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**INEE**



# Education and fragility in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Clare Magill



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The review and other key resources relating to education and fragility can be found at: [www.ineesite.org/index.php/post/situational\\_analyses\\_of\\_education\\_and\\_fragility1/](http://www.ineesite.org/index.php/post/situational_analyses_of_education_and_fragility1/)

## Presentation of the IIEP series

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UNESCO is often requested to provide an educational response in emergency and reconstruction settings. The Organization continues to develop expertise in this field in order to be able to better prompt and relevant assistance. IIEP has been working most recently with the Global Education Cluster to offer guidance, practical tools, and specific training for education policy-makers, officials, and planners.

The UN General Assembly adopted, in July 2010, a resolution on the ‘Right to education in emergency situations’. It recognizes that both natural disasters and conflict present a serious challenge to the fulfilment of international education goals, and acknowledges that protecting schools and providing education in emergencies should remain a key priority for the international community and Member States. The Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 explicitly focused on the rights of children in emergencies in the fifth of the eleven objectives it adopted. Governments, particularly education ministries, have an important role to play in an area that has often been dominated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies.

In this regard, the field of educational planning in emergencies and reconstruction is still developing, and requires increased documentation and analysis. Accumulated institutional memories and knowledge in governments, agencies, and NGOs on education in emergencies are in danger of being lost due to high staff turnover in both national and international contexts. Most of the expertise is still in the heads of practitioners and needs to be collected while memories are fresh.

The IIEP series on Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction aims to document such information, and includes country-specific analyses on the planning and management of education in emergencies and reconstruction. These studies focus on efforts made to restore and transform education systems in countries and territories as diverse as Pakistan, Burundi, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Sudan, Kosovo, Timor-Leste, and Rwanda.

The Situational Analyses on Education and Fragility, produced in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), are the latest of IIEP’s publications that seek to broaden the body of literature and knowledge in this field. These include a series of global, thematic, policy-related studies, on topics including certification for pupils and teachers, donor engagement in financing and alternative education programmes. In addition, IIEP has published a Guidebook for Planning Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction for ministry of education officials and the agencies assisting them. In collaboration with UNICEF and the Global Education Cluster, IIEP is also developing specific guidance on how to develop education sector plans in situations affected by crisis for a similar audience. Through this programme, IIEP will make a modest but significant contribution to the discipline of education in emergencies and reconstruction, in the hope of enriching the quality of educational planning processes in situations affected by crisis.

Khalil Mahshi  
Director, IIEP

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## List of abbreviations

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ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CFS	child-friendly schools
CoE	Council of Europe
CPD	continuous professional development
CRISE	Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
DCF	Donor Coordination Forum
EC	European Commission
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EU	European Union
EUFOR	European Union Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GDP	gross domestic product
GFA	General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (also referred to as the Dayton Agreement)
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union
IC	Italian Cooperation
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	internally displaced person(s)
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD–DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OHR	Office of the High Representative
PIC	Peace Implementation Council



RS	Republika Srpska
SDS	BiH's nationalist Serbian Democratic Party
SFOR	Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	United Nations
UNCERD	United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
UNCESCR	United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
VET	vocational education and training

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## Foreword to the situational analyses

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The publications in this series are the result of a research project, 'Situational Analyses of Education and Fragility', carried out by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Working Group on Education and Fragility. The four studies in the series – on Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, and Liberia – have been synthesized into an overarching review that aims to identify key elements in the complex relationships between education and fragility.

The INEE Working Group on Education and Fragility was established in 2008 as an inter-agency mechanism to coordinate diverse initiatives and catalyse collaborative action on education and fragility. Its goals are to: strengthen consensus on what works to mitigate fragility through education while ensuring equitable access for all; support the development of effective quality education programmes in fragile contexts; and promote the development of alternative mechanisms to support education in fragile contexts in the transition from humanitarian to development assistance. In late 2008, the Working Group decided to undertake this research project of country case studies as a means of further developing the evidence base necessary for understanding the role of education in either exacerbating or mitigating fragility.

One of the Working Group's first tasks, in considering the relationship between education and fragility, was to try to clarify the concept 'fragility'. This evolved from the terminology of 'fragile states', which the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) defines as those having a limited capacity and/or political will to provide basic services to the population.\* The shift from 'fragile states' to 'fragility' reflects an attempt to, first, avoid pejorative labels that might hinder diplomatic relations or assistance to such countries, and, second, be more constructive in articulating the conditions of fragility, their causes, and their locations. This new focus no longer considers the state as the only unit of analysis – although its role remains critical. It also allows for a deeper exploration of the various causes (human and systemic) of a failure to provide basic services (security, justice, health, and education) to affected populations.

Contexts of fragility are distinguished from 'non-fragile' contexts first and foremost by instability – political, economic, social – which is often coupled with the presence (or risk) of violent conflict. Fragile contexts are marked by any number or combination of dynamics of fragility, including poor governance, repression, corruption, inequality and exclusion, and low levels of social cohesion. The four states examined in the Situational Analyses of Education and Fragility (Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, and Liberia) have all experienced, and continue to experience, instability and/or prevalence of violence.

The relationship between education and fragility is dynamic and often mutually reinforcing: education is impacted by fragility, as fragility is impacted by education. The myriad ways in which different conditions of fragility affect various aspects of education (including access, quality, relevance, equity, and management) are well documented. And there is a deepening understanding of the impacts of education on fragility (whether in exacerbating or mitigating it). However, additional evidence is needed to understand the complex dynamics of education in fragile contexts and to determine the effectiveness of educational policies and programmes in reducing fragility.

\* See OECD-DAC, Service Delivery in Fragile Situations, at: [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/54/40886707.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/54/40886707.pdf)

Each of the four case studies presents an analysis of a situation of fragility. Their ultimate aim is to facilitate the development of recommendations for policy, planning, and programming strategies and best practice at country level. All four studies used an 'Analytic Framework of Education and Fragility',\*\* developed by the Working Group, which built on existing tools, such as the USAID Education and Fragility Assessment Tool and the Fast Track Initiative's (FTI) Progressive Framework. The Analytic Framework laid out common research questions to facilitate a process of (1) establishing the fragility context, (2) understanding the response to the fragility context, and (3) summarizing impact. The research analysed the interactions between education and fragility across five fragility domains (security, governance, economy, social, and environment) and against various aspects of education within four categories (planning, service delivery, resource mobilization, and system monitoring). The analytic framework was also meant to provide a base upon which a cross-comparison examination of all four situational analyses could be developed.

Yet, using the analytic framework as a methodological basis for the research proved to be challenging. In addition to being unwieldy, it failed to clarify the relationship between education and fragility for the researchers, each of whom interpreted the task and the framework in a different way.\*\*\* Complex and abstract definitions of fragility, which proved difficult to operationalize, compounded the problem, as did the issue of how to discriminate the interlinking and cross-cutting dynamics between the five fragility domains. This made it difficult to develop measurable indicators, and thus, in turn, both methodologies and questionnaires, and led to differences in data collection between the countries, as well as complicating the cross-case analysis. It became clear that it is necessary to fully understand the fragility dynamics before teasing out how education interacts and interfaces with indicators of fragility.

Due to this difficulty in establishing a shared analytic approach, the studies were less analytically consistent – in terms of depth, focus, and quality – than had been envisaged. The studies on Cambodia and Liberia, which were originally intended to be field-based, suffered more significantly from this lack of consistency, and therefore required bolstering with secondary literature.

However, despite the challenges, the synthesis reviews the four studies to identify emerging themes, commonalities, contrasts, and gaps in research on the relationship between education in fragility. We hope to use the knowledge garnered from the series to develop additional research and analytic tools for a wider audience.

\*\* The Analytic Framework is available at:  
[www.ineesite.org/index.php/post/field-based\\_situational\\_analyses\\_of\\_education\\_and\\_fragility/](http://www.ineesite.org/index.php/post/field-based_situational_analyses_of_education_and_fragility/)

\*\*\* The Afghanistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina studies were developed by independent researchers at IIEP-UNESCO and the University of Ulster, respectively; for the field work and development of the Cambodia and Liberia studies, the Working Group commissioned independent research teams.

## Executive summary

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This desk review is part of a larger Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) research project, 'Situational Analyses of Education and Fragility', which aims to better understand the relationship between education and fragility. The geographical focus of this review is Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The review examines the post-war period in particular, from the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFA, also referred to as the Dayton Agreement) in 1995 through to the present day. For the purposes of this review, 'fragility' is understood as referring to the multiple transitions the BiH State and society are currently undergoing, and the many challenges inherent in these transitions.

The rise of hard-line Serb nationalist Slobodan Milošević and the fall of communism helped to precipitate the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. From 1992 to 1995, a bitter war was fought among the three officially recognized 'constituent peoples' in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks. The GFA succeeded in bringing about an end to hostilities and setting up structures to ensure the implementation of both the civilian and the military aspects of the Agreement. However, it failed fundamentally to reconcile competing visions of the state – arguably, one of the causes of the war.

Several recent reports stress the precariousness of the current political situation in BiH. According to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), political dialogue, characterized by aggressive rhetoric, is 'sadly reminiscent of the immediate pre-war (and post-war) era' (Bassuener and Lyon, 2009). Although not widely considered to be a 'fragile state' by the international donor community, BiH nevertheless remains fragile due to internal and regional political insecurity. The current political stagnation and absence of social trust in BiH are due in no small part to ongoing disagreement about the country's identity and future – and such disagreement has implications for the education of the country's children and young people.

