the work in classrooms, and developing pedagogical standards. Earlier reports have elaborated on the limited resources and expertise of these institutions to fulfil all these tasks (Spaulding 1999).[25] As a consequence, teacher training has not been tackled sufficiently: The process of training teachers in modern techniques is a long endeavour, and "training on the job" is urgently needed,[26] especially with teachers who have been doing their job for some time: they have established routines in knowledge-based teaching which ensured that their authority was never questioned. As current pedagogical concepts, by contrast, favour debate with students, teachers have to adopt new roles. Strong support is therefore necessary also after training. The current routine of inspections by Pedagogic Institutes does not meet this need, as it more often asserts control over teachers rather than giving them confidence. Teachers participating in a workshop in 2001 even doubted that further training by Pedagogic Institutes would improve their qualifications, as the personnel there was not familiar with modern teaching methods or classroom practices (Low-Beer 2003:4; OECD 2001:22).

24 An analysis in 2003 of service providers for education training in Tuzla canton suggests further imbalances, as a) most focus on primary education, b) "most organisations operate in urban areas and do not actively seek to provide services to rural communities" (Open Society Fund 2003:74).

25 Some Pedagogic Institutes are supposed to cover a huge area, and for some (divided) schools two of them are in charge. Taking into account the limited resources of the Pedagogic Institutes, cooperation would be reasonable to provide teachers with a better service.

26 Currently, there are teachers who started work during the war with hardly any training, and some teachers from socialist times who face the problem that their subjects (i.e. Russian, military training or some vocational subjects) are not taught anymore. The situation is even more strained as the war and post-war period have caused a double "brain-drain effect" among the teaching professions: first, many were killed or left the country, then, due to their qualifications, a lot of teachers left their profession to work for international organisations (OSF 2003:74; see also OECD 2001:29). A report by the Council of Europe for the World Bank in 1999 noted that in some areas up to 25% of teachers were not qualified for the level or grade they taught (CoE 1999:46).

Teacher training will remain one of the key challenges and priorities for the coming years. The support for teachers should also cover measures to deal with the war-related effects of trauma on pupils and on the teachers themselves. Even though the war ended 10 years ago, trauma might appear only now (*see the article by Monika Kleck on trauma work in this book*). Children currently entering schools were born after the war, but their perceptions are strongly influenced by their environment (families and communities) which was deeply affected by the war. Teachers also have to cope with these experiences and at the same time struggle with their own traumas. Psychological programmes focusing on the needs of (traumatised) individuals are therefore important here.

6. Conclusions and Wider Perspectives

It is apparent that several initiatives by international actors have not met with sufficient support from Bosnian stakeholders. In most cases, agreements have been signed but not implemented. In others, accords have faced strong resistance at the local level which has not been countered by interventions from upper level representatives who sign the agreement and have the responsibility for its implementation. So is there a misunderstanding between Bosnian and international actors on how reforms should proceed? Or is it solely a struggle between stubborn nationalists and a progressive international community advocating a multiethnic Bosnia?

Clearly the controversies over integrating the education sector have an ethnopolitical sub-context. Taking into account the different loyalties and perceived affiliations of the three constituent peoples, Bosniak representatives mainly favour the strengthening of common institutions in order to integrate Bosnia further, a position also shared by those rejecting ethnic labelling and segregation. In contrast, Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb politicians usually argue for more autonomy at the entity or lower levels. Here, the different political systems of both entities play an important role: while separatist aspirations of Bosnian Serbs might have been accommodated by the creation of the RS, Bosnian Croats face stronger pressure within the Federation where the need for compromise to establish working structures is far greater.[27] Of course, the situation is far more complex, as individuals cannot be reduced to a single

27 The difficulties of the 1999 curricula reform initiative by OHR might illustrate this. RS representatives opted not to participate in the reform in the first place, so international actors concentrated on pushing for reforms in the Federation, where Bosnian Croat authorities finally boycotted the initiative on similar grounds as the RS politicians had done before.

identity and group affiliation. And even hard-line politicians may at times prefer a pragmatic approach rather than to follow a separatist agenda, since pushing for reform to ensure high-quality education is clearly in their constituents' interest.

What does this mean for the international organisations involved? How can the strategies adopted by international organisations finally be balanced? Some initiatives, like the EC-TAER project, have primarily focused on technical issues of education reform, and have achieved some general agreement on standard-setting or common institutions with limited responsibilities. Nevertheless, as the critical issue of refugee return could not (and was not intended to) be excluded from this comprehensive reform initiative, the approach reached its limits: agreement was only possible as long as the critical issue of segregation was not addressed. But organisations which concentrated on the controversial issues of textbook content or segregation of schools, like OHR, also achieved only limited progress. Censoring textbooks or imposing the integration of two schools from above may be justified as short-term action, but has to be supplemented with long-term measures on the ground. For that, local partners are necessary, but they might be alienated by this short-term approach.

Ten years after the war, the education sector is still highly segregated along ethnopolitical lines and, accordingly, in many constituencies it has remained a playground for nationalistic forces. Reports monitoring progress on educational reform point out ongoing obstruction by cantonal or municipal authorities in certain areas (OSCE 2005; CoE 2005). So far, Bosnian authorities on the higher levels tend to give in to these demands, as they refrain from imposing implementation.[28] The following example might underline this observation: when segregation of schools was widespread practice in the Federation of BiH, the Federal Minister of Education was initially willing to endorse it but refrained due to international protest (Spaulding 1998:8). Where obstruction is not the problem, over-bureaucratisation halts progress, as the recent OSCE report illustrates.[29]

But with international actors like the OSCE slowly losing patience (OSCE 2005) over the limited progress of reform, who is to take the leading role? Those involved in education reform efforts seem to agree that a longer international engagement is necessary (OSF 2003:13; OSCE 2003). A withdrawal now would be premature and would damage the promising initial steps.