It has been argued that the manner in which education was delivered during the war supported the conflicting agendas of the three constituent peoples by stereotyping and promoting divisive histories. After the war, education was manipulated to perpetuate these divisions. The GFA left a chaotic legacy for education, creating an institutionally complex structure that has made the task of educational reform exceptionally challenging. The post-Dayton fragmentation of the education system makes state-level coordination of the education sector virtually impossible. It has also led to inefficient spending and significant duplication of provision, which in turn have a negative impact on educational quality.

This review briefly examines the financing of education in BiH and provides an overview of international involvement in the education sector. It goes on to look at the impact of the war on education and the legacies of the GFA for education in the war's aftermath. The GFA barely mentioned education; nevertheless the 1995 Agreement shaped the future of education reform in BiH for two key reasons relating to language of instruction. First, the GFA recognized and protected the Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian languages. Second, the new BiH Constitution included the texts of various international human rights conventions and treaties, among them the European Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees the right of all children to be educated in their own language. Together, these two outcomes of the Dayton Agreement meant that each of the three major ethnic groups could justify the continuation of separate, segregated education, in spite of the fact that Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian are mutually intelligible. This paved the way for the use of linguistic arguments to support political motivations by those arguing for separate

schooling. Thus, the highly sensitive issue of language of instruction has contributed directly to the politicization of education in BiH. Instead of recognizing education's potential to contribute to societal reconciliation in the aftermath of the war, Dayton led to the emergence of three education systems, separating the country's children along ethnic lines. The GFA also helped to provide justification for the establishment of 'possibly the most visible and obvious symbol of the politicization of education' (Perry, 2003: 29), namely the phenomenon of 'two schools under one roof'.

The issue of teacher training and professional development in BiH is briefly considered here. As with much of the rest of the education system in BiH, teacher training in the Federation of BiH (FBiH) is largely segregated. In relation to post-war educational reconstruction in BiH, it has been argued that opportunities were missed to examine objectionable material and to train teachers to encourage critical thinking and more debate and discussion in classrooms – skills that may assist children and young people in exploring the root causes of violent conflict. More recently, concern has been expressed about the lack of investment in teacher training and professional development, despite the recognition by authorities that there remain a high number of unqualified teachers in BiH.

With regard to school management in BiH, continuing political control over the day-to-day running of schools is considered to be problematic. School boards are commonly controlled by the main political party in the area, which has worrying implications for the appointment of school directors and teachers. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is currently engaged in efforts to address this issue with the aim of improving good governance and civic participation in school boards.

Curriculum issues in BiH are also examined as part of this review. The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted in 2003, provided for the development of a common core curriculum for all schools, consisting of the curricula and syllabi of all subjects of primary and general secondary education 'that have as broad an agreed common core as possible'. The common core curriculum was expressly intended to ensure the development of 'positive relations and a feeling of commitment to the State of BiH'. However, the main curricula currently in use in BiH have a strong ethnic slant. The close links between education and national identity have the potential to actively frustrate efforts to create a sense of shared future and citizenship in BiH. Unsurprisingly, the history curriculum continues to be a source of particular controversy. In direct contrast to the common core curriculum's stated aim to foster positive relations, some history textbooks appear to teach that living together is a dangerous thing. As such, the teaching of history and other national subjects represent a serious obstacle to the development of a common BiH identity among BiH's youth and, consequently, the emergence of a pluralistic society. With regard to religious instruction in BiH, according to the Council of Europe (CoE), it is not realizing its potential to 'contribute to a better understanding and tolerance between the various communities from an early age'. The introduction of a subject entitled 'culture of religions' to parts of BiH – a recent initiative of the OSCE – may go some way toward addressing some of the issues raised by the CoE.

The review considers the issue of access to education for returnees, refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs), in particular, two separate but related phenomena, both of which pose challenges for the educational integration of returnee children: 'two schools under one roof' and school bussing. The practice of 'two schools under one roof' remains especially controversial. It has been roundly condemned by the international community as it indicates that segregation of individuals along ethnic lines in BiH is a persisting trend.

With regard to unemployed youth, although brain drain has been a problem in BiH since before the war, the situation has worsened in the post-war years. The economic situation has resulted in alarming levels of youth emigration, which in turn has begun to have a negative effect on BiH. This review points to the importance of addressing the mismatch between labour force education and skill levels on the one hand, and job requirements in the labour market on the other.

Although local politicians have without doubt played a role in the politicization of the education debate in BiH, it is important to acknowledge the international community's role in education reform and in the wider political arena. After the war, the international community's involvement in the education sector expanded as education became linked to priorities such as state-building and minority refugee return. Initially, educational reconstruction efforts – including donations – were hampered by a lack of coordination. In 2002, as part of the streamlining of the international community's work in BiH, lead responsibility for education was given to the OSCE. According to this organization, which continues to lead education reform efforts in the country, BiH 'will only be as successful, stable and united as its schools', underlining the crucial link, emphasized by the international community, between education and post-war stability in the country. In considering the role of the international community, this review also considers the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development–Development Assistance Committee's (OECD–DAC) *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations* (2007), and their relevance to issues raised in the education reform process in BiH.

The perspectives of children and young people are examined – the ultimate beneficiaries of the education system who, according to the United Nations Report on the *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, 'remain the greatest hope and the greatest resource in rebuilding war-affected communities' (Machel, 2001). Evidence suggests that some young people believe that education has a positive role to play in helping successive generations understand the recent history of violent conflict, even though the topic may be sensitive and, some would argue, too recent.

The review concludes with a brief examination of some of the lessons learned from the BiH context.



Figure 1. Map of post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina



Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/bosnia/bosnia\\_herz\\_pol97.pdf](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/bosnia/bosnia_herz_pol97.pdf) (Retrieved 14 August 2009).



*The pendulum of BiH remains obstinately slanted in favour of the ideologues. For the good of the country and the future prosperity of its people, the pendulum needs to swing, dramatically and quickly, towards the interests of its children (Stabback, 2007: 465).*

# 1 Introduction

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This desk review is part of a larger INEE research project, 'Situational Analyses of Education and Fragility', which aims to better understand the relationship between education and fragility. The geographical focus of this review is Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), in particular the post-war period, from the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in 1995 through to the present day. The review is based on an analysis of project documents, technical papers, and academic studies.

With regard to terminology, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Working Group on Education and Fragility has opted to use the terms 'fragility' and 'fragile context' rather than 'fragile state' (see INEE, 2009). States affected by fragility include those affected by violent conflict, natural and humanitarian disasters, and those with weak institutions and/or weak state legitimacy. While cognisant of the term's limitations, the Working Group nevertheless views 'fragility' as a useful term that allows partners 'to bring education to the table with agencies engaged in issues of governance, security and economic growth where it might not otherwise be on the agenda' (INEE, 2009). For the purposes of this review, 'fragility' is understood as referring to the multiple transitions the BiH State and society are currently undergoing, and the many challenges inherent in these transitions (see *Section 3, The post-conflict/fragility context in BiH*, below).

## 2 Historical overview

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Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is situated in the western part of the Balkan peninsula in south-eastern Europe, and has a population of approximately 4 million. In addition to the three officially recognized 'constituent peoples' – Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks – there are 17 national minorities in BiH, including Roma, Jews, Turks, and Albanians. Largely due to its position on a major trade route between Europe and Asia, at the intersection of Islam and the Catholic and Orthodox branches of Christianity, the Balkans region has a long history of cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, and of conflict and conquest. Over the centuries, the area has formed part of the Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian empires. Following the First World War, Bosnia became part of the state of Yugoslavia (originally called the 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes'), while in the period after the Second World War (1945–1992) it formed part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) with Communist leader Josip Broz Tito as Prime Minister and later President.

Tito's Yugoslavia consisted of six republics – Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Bosnia – and, after 1974, two autonomous provinces within Serbia – Kosovo and Vojvodina. While he was alive, Tito's policy of 'brotherhood and unity' – a combination of severe repression and progressive devolution of authority to the six republics – succeeded in containing nationalists and nationalism. 'We have spilt an ocean of blood for brotherhood and unity of our peoples', Tito once said, 'and we shall not allow anyone to touch or to destroy it from within.' However, economic crisis and Tito's death in 1980 led to an increase in ethnic tensions in the region. The rise of hard-line Serb nationalist Slobodan Milošević and the fall of communism helped to precipitate the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.

From 1992 to 1995, a bitter war was fought among BiH's three officially recognized 'constituent peoples' – Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks. Identity issues – ethnic, national, cultural, and linguistic – played a central role in the conflict. The war resulted in the deaths of over 100,000 people and the displacement – both internally within BiH and externally to other, mainly European countries – of around 50 per cent of the population. The war came to an end in November 1995 when the main parties to the conflict reached a peace agreement – the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFA, also referred to as the Dayton Agreement) – in Dayton, Ohio (USA). Following the successful negotiation of the Agreement, a Peace Implementation Conference was held in London in December 1995 to mobilize international support for the Agreement. The meeting resulted in the establishment of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), which comprises 55 countries and agencies that support the peace process in different ways – by assisting financially, providing troops for the Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR), or directly running operations in BiH.

As a result of the signing of the GFA, two entities were established in BiH: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS). The Federation occupies over 51 per cent of BiH's territory and consists of ten cantons: five are predominantly Bosniak, three are predominantly Croat, and the remaining two are ethnically mixed. The mainly Serb (Orthodox) Republika Srpska accounts for 49 per cent of BiH's territory and has a centralized administration. Additionally, a separate District of Brčko was created following an arbitration process undertaken by the Office of the High Representative (OHR). The strategically important territory straddles the Inter-Entity Boundary Line and as such was disputed. Brčko District is administered under international (largely American) supervision. The implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Agreement is supervised and monitored by the High Representative, the highest political authority in the country,

whose powers were extended in 1997 to include the power to dismiss elected and non-elected officials and to impose legislation as required. As of 2003, the High Representative is also the European Union's Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, as such, coordinates the activities of all EU stakeholders in BiH.

The GFA thus succeeded in bringing about an end to hostilities and setting up structures to ensure the implementation of both the civilian and the military aspects of the Agreement. However, it failed fundamentally to reconcile competing visions of the state – arguably, one of the causes of the war.

### 3 **The post-conflict/fragility context in BiH**

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A recent report by the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) notes that post-conflict scenarios are often characterized by multiple transition processes. By their nature these include the transition from war to peace, but may also often involve democratization, decentralization, and market liberalization. The report argues that ‘the transformation of war-torn societies into peaceful, stable, and more prosperous ones is an immensely complex task, often susceptible to contradictory pressures and concomitant risks of a relapse into violence’ (Brown *et al.*, 2008: 3). This is certainly the case in BiH, a society which, as Perry has pointed out, is undergoing not one transition, but three:

1. the post-Cold War transition from a one-party, socialist political system and a controlled economy to a multi-party, democratic, free market capitalist state;
2. the post-war transition resulting from the violent break-up of the Yugoslavia; and
3. the transition towards membership of the European Union (EU) (Perry, 2003: 7).

Each of these transition processes has an impact to varying degrees on the political landscape in BiH, which is characterized by extreme instability.<sup>1</sup>

In relation to the current political climate in BiH, several reports stress the precariousness of the situation. A March 2009 report published by the ICG warns that the GFA is arguably under the greatest threat since the war ended in 1995: ‘Tensions are currently high and stability is deteriorating, as Bosniaks and Serbs play a zero-sum game to upset the Dayton settlement’ (ICG, 2009: 1). The report highlights the role politicians are playing in destabilizing the situation, observing that while Milorad Dodik, the Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, has issued calls for the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to be closed immediately and demands for the right to a referendum on RS independence, Haris Silajdžić, the President of BiH, wants the international protectorate to continue, insisting on the abolition of RS and the creation of a centralized Bosnian state. According to the ICG, political dialogue, characterized by aggressive rhetoric, is ‘sadly reminiscent of the immediate pre-war (and post-war) era’ (ICG, 2009: 2). ‘While more moderate leaders seek common ground in order to move Bosnia toward European integration’, the report continues, ‘others push in the opposite direction, both convinced they articulate their nations’ true interests’ (ICG, 2009: 2). A May 2009 report published by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) goes further, emphasizing that although violent conflict does not appear imminent, ‘for the first time since Dayton, politicians and the media now mention war as a possible option’ (Bassuener and Lyon, 2009: 4). In addition, recent research by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Centre, University of Ulster, indicates that political instability in BiH has fostered a real sense of pessimism about the future among young people. This is particularly the case among those old enough to have memories of the war, several of whom fear that a return to violent conflict is almost inevitable (see Magill *et al.*, 2009).

The situation is further complicated by what could be described as a democratic deficit in BiH – or, in the words of an official in the OSCE’s Education Department, a ‘democratic paradox’ – where, as mentioned above, decisions made by democratically elected officials can be overturned and legislation imposed by the High Representative. Not only is such imposition of reforms inconsistent

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1. The complexity of BiH’s recent history is beyond the scope of this desk review. Readers interested in political and related developments since 1991 may wish to consult the BBC’s Bosnia-Herzegovina timeline at: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country\\_profiles/1066981.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1066981.stm)

with the development and consolidation of democracy, as some have argued (see, for example, Perry, 2003: 94); it also protects political leaders from the worst consequences of their behaviour and, paradoxically, can make disruptive actions politically safer and thus more tempting (ICG, 2009: 15). Instead of pursuing political dialogue, political parties often seek to deflect blame for political impasse from themselves, directing it instead towards each other and the OHR. Without the High Representative's safety net, the ICG argues, leaders would be compelled to behave more responsibly. However, a recent USIP report sees the OHR, together with a strong military presence, as being an essential 'guardrail' preventing the re-emergence of conflict in the country. Thus, the OHR is charged with the unenviable task of supporting the development of democracy in BiH whilst simultaneously impeding its full development. Preparations are ongoing for a reinforced EU Special Representative (EUSR) presence in BiH following the eventual closure of the OHR. There is little doubt, however, that uncertainty surrounding both the timing of this closure and the OHR-EUSR transition process has the potential to exacerbate an already unstable political situation in BiH.

To summarize, although not widely considered to be a 'fragile state' by the international donor community, BiH nevertheless remains fragile due to internal and regional political insecurity. Indeed a recent paper notes that, although rarely if ever referred to as a 'failed' or 'fragile' state, the continuing presence of an international military force and civilian administration in BiH, for 13 years thus far, is an implicit measure of its 'perceived inability to be fully self-governing' and its 'perceived continuing threat to regional security' (Woodward, 2009: 49). The current political stagnation and absence of social trust in BiH are due in no small part to ongoing disagreement about the country's identity and future – and such disagreement is, arguably, the logical legacy of the Dayton Agreement.

## 4 Education in BiH

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Primary education in BiH is compulsory and free for all children aged 6 to 15 years and lasts for nine years, as established by the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education.<sup>2</sup> Post-primary education is also free; it is provided by general (gymnasium) and technical (vocational) secondary schools where studies last for three to four years. At the beginning of the 2008/2009 school year in BiH, there were approximately 360,000 pupils enrolled in 1,874 primary schools and 148,000 students enrolled in 306 post-primary schools. There are roughly 23,700 primary and 11,700 post-primary teachers in BiH. With regard to tertiary level education, BiH has eight universities – six in FBiH and two in Republika Srpska – with about 105,000 students (Veljo and Eskić, 2009).

The country does not have a state-level ministry of education. Instead, the Ministry for Civil Affairs is in charge of education at national or state level. BiH has 13 ministries of education: two at entity level (FBiH and RS), ten at cantonal level, and one at district level (Brčko District).

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2. The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH (adopted in June 2003) regulates the principles of preschool, primary, and post-primary education. It sets out the obligations of education authorities in both entities and the District of Brčko to ensure educational services under equal conditions for all students.

## 5 Financing of education in BiH

Education in BiH is mainly financed from the public resources of entity, canton, Brčko District, and municipality budgets. Practically, in terms of allocations, this means that there are 13 separate education budgets in BiH: two entity budgets, one in Brčko District, and ten cantonal budgets. The amount of resources allocated to education from the state level budget is, according to one report, 'almost non-existent' (Pitkanen, 2008: 13). Republika Srpska and the Federation of BiH spend approximately 4 per cent and 6 per cent of their respective gross domestic product (GDPs) on education. The budget of the Department for Education of Brčko District amounts to 11.2 per cent of the district budget (Pitkanen, 2008: 13). From the total education budget resources, 88 per cent is allocated for the gross salaries and allowances of staffs, around 8 per cent for material expenditure, and 4 per cent for capital investments (Pitkanen, 2008: 13).

For the last decade or so, both bilateral and multilateral international agencies have supported the education sector in BiH. According to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 2007 *Donor Mapping Report*, multilateral donors in BiH have focused mainly on assisting the capacity-building of local institutions, financing the development of a legal framework for the education sector, and providing other forms of technical support. Additionally, both bilateral and multilateral donors have supported civil society organizations dealing with education issues. Figures for 2008 are not yet available from the Donor Coordination Forum (DCF) in BiH. However, in 2007, the Infrastructure and Economic Development and Social Protection sectors received the bulk of Official Development Assistance (ODA). When combined, these two areas of intervention made up more than 70 per cent of all allocations (*Table 1*).

**Table 1. Sector share of ODA in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2007)**

Sector	Sector share of ODA in 2007
Infrastructure	42.98%
Economic development and social protection	27.60%
Good governance and institution-building	8.63%
Conflict prevention, resolution, peace and security	5.68%
Cross-cutting sectors	4.56%
Local governance	4.10%
Agriculture and forestry	1.97%
Education	1.64%
Health	1.61%
Environmental protection	1.19%

Source: Chimiak *et al.*, 2008: 18.

DCF donors active in the education sector in BiH include: Austria/ADA, France, Germany/GTZ, Italy/IC, Norway, Spain/AECID, Sweden/Sida, USA/USAID, the European Commission (EC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank (for an overview of international involvement in the education sector in BiH, see *Box 1*). Together, they contributed €9.1 million to the education sector in BiH in 2007 – 1.64 per cent of ODA. Non-DCF members, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the OSCE are also influential in this sector.