28 The Bosnian Ministry of Civil Affairs is for example legally entitled/obliged to impose certain measures in order to fulfil Bosnia's international obligations (OSCE 2005:16).

29 Once a law on education is passed, the local Ministry of Education must issue instructions, based on the law, to the schools. This means that even when modernisation measures are included within the scope of the law, school officials cannot implement them until they get the go-ahead from their superiors. In some cases, the ministers will not issue these instructions without a green light from their political party leaders (OSCE 2004:16).

The experience of education reform in Bosnia clearly shows the limits of a top-down approach in bringing about changes at the local level. This is all the more true in a federal system like Bosnia-Herzegovina, where competencies are transferred to lower levels with no agreed cooperation procedures in place. This progress on lower levels should be the focus of research, something unfortunately beyond the scope of this article. Comprehensive research on schools and educational institutions in different areas would be important to draw conclusions on recent developments. Exploring local differences might reveal important lessons to be learned for similar interventions. One promising approach might be the "model for system change in secondary education" project of the Open Society Fund BiH and the cantonal authorities, an extensive reform comprising policy-making (legal amendments), capacity-development (reform of the cantonal Pedagogic Institute) and building a school and community network (establishment of youth councils, parents' associations and student cooperatives) (OSF 2003:6). It remains to be seen whether projects like these can serve as role models for other political units where reform so far has been delayed. Otherwise there is a danger of disparate development that may lead to further disintegration – not so much along ethnic but economic lines.

So far, international initiatives in Bosnia have focused mainly on establishing an integrated school system. The question remains whether such a goal is realistic. Also, from other ethnopolitical conflict settings, integration by itself is not perceived as the primary peacebuilding tool (see Church/Visser 2001). In Northern Ireland, for example, less than 10% of students attend integrated schools (for more information on segregation in Northern Ireland see Gallagher et al. 2003; Montgomery et al. 2003). Authorities have rather focused on establishing links *between* schools to overcome the inter-communal divide, an approach that the OSCE seems to be slowly adopting in Bosnia after the limited success so far in problem areas like Mostar.[30] There have also been major efforts to reform curricula and teaching materials in Northern Ireland to enhance students' respect for the other community. The concept of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) was not established as an extra subject but rather mainstreamed into the whole teaching process. A possible way for Bosnia might be to incorporate similar concepts or modules of peace education into the curricula. Another option is to set up pilot projects by introducing peace education to some schools, as the Education For Peace (EFP) project

30 The current online presentation of the OSCE Field Office in Mostar, for example, says: "The OSCE will continue to work towards the integration of classes, and as a first step will promote joint extra-curricular activities." www.oscebih.org/overview/mostar.asp; 11 August 2005.

does.[31] With all initiatives it would be important to adapt concepts to the Bosnian context, a necessity that with some international efforts seems to have been forgotten (see EFP internal evaluation).

The debates on textbook content have been raised by international interventions which have focused insufficiently on one important lesson: there is no single perspective, no single "truth" in post-conflict settings. Different experiences lead to different perspectives. Of course one has to draw a line if facts are neglected or history is used to reinforce stereotypes of other groups, justify acts of crime or support feelings of superiority. But censorship does not solve the problem and will not change mindsets. One possible way of dealing with this is to introduce students to different perspectives. The key challenge is to make them question interpretations of history and social context and to empower them to think critically. What is urgently needed in Bosnia is not only a reform of the framework educational structures, but also a change of values. Furthermore, a change of pedagogic practices is absolutely necessary. Teaching methods in Bosnia, at least until recently, have remained teacher-centred and knowledge-based. Instead of focusing mainly on textbooks, international organisations should focus much more on the teachers and their training. Only if teachers are prepared to challenge students' perceptions and make them "think", is change likely.

This is already reflected in pedagogic concepts, like Education for Democratic Citizenship, as favoured by the CoE. This concept follows a twofold strategy: to keep the education sector free from ideology or political influence, but also to focus on passing down the values necessary for a democratic and tolerant society. Education for democratic citizenship is based on the link between education, culture and identity. In this concept, the individual is seen as a responsible member of a democratic society – a citizen. In order to fulfil this role, the individual must acquire skills such as the capacity for critical thinking and tolerance for others and for differing opinions. The concept therefore puts as much emphasis on teaching *methods* as on curricula *content*. The need for in-depth training programmes for teachers is obvious, given the demands of current reforms, which are in sharp contrast to the current qualification of teachers.

31 The Education for Peace (EFP) project in BiH was set up in 2000 by the Canada-based International Education for Peace Institute in partnership with the MoEs of the Federation and the RS. The aim of this project was to bring forward peace education by providing teaching material and setting up a network of model schools practicing education for peace-techniques. Although an evaluation in 2004 raised doubts about the adaptation of the project to Bosnian needs and the concept in general (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation 2004), the project is regularly appraised by international organisations (see EFP homepage: www.efpinternational.org/).

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