**Box 1. Overview of international involvement in the education sector in BiH (2007)**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Activity</b>
European Commission (EC)	The EC is the main financial donor in the sector, assisting the reform processes at all three levels of education: primary, secondary, and higher education, including vocational training in high schools. It has supported both the development of the legislative framework on education and the adoption of these laws. The EC approaches education reform through a public administration lens, as laid out in the recommendations of the <i>Functional Review of the Education Sector</i> , carried out by the EC in 2004. The EC is also promoting the introduction of European Union (EU) policy in education, supporting the implementation of the Bologna Process and Lisbon Convention in Higher Education, and the Copenhagen Process in vocational education and training.
World Bank	The World Bank's current education project addresses secondary and higher education reform as well as the management and financing of education. The project is intended to continue until March 2010. However, the World Bank is concerned that local authorities have not expressed the expected interest in the project, thus jeopardizing its implementation.
UNICEF	UNICEF is a key player in terms of the development of models for the promotion of socially inclusive, multicultural approaches to education through the 'child-friendly schools' (CFS) model. The following are among UNICEF's most recent, relevant achievements: the development of standards and regulatory frameworks for basic education and Early Childhood Development, which resulted in the government's recent adoption of a Framework Law on Pre-Primary Education; the creation of a life-skills model focusing on the prevention of risky behaviours; and the implementation of CFS approaches at the school level, which led to most of the 600–700 schools in the country actively applying some of these principles.
France	France has two separate projects – one for higher education and the other for secondary education and French-language teaching. France is also implementing a project that aims to teach history in an innovative way by providing a common methodological background. This initiative is especially commendable as history education is one of the key areas that can be used to reconcile divergent interpretations of common past events.
Spain/AECID	AECID supports the efforts of the OSCE, OHR, and BiH authorities to recover the Mostar Prva Gimnasija building, an emblematic centre of secondary education, located in Mostar's Plaza de España.
Germany/GTZ	GTZ concentrates on vocational education and training (VET). This focus area, combined with GTZ's efforts in its other priority areas, is meant to improve conditions for foreign investments by securing an adequately trained labour force for those investments. GTZ's main aim is to change the teacher-oriented education system into a student-centred one.
Austria/ADA	ADA assists two areas: vocational training and higher education. The former of these includes a virtual programme for developing business activities and schools for tourism. The latter includes curriculum development, promotion of e-learning, and the involvement of researchers from the EU as well as emigrated BiH academics to teach courses at BiH public universities.
Italy/IC	IC sponsors a master's degree in Democracy and Human Rights for South East Europe, implemented jointly by the Centre for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies and the University of Bologna.
Sweden/Sida	Sida is financing a master's studies in Management and Supervision of Social Work, jointly delivered by Gothenburg University and the universities of Banja Luka and Sarajevo. Together with UNDP and Norway, Sida also supports a master's programme in Gender Studies at the University of Sarajevo.
USA/USAID	USAID has partnered with the University of Delaware and the Sarajevo Faculty of Economics to establish the Sarajevo Graduate School of Business to offer a western-style master's programme in business administration in BiH.

Donor	Activity
Norway	Norway is supporting a postgraduate programme on religion and its ties to politics, nationalism, violence, and human rights. Norway also organizes a teaching exchange in the same field.
OSCE	<p>A non-DCF organization, the OSCE is nevertheless significantly engaged in the education sector in BiH. The OSCE's focus is on enhancing local competencies; strengthening student councils and parent councils; broadening the debate on education as a policy issue by organizing events for school directors, pedagogical institute experts, and other stakeholders; and conducting extensive research at the school and community level on the state of education and education reform in the country.</p> <p>A key OSCE priority is supporting a reform environment that will result in the removal of divisive national politics from the classroom. This is implemented through a history and geography textbook reform effort conducted in cooperation with the CoE and the George Eckert Institute, and endeavours to monitor the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children. The CoE and OSCE both support the establishment of a state-level education agency that sets and enforces common standards and ensures quality and mobility. They also advocate for the development of a modern, flexible curriculum that will be appropriate for all children.</p>
Council of Europe (CoE)	<p>Also a non-DCF organization, the CoE, together with its international partners, has been responsible for the successful drafting of the Law on Higher Education, adopted in 2007, and the primary and secondary education laws. CoE has supported citizenship and human rights education, as well as history and language classes. In the area of higher education, the CoE funded and co-chaired the Higher Education Working Group/ BiH Bologna Conference for four years. From January 2006 to January 2008, the joint EC and CoE project, <i>Strengthening Higher Education in BiH</i>, supported BiH institutions in developing Bologna reform tools and action lines at the system level, with a focus on Quality Assurance, Qualification Framework and Recognition of Qualifications and Study Periods. These reform tools were adopted by the BiH Council of Ministers in December 2007 and published under the title <i>7 Key Strategies and Guidelines to Implement the Bologna Process</i>.</p> <p>On a political level, the CoE has ongoing monitoring mechanisms through its Committee of Ministers and Parliamentary Assembly regarding BiH's post-accession commitments in the area of education, namely to adopt education legislation that meets CoE standards and to end ethnic segregation in schools.</p>
<p>Source: Chimiak et al., 2008: 18–20.</p>	

Compared with 2006, donors allocated more funds to education, among other areas in 2007 – a ‘heartening development’, according to the *Donor Mapping Report*, reflecting ‘the understanding that improvements to this sector are crucial for the continued success of reforms in all other areas’. However, although progress is being made in the sector, the report argues that the politicized nature of the education system in BiH limits donors’ efforts to effect change, and that the removal of such divisive politics must therefore be given priority (Chimiak et al., 2008: 21). Interpretations differ concerning how to go about doing this and no quick fix solution exists; rather, tackling the issue will require sustained, long-term engagement. The *Donor Mapping Report* recommends that donors continue to work to advocate the eradication of political obstacles without necessarily tying their involvement in the sector to the eradication of these barriers. A good example of this is France’s focus on the methodological issues of history teaching.

## 6 Impact of the war on education in BiH

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Children's schooling was severely disrupted during the war. Education facilities across BiH were badly affected, with over half of all school buildings in the country being seriously damaged, destroyed, taken over by the army, or used to house the displaced. Although many teachers continued to provide basic teaching, often in hugely challenging and dangerous conditions, Stabback points out that it is also true that many teachers left the profession and the country during the war years, resulting in the employment of a great many untrained teachers (Stabback, 2007: 453). This was particularly true of teachers of foreign languages, many of whom left BiH or found employment with international organizations. With regard to the wartime experiences of children and young people, many were forced to change school, often multiple times, as a result of being displaced – internally, within BiH, or externally, for example, to Croatia or Germany (Magill et al., 2009: 37–39). Thus, in the aftermath of the war, in addition to the loss of professional expertise, schools had to cope with two groups of children with exceptional needs: children who had witnessed atrocities during the war and/or survived them, and children returning after a period of internal displacement or abroad as refugees (Galloway, 2006: 265).

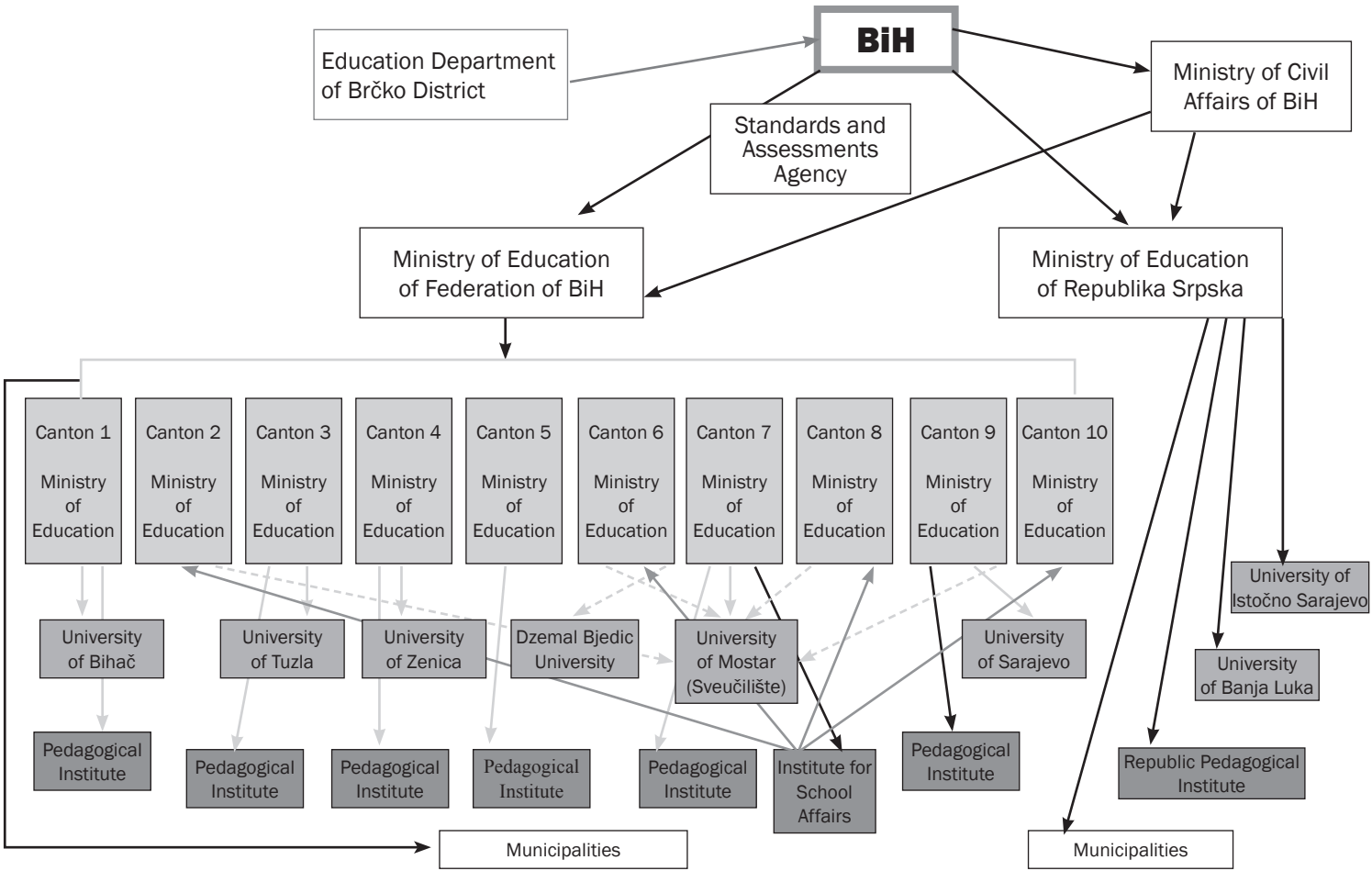
In relation to the environmental legacy of the war, the UN estimates that over 3 million mines were laid in BiH during the war, of which around 200,000 remain. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the most mine-affected country in Europe. According to the Electronic Mine Information Network, mines and unexploded ordinance contaminate about 3 per cent of the land in BiH and directly affect the safety of around 900,000 people – roughly one quarter of the population.<sup>3</sup> As such, they continue to represent an obstacle to the safety of citizens, including school-going children and young people, as well as to economic and social development. An estimated 5,000 BiH civilians have been killed or injured by mines, more than 1,500 of those after the war ended. In 2008 alone, 33 mine-related incidents and injuries were recorded. Although mine clearance is ongoing, it will be many years before the country is free from land-mine and unexploded ordinance contamination. Various mine-risk education projects are in operation in BiH, working to raise children's awareness of the danger of landmines and unexploded ordinance. One such example, the Genesis Project in Banja Luka, uses puppets to engage children and help them retain messages. With support from UNICEF, the project has trained over 1,200 teachers to run mine-risk education throughout the school year (Bolton, 2005).

Beyond the structural damage and disruption caused by the war, the break-up of Yugoslavia and the war which followed also led to the emergence in Bosnia and Herzegovina of three separate education systems based on three different curricula, two of which (the Serbian and Croatian) were largely adopted from outside the state of BiH – from Serbia, to the country's east, and Croatia, to the west and north. The third, Bosnian system was adapted from the earlier, pre-war education system of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has been argued that the manner in which education was delivered during the war perpetuated the conflicting agendas of the three constituent peoples by stereotyping and promoting divisive histories (Nelles, 2006: 231). After the war, education was manipulated to perpetuate these divisions (Pašalic-Kreso, 2008: 353).

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3. [www.mineaction.org/country.asp?c=4](http://www.mineaction.org/country.asp?c=4) [Retrieved 4 November 2009].

Figure 2. Structure of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Source: OSCE, 2007b.

## 7 Legacies of Dayton for education

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The meetings that took place in Dayton, Ohio, in November 1995 aimed to bring about an end to hostilities in BiH. Educational reform issues were not high up on the agenda. However, the post-war educational landscape in BiH is in large part a creation of the GFA. Fourteen years after the signing of the Agreement, it would appear that many of the challenges and setbacks faced by educational reformers in BiH can be traced back to Dayton. However, some would argue that although Dayton could have been more helpful, these difficulties can be traced back further, to the 1992–1995 war. Regardless of Dayton, wartime power structures (with education as an essential part) were always going to be difficult to overcome.

According to Pašalic-Kreso, Dayton left a chaotic legacy for education: ‘From the very beginning, the Constitution created a decentralized, asymmetric and defective education management system that has undermined unity in educational policies, common educational goals, common values, positive and patriotic feelings for one’s country and homeland, etc.’ (Pašalic-Kreso, 2008: 360). Article III of the BiH Constitution (Annex 4 of the Dayton Agreement) gives all powers ‘not expressly assigned’ to state institutions to the entities (Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), while Section III, Article 4(b) of the Federation constitution gives the cantons responsibility for ‘making education policy, including decisions concerning the regulation and provision of education’. Education is thus highly decentralized in the Federation of BiH and highly centralized in the RS. Dayton therefore created an immensely institutionally complex structure that has made the task of educational reform not merely difficult but gargantuan. ‘Whether the [educational reform] agenda could be implemented in such a fragmented institutional framework, as the one the country currently operates’, a 2006 World Bank report concluded, ‘is a question that political leaders would be advised to ponder’ (World Bank, 2006).

Dayton has been widely criticized by international organizations and experts in the field for ignoring the historical, cultural, and educational factors that contributed to violent conflict, and for making education ‘a hostage to latent nationalism in BiH’ (Nelles, 2006: 231). Just as educational developments in BiH have been greatly influenced by the often fragile political climate, the reverse has also proved to be true, with educational developments in some cases themselves contributing to fragility in BiH. A brief analysis of the Dayton Agreement’s educational legacies may help to illustrate the dynamic and hugely complex relationship between education and fragility in the BiH context. Put another way, it would be virtually impossible to gain an insight into the relationship between education and fragility in BiH without at least a basic understanding of the Dayton Agreement and its implications for education.

One of the most serious criticisms levelled at Dayton is its implications for the administration of education in BiH. By ‘conferring responsibility and powers on units that were hopelessly small, in most cases ethnically exclusive and, too often, controlled by local interests whose principal commitment was to their own ethnic group’, Galloway argues, Dayton rendered the state impotent (Galloway, 2006: 258). This had obvious repercussions for post-war education reform. According to Russo, the lack of a unified system of educational laws and regulations ‘clearly creates problems for reformers’ (Russo, 2000: 123). The high level of fragmentation makes state-level coordination of education sector reform virtually impossible – something which is seen by many as being crucial to the development of an equitable and inclusive education system that fosters societal reconciliation rather than division. This is highlighted both in a 2008 report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education (UN Human rights Council, 2008) and in

a 2005 Communiqué by the Steering Board of the PIC, the latter of which called urgently for the establishment of a state-level education agency (OHR/EUSR, 2005b). However, some education officials on the ground are sceptical that the establishment of such an agency would dramatically alter or improve the situation, unless it was run by the OHR instead of local institutions.<sup>4</sup>

Although decentralization has become a common feature of education reforms, some have argued that decentralization of education is not always useful, as it may result in an ethnic or religious bias in local political decision-making, particularly where multiple identity groups vie for power at a local level (see, for example, Weinstein *et al.*, 2007; Galloway, 2006; Smith, 2005; Smith and Vaux, 2003). Both Pašalic-Kreso and Galloway contend that a small and divided country such as BiH cannot support a divisive and decentralized education system (see Pašalic-Kreso, 2008: 360–362; Galloway, 2006: 269). One of the many problems associated with the fragmentation of the education system in BiH is that lack of coordination between ministries responsible for the implementation of laws means that national laws are simply not being implemented (UN Human Rights Council, 2008). This in turn constitutes a serious obstacle to the fulfilment of children's right to education, enshrined in Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as it impacts on important components of the right to education such as availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. Coordinated, coherent, and uniform education policies are an impossibility since state-level education authorities do not have the means to enforce and monitor implementation of the legislation in this field. A recent report of the CoE Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities sees this as a 'matter of deep concern since [recent educational developments] undermine the efforts to foster national reconciliation and could, in the long run, constitute a threat to social cohesion' (CoE, 2009).

Additionally, the post-Dayton fragmentation of the education system in BiH has cost implications. The institutionally complex structure and politically forced separation in education have led to inefficient education spending and significant duplication of provision. Indeed, the fragmentation of educational administration in BiH – not only into 12 educational authorities but also into smaller than average school sizes – is partly responsible for the high level of public spending as a proportion of GDP. This in turn has had a knock-on effect on educational quality, as inefficiencies in spending have, according to the World Bank, resulted in unacceptably low education outcomes (World Bank, 2006: 73).

The fragmented nature of the education system is also responsible for the absence of an official statistics database at the national level, which has a number of serious implications. Such a database is necessary, for example, to ensure that all children in BiH, regardless of their ethnic or national group, are realizing their right to education, and to monitor the quality of the education they receive. Planning, implementing, monitoring, and advocating education reform in the absence of official statistics have proven to be immensely challenging for those involved. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, the lack of official statistics reflecting the general situation of the country – for example statistics on enrolment, school completion and dropout rates, teacher–student ratio, and gender parity – makes undertaking an adequate and accurate analysis of the situation with regard to the enjoyment of the right to education in BiH very difficult (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 12). A World Bank report similarly argued that consistent information on performance was necessary in order to be able to address inequities in education outcomes. Additionally, the lack of an official national statistics database has significant implications for the focus of public debate on education. As reliable and standardized public information on educational inputs, outputs, and outcomes is not available, public discourse on education tends to focus almost

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4. Personal communication, education official, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, September 2009.

exclusively on politics instead of on the quality of teaching and learning, potentially exacerbating an already fragile political situation. However, some education officials on the ground have expressed scepticism that reliable and standardized information would move the focus from nationalist issues.<sup>5</sup>

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5. Personal communication, education official, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, September 2009.



# 8

## Education as a contributor to fragility in BiH

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### 8.1 Language of instruction and the politicization of education

With regard to the issue of language in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is worth noting that most linguists agree that Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian are in fact one language with a number of dialects and variants (see, for example, Pašalic-Kreso, 2008: 367; Hromadžić, 2008: 556). Prior to the 1992–1995 war, Serbo-Croatian was the main language spoken in BiH. During Tito's rule, Serbo-Croatian served as the language of communication among the diverse ethnic groups within Yugoslavia's borders and was the language of Yugoslav diplomatic missions in foreign countries. However, as of 1991–1992 Serbo-Croatian officially ceased to exist in the Yugoslav successor states. The first instruments for the codification of a new Bosnian language were written while the war was still ongoing in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the future of the Bosnian state was uncertain. At around the same time, the Bosnian Serb leadership tried to compel its subjects to stop speaking their native dialect in favour of the Serbian spoken in Belgrade. In this way, they hoped to achieve linguistically a 'Greater Serbia' (Greenberg, 2004: 8). The post-1991 Croatian language reforms were likewise intended to maximize differences between Croatian and Serbian. Thus in the 1990s, members of Yugoslavia's four main ethnic groups had to choose which successor language they felt an allegiance to – Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, or Montenegrin.

In BiH, although locals understand all three versions of the language, the claim that Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian are actually three separate languages is constitutionally acknowledged in Dayton (Farrell (2001) cited in Hromadžić, 2008). According to Hromadžić, this leaves the way open for the language issue to be used to erect barriers between the three main ethnic groups (Hromadžić, 2008). One of the main differences between BiH's three languages is that Serbian is commonly printed in the Cyrillic alphabet, while Bosnian and Croatian employ the Latin alphabet. Thus, the language issue has clear educational implications in BiH – for not only the language of instruction, but also the *alphabet* of instruction.

Dayton barely mentioned education; nevertheless the 1995 Agreement shaped the future of education reform in BiH for two key reasons relating to language of instruction. Firstly, the General Framework Agreement recognized and protected the Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian languages. Secondly, the new BiH Constitution, which formed part of the peace agreement, included the texts of various international human rights conventions and treaties, among them the European Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees the right of all children to be educated in their own language. Together, these two outcomes meant that each of the three major ethnic groups could justify the continuation of separate, segregated education, in spite of the fact that Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian are mutually intelligible. This paved the way for linguistic arguments to be used to support political motivations by those arguing for separate schooling (Palmer, 2005: 56–57). Thus, instead of recognizing education's potential to contribute to societal reconciliation in the aftermath of the war, Dayton led to the emergence of three education systems separating the country's children along ethnic lines.

Dayton also helped to provide justification for the establishment of what Perry refers to as 'possibly the most visible and obvious symbol of the politicization of education', namely the phenomenon of 'two schools under one roof' (Perry, 2003: 29). Many of these schools were formed when returnee children were finally allowed to share a school building with the dominant ethnic group, often after a period of being schooled in a private house along with other returnee children. The phenomenon



where a single pre-war school now houses two new schools whose pupils are taught in different languages (Bosnian, Serbian, or Croatian), study different curricula, and are kept largely or entirely separate, is most common in the two mixed cantons of the FBiH, and has been defended on linguistic grounds by nationalist politicians. For example, in August 2003 when Lord Ashdown employed the Bonn powers to fine the ruling nationalist party, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), €20,000 for their failure to issue instructions on the administrative unification of the 'two schools under one roof' in the Srednja-Bosna and Herzegovina-Neretva cantons, local politicians claimed that they were concerned about the protection of the Croatian language in unified schools (Perry, 2003: 89).

The concern expressed by nationalist politicians about the protection of language indicates the extent to which identity politics have become a factor in discussion of education reform, and at least partly explains what the World Bank terms the 'strong political resistance' to integrating education across constituent groups in BiH (World Bank, 2000: 8). This may also go some way to explaining why implementation of the requirement, since 2001, to teach both Latin and Cyrillic scripts at primary and post-primary level in both entities has not been consistent or guaranteed, particularly in Croat curriculum schools (Perry, 2003: 35). In a post-war context where multiple identity groups compete for power, the desire to ensure children are taught in Bosnian, Serbian, or Croatian highlights not only the relationship between education and identity formation, but crucially the political significance of this connection. Language is intimately bound up with notions of identity and is, as such, 'of utmost importance in conflicts that have an identity dimension to them' (Dupuy, 2008: 160). Identity politics played a central role in the war and are the source of continuing tension and fragility in the country, 14 years after the signing of the General Framework Agreement. If education is perceived to be instrumental in the creation and maintenance of identity – linguistic, ethnic, cultural, religious, and/or national identity – then it follows that nationalist politicians would seek to facilitate rather than undermine such a process. Pašalic-Kreso argues that politicians in BiH are content to keep education the way it is for precisely this reason, because 'it can be used for the purposes of political indoctrination enabling teachers, students, and indirectly, the students' parents, to be manipulated' (Pašalic-Kreso, 2008: 365). Indeed, as recently as May 2009, concern was expressed that the education system in BiH 'inculcates nationalism' (Bassuener and Lyon, 2009: 10). Thus, the highly sensitive issue of language of instruction has contributed directly to the politicization of education in BiH. Instead of helping to foster societal reconciliation, the debate around education often exacerbates political instability in the country – a fact acknowledged by Lord Ashdown when, shortly after assuming the post of High Representative and the EU's Special Representative in BiH in May 2002, he stated that his chief concern regarding the process of education reform was that education continued 'to be used as a political football by short-sighted and manipulative politicians' (Freeman, 2004: 6). The politicization of education in turn impacts on the pace of educational reform. For example, according to the World Bank, nationalistic efforts to differentiate the common language of BiH into three separate languages have 'become an excuse for lack of cooperation in developing new curricula, textbooks and educational materials', highlighting the bi-directional nature of the relationship between education and fragility (World Bank, 2000: 6).

## **8.2 Teacher training and professional development**

As mentioned above, there are about 24,000 primary school teachers and 12,000 post-primary school teachers in BiH. Approximately 70 per cent of primary and 55 per cent of post-primary teachers are female (Veljo and Eskić, 2009). Teachers come into the BiH education system through one of four ways: direct from secondary school, direct from secondary school plus two years in a

pedagogical institute, direct from secondary school plus four years in a pedagogical institute, or with university training which focuses on academic content (mathematics, physics, language, etc.) and adds a small component of training in teaching methods (Trbić and Perold, 2003: 27). There are eight pedagogic institutes in BiH: one in RS, two in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, and one each in the Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica, Bihac, and Gorazde cantons.

Responsibility for the development of teacher training programmes in the Federation is devolved to the pedagogical institutes in each canton – the result of post-Dayton decentralization which, according to Galloway, has had an adverse impact on teacher training and professional development in BiH (Galloway, 2006: 259–260). Given that only two of the ten cantons are ethnically mixed, teacher training in FBiH is largely segregated, with the pedagogical institutes tailoring their programmes to the curriculum of the dominant group – Bosniak or Croat. The absence of a Federation teachers' trade union in BiH is a reflection of Dayton's decentralization of education. However, it also highlights the ethnic polarization within the profession, with Bosniak and Croat teachers' unions failing to reach agreement on forming a unified trade union federation. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education sees this as additional evidence of the politicization of education in BiH (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 21).

Legislation provides for universities (which train intending post-primary school teachers and pedagogues), pedagogical academies and pedagogical faculties (which train intending primary teachers) to contribute to teachers' professional development. Galloway points out that this means that in principle they should have been in a position to play a significant role in post-war educational reconstruction. However, their influence in the reconstruction process in schools was limited for a variety of reasons. For example, discrepancies in provision between cantons in the FBiH in turn created discrepancies both in the services available to schools and cantonal ministries, and in the quality of what was available. Other explanations for their limited involvement include, according to Galloway, the absence of partnerships – formal or informal – between higher education establishments and schools, and the absence of a system whereby professional teaching qualifications would be mutually recognized throughout BiH. Weinstein *et al.* argue that opportunities were missed to examine such objectionable material and to train teachers in ways to encourage critical thinking and more debate and discussion in classrooms – skills that may assist children and young people in exploring the root causes of violent conflict (Weinstein *et al.*, 2007: 51).

The lack of government funding and support for the professional development of teachers forced schools to seek professional advice from donor agencies, instead of making use of local expertise. Recognizing the need to equip teachers with the skills to prepare their pupils for life and work in not only a post-conflict but also a post-communist context, international actors organized a range of seminars at different levels (school, cantonal, federal, and state) covering a wide variety of topics such as the issues faced by young people in war and post-war circumstances; economic and social change; and the role of the school, teachers, school principals, and parents in a decentralized education system (Trbić and Perold, 2003: 30). However, this kind of fragmented approach was unsustainable and lacked both coordination and coherence, which Galloway suggests has implications for children's progress and psychosocial adjustment (Galloway, 2006: 261–262). He argues that the focus on children's psychosocial adjustment and development after the war may have masked the need for professional development for teachers, 'which arose from deeper and longer-term tensions associated with political and economic change' (Galloway, 266). (However, others argue that professional training would have had little impact without buy-in from the political

authorities.)<sup>6</sup> According to Galloway, greater use of local expertise in identifying topics for continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers, and also in providing it, could have improved the prospects for sustainable change (Galloway, 268). However, education officials on the ground have expressed scepticism as to where this local expertise might have come from.<sup>7</sup>

### **Box 2. Education reform in Brčko District**

Brčko District is an autonomous district that exists apart from the legal structures of the two entities in BiH – the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska. It has a population of approximately 80,000 and is run more or less as a protectorate under the Brčko District Supervisor, who has the authority to impose laws and remove obstructionists. In Brčko District, students of different ethnicities go to school together, receive instruction in their own languages in the same classroom, and retain their individual cultural identities. Whereas in the rest of BiH the issue of language is used as an argument for dividing schools (in that each constituent people has its own language), in Brčko District Article 9 of the Education Law states that: 'The Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian languages, and the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets shall be used in equal terms in the realization of curricula and facultative activities in primary and secondary schools.' The law also stipulates four rules on the use of language of instruction in Brčko's schools:

1. The student has freedom of expression in his or her own language.
2. School documents will be used in the language and alphabet requested by the student or parent.
3. The ethnic composition of teachers should reflect that of the students in the school.
4. [Because of the lack of new books] existing textbooks can be used if they are harmonized with the curriculum.

Brčko District additionally obliges teachers to use all three languages when teaching. The Law on Education and the newly developed curriculum were imposed by the Brčko District Supervisor on 5 July 2001.

In order to ensure that teachers supported legislative and administrative reforms, Brčko District began to restructure education. It fired teachers and then re-hired them only on the condition that they sign a Code of Conduct committing them to support the new reforms. It also gave teachers strong incentives to re-enlist. Under their new contracts, they would receive a much higher salary than before – almost twice the average teacher's salary in BiH at the time. In order to secure their continued commitment to the reform agenda, the Education Department issued teachers with short-term contracts which were renewed annually and even bi-annually.

In her 2003 study, Perry points to the opinion of certain experts that the success of educational reform in Brčko District is a result of a high concentration of international community money, effort, attention, and technical assistance, which would be impossible to reproduce throughout the entire territory of BiH (Perry, 2003: 80). However, a more recent study undertaken by the OSCE argues that, 'despite certain shortcomings and with the requisite political will', the Brčko model is applicable to the whole of BiH – and, indeed, elsewhere (OSCE, 2007d). Indeed, education in Brčko clearly shows that students of different nationalities can commingle in schools without losing their own national identities.

Source: OSCE (2007c).

Related to this is the issue of teachers' involvement, or lack thereof, in curriculum design. Education authorities in BiH have been criticized for their historic, systematic exclusion of teachers from the curriculum design process (Weinstein *et al.*, 2007: 66). The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, for example, has pointed to the absence of adequate channels of communication between universities, pedagogical institutes, and bodies in charge of the elaboration of curricula (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 15). When initiating changes, Pašalic-Kreso recommends that the best place to start is with teachers (Pašalic-Kreso, 2008: 371). Both Pašalic-Kreso and Galloway stress the potential for teachers to play a part in developing the values of mutual respect and tolerance. Certainly affording teachers a role in the development of post-conflict curricula would not only demonstrate to teachers that their views are of value, thus potentially increasing teacher motivation and ownership, but would also enhance the quality and relevance of the curricula.

With regard to current government spending on education, however, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education has expressed concern about the lack of investment in teacher training

6. Personal communication, education official, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, September 2009.

7. Personal communication, education official, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, September 2009.

and professional development, despite the recognition by authorities that there remain a high number of unqualified teachers in BiH. According to the World Bank, the large wage bill is principally responsible for under-investment in teacher education, with adverse consequences for education performance (World Bank, 2006: 73–74). Wages consume 80 per cent of overall outlays on education – a slightly higher than average share of overall education outlays than in comparator countries (World Bank, 74). However, in spite of the investment of such a large proportion of education spending in salaries, teachers' salaries are low; according to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur, in some cases they are not even sufficient to pay the basic costs of life in some parts of BiH (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 14). This, in turn, has implications for teachers' motivations to engage in CPD.

### **8.3 School boards and appointments**

School management in BiH is delegated to school boards. These bodies are meant to be democratic and allow parents, teachers, the local community, and the school founder to have a say in how schools are run. Linking involvement on school boards to civic engagement in the democratization process in BiH, Gary Robbins, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH, argued that 'this kind of participation – when citizens play a part in the functioning bodies that affect their lives – is essential to any democratic system'.<sup>8</sup> School boards in BiH have a number of tasks, the most important of which include selecting school directors, addressing student disciplinary cases and faculty issues, and approving school budgets. The ethnic make-up of boards is considered to be an important issue due to its potential to impact on the stability/fragility dynamic at the local school and community level. March 2003 saw the creation of draft instruction on the harmonization of the ethnic composition of school boards and teaching staff to match that of students. Schools with 10 per cent minority students are required to have at least one minority board member. However it would appear that implementation of these directives is proving problematic.

Political control over the running of schools may be one factor hindering the implementation of these directives. According to a recent report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, political parties still have a considerable influence on the day-to-day running of schools, in spite of the provision of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education, aimed at forbidding activities of political parties in schools. According to the report, school boards are commonly controlled by the main political party in the area, 'which often has a nationalist and/or ethnic orientation' (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 20). This claim is supported by the OSCE, which found that in some cases members of the government, education officials, and political parties tried to exert political pressure on school boards and influence their work 'much to the detriment of schools and, ultimately, students' (OSCE, 2006: 5). These demands were most often related to the appointment of school directors and teachers, an issue which the UN Special Rapporteur found to be particularly worrying (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 21).

With regard to recent developments in the area of good governance in education in BiH, on the basis of a study evaluating the functioning of school boards and their contribution (positive or negative) to the operation of schools, in 2007 the OSCE initiated an effort aimed at improving good governance and civic participation in school boards. It included a pilot project to support a grassroots group in Zenica in developing training materials for school board members.<sup>9</sup> The project

8. Remarks by Gary Robbins, Head of OSCE Mission at Good Governance in Education Conference, Zenica, 18 December 2008, [www.oscebih.org/public/default.asp?d=6&article=show&id=2299](http://www.oscebih.org/public/default.asp?d=6&article=show&id=2299) (Retrieved 14 August 2009).

9. For further information about this pilot project, 'Good Governance in Education – School Boards as Advocates for Change and Accountability in Education, in Zenica – Dobož Canton', see [www.oscebih.org/documents/12859-eng.pdf](http://www.oscebih.org/documents/12859-eng.pdf) (Retrieved 14 August 2009).

is currently operating in West Herzegovina Canton and the RS and there are plans to expand it to other parts of the country.

## **8.4 Curriculum**

As mentioned earlier, BiH society is undergoing not only a post-conflict but also a post-Cold War transition. It is important to bear in mind that this is the case, too, with regard to educational policies and curriculum structure. During the pre-war, socialist era, curriculum was 'ideologically driven and highly centralized, with little room for critical thought, analysis and discussion' (Perry, 2003: 12). After the war, Stabback argues that the curriculum 'remained old fashioned, while curriculum development processes and curriculum policy remained highly centralized and politically controlled' (Stabback, 2007: 451). A 2003 UNESCO study concluded that the curriculum paradigm on which curricula in BiH was based relied too heavily on memorization and recall of facts, with too little emphasis on the development of skills, values, and attitudes. The study also found that 'the current curricula do not contribute sufficiently to social cohesion and a peaceful BiH' (Stabback, 2003: 37–84). The challenges faced by curriculum developers in the aftermath of the war were thus compounded by the legacy of the Communist era – although Perry rightly argues that it is important not to confuse post-war and more general transitional reform agendas (Perry, 2003: 93).

The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted in 2003, provided for the development of a common core curriculum for all schools, consisting of the curricula and syllabi of all subjects of primary and general secondary education 'that have as broad an agreed common core as possible' (Framework Law, 2003). The development of the common core curriculum was an initiative of the OSCE Education Department (building on previous work of the Office of the High Representative) aimed to ensure that students across BiH learn a minimum of common elements and to facilitate the mobility of pupils. In each administrative region the dominant curriculum is that of the majority ethnic group of the canton or entity. In two cantons with a more mixed population, there are two curricula in force, used according to the ethnic majority of the school – with an alternative to this being the 'two schools under one roof' system, discussed below, where both curricula are taught in the same school, albeit separately. However, concern has been expressed, both in a 2008 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education and a 2009 report of the CoE Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, that the common core curriculum is not systematically implemented (see UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 18; CoE, 2009: 30).

The common core curriculum was expressly intended to ensure the development of 'positive relations and a feeling of commitment to the State of BiH' (Framework Law, 2003: 12). The main curricula currently in use in BiH – Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian – however have a strong ethnic slant, seen primarily in the so-called 'national group of subjects' – language and literature, nature and society, religious instruction, geography, and history. For example, depending on the curriculum, the principal country of reference often is a neighbouring country such as Serbia (in the Bosnia Serb curriculum) or Croatia (in the Bosnia Croatian curriculum), not BiH as one might expect. Instead of fostering a sense of collective identity, as the common core curriculum is intended to do, the close links between education and national identity have the potential to actively frustrate efforts to create a sense of shared future and citizenship in BiH.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, acknowledging the potential for the common core curriculum to prove divisive, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that the BiH authorities merge and teach one curriculum to all classes, irrespective of ethnic origins (UNCESCR, 2005: 7). More recently, the UN Special Rapporteur on

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10. Personal communication, education official, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, February 2009.



the Right to Education stated that the curriculum 'should incorporate an intercultural approach' and 'must be objective, not ethnically coloured' (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 19). However in spite of efforts, promoted primarily by the international community, textbooks on sensitive subjects remain ethnically oriented (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 19).

## 8.5 Teaching of history

According to Weinstein *et al.*, 'the politics of memory and the teaching of history reflect the submerged but ongoing conflict' that pervades BiH society (Weinstein *et al.*, 2007: 57). As such, it is unsurprising that the history curriculum continues to be a source of particular controversy in BiH. The teaching of the history of the 1992–1995 war, in particular, remains a delicate, highly politicized issue, with some curriculum policy-makers arguing that it should not be included in the school curriculum on the basis that society is not yet ready to deal with the issues (Stabback, 2007: 460). For example, a project of the canton of Mostar and the OSCE aimed to issue history textbooks reflecting different perspectives on BiH's history. However, due to a lack of consensus, these textbooks omit the 1992–1995 war period (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 19). Likewise, a project sponsored by the OSCE and the CoE, which aimed to remove ethnic/national bias from textbooks, had to be abandoned when two new textbooks on history and geography were withdrawn from a canton's education system because of a demonstration by a group of war veterans against their use (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 21).

Perry, Bartulovic, and Weinstein *et al.* all argue that, depending on how it is manipulated, rather than fostering cohesion, history can be a tool for division. The teaching of history plays a significant role in the transmission of collective memory and, thus, in the development of national identity. In BiH it is claimed that the subject of history is being manipulated to create segregated identities. For example, in a study analysing the content of history textbooks in RS, Bartulovic reveals that 'numerous strategies are used to escape the grip of a common BiH country and culture' (Bartulovic, 2006: 63). She argues that negative portrayals of history and stereotyping of the 'other' breed fear and result in the creation of separate identities incompatible with the common core curriculum's aim to develop positive relations and a feeling of commitment to the State of BiH (Bartulovic, 2006: 61–62). Pašalic-Kreso similarly points to the dangers inherent in the harnessing of the history curricula to serve nationalistic interests – for example, the modification of historical facts to suit particular (ethnic) interests, and the use of different, often value-laden terms to refer to the 1992–1995 war, such as 'aggression', 'civil war', or 'defence' (Pašalic-Kreso, 2008: 363). She suggests that this kind of 'segregative approach' to education 'encourages a "them and us" mentality in children and will have a long-term effect on the future of this country and its citizens' (*ibid.*: 368). Bartulovic goes further, arguing that the promotion of separate, exclusive national identities in the textbooks used in BiH 'to a large extent explains why we are not witnessing the formation of a unified nation-state, but its slow disintegration' (Bartulovic, 2006: 51).

In direct contrast to the common core curriculum's stated aim to foster positive relations, some history textbooks appear to teach that living together is a dangerous thing (Pašalic-Kreso, 2008: 366–367). Several textbooks suggest that, rather than being an asset, BiH's multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional make-up is in fact a major problem (Pašalic-Kreso, 2008: 366). The 1992–1995 war is offered as proof that peaceful coexistence in BiH is impossible (Bartulovic, 2006: 66). Bartulovic cites the example of RS textbooks, which promote the message that 'new conflicts will erupt sooner or later, since Serbs are separated from their fatherland and are being forced to sacrifice the unity of their nation and unique cultural identity' (Bartulovic, 2006: 66). She emphasizes that similar messages are evident in the textbooks used by Bosnian Croats, while the Bosniak curriculum textbooks are unique in emphasizing the unity of the State of BiH. As such, the

teaching of history and other national subjects represents a serious obstacle to the development of a common BiH identity among BiH's youth and, consequently, the emergence of a pluralistic society (see Perry, 2003: 33; Weinstein *et al.*, 2007: 52). Also of concern is the exclusion of elements of the history and culture of national minorities from the curricula. Although there are 17 legally recognized national minorities in BiH, of which Roma are the largest, the CoE Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has noted with concern that the national minorities continue to be 'invisible' within the education system (CoE, 2009: 31). This not only goes against the principles of the Law on Protection of Members of National Minorities, adopted by BiH in April 2003; it also does not augur well for the creation of an integrated and inclusive society.

## 8.6 Religious instruction

Much like the teaching of history, the subject of religion has also sparked controversy, and for similar reasons – for example, the association between religion and the politics of identity in post-war BiH. Indeed, concern has been expressed about the 'growing tendency, in public discourse, to associate ethnicity and religious affiliation, which can lead to religious intolerance and increased tensions in society' (CoE, 2009: 23). Perry points out that religious instruction in the country has been affected by two important factors, namely the ability to teach religion after years of official atheism under communist rule and the politicization of religion during the war (Perry, 2003: 36). After years of being forbidden to teach religion in schools, many people, teachers and religious leaders are unwilling to sacrifice this crucial aspect of their identity (Perry, 2003: 36). Although the right of parents to ensure that the religious and moral education of their children is in accordance with their own convictions is enshrined in Article 13(3) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education noted with concern the increasing influence of religious leaders and communities on education and curricula in BiH (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 23). He expressed particular unease regarding an initiative in Sarajevo and Tuzla aimed at introducing religious education in preschool institutions because of the very young age of the children concerned. Such an initiative could, in the Special Rapporteur's estimation, 'increase the potential for further divisions based on religion and for subsequent discrimination' (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 23). The CoE Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities likewise expressed concern that religious education was being introduced at the level of preschool education.

While not disagreeing with the premise that religious education should not be taught until students are older, Perry's study disputes the logic behind the argument that religious education per se is a potentially dangerous thing in post-war BiH. She argues that in order to ensure peace and stability in a multi-ethnic state such as BiH, it is not actually necessary to remove religion from the schools. In her view, the goal should rather be 'to maximize the time students spend in a classroom together so that tolerance can be learned through the simple process of going to school' (Perry, 2003: 37). Religion classes need not necessarily pose a problem as long as they are inclusive and do not serve to further segregate school pupils. However, it would appear that, in some cases at least, religious instruction in BiH is doing exactly this. As recently as April 2009, for example, the CoE Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities expressed its concern about this very issue, regretting that religious instruction is not realizing its potential to 'contribute to a better understanding and tolerance between the various communities from an early age', largely because the subject 'does not seem to involve teaching of the history and culture of religions' (CoE, 2009: 23). It therefore has the potential to lead to further segregation of pupils along religious lines. The CoE's Advisory Committee also noted that holding classes of

religious instruction in the middle of the school day poses a problem for pupils whose religion is not taught or who have no religious affiliation, underlining the importance of whether such classes are compulsory or optional.

A recent OSCE initiative may go some way toward addressing some of the issues raised by the CoE. In order to foster dialogue and better understanding of the country's main religious traditions (Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, and Orthodox Christianity), a subject called 'culture of religions' has been introduced into parts of BiH (OSCE, 2007a). The course, developed together with the Goethe Institute and the NGO Sarajevo Open Centre, uses an inclusive, non-denominational approach aimed at promoting tolerance and understanding. Given that the decision regarding its introduction rests at the entity level in RS, cantonal level in FBiH, and district level in Brčko District, the course has not been uniformly introduced throughout BiH. However, culture of religions has been incorporated into the regular school curriculum in three cantons and introduced as a compulsory course on an experimental basis in all secondary schools in RS; it is being piloted in Brčko District, and the OSCE is leading efforts to introduce the course to more schools in BiH.

## **8.7 Access to education for returnees, refugees, and IDPs**

At the end of the war in BiH there were more than 1.2 million refugees and 1 million IDPs (Cousens and Cater, 2001: 71). The GFA aimed to reverse the effects of this massive displacement, stating that 'the early return of refugees and displaced persons is an important objective of the settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina' (GFA, 1995: Article 1(1)). In its Agreement on Refugees and Displaced Persons (Annex 7), the GFA stipulated an unqualified right of return: 'All refugees and displaced persons have the right to freely return to their homes of origin'. Annex 7 had obvious implications for the schooling of returnee children. Given the increasing number of returnee families and concerns regarding education options in their areas of return, the OSCE developed an Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children in March 2002. In March 2003, in order to address discrimination against returnee children and ensure their greater enrolment into schools, BiH's ministers of education adopted an Implementation Plan for this Interim Agreement. The Interim Agreement provided returnee parents with the option of having their children taught the national group of subjects (language and literature, history, geography, nature and society, religious instruction) according to their choice of curricula. It also provided conditions for the increased employment of returnee teachers, and stipulated that the ethnic composition of school boards should reflect the composition of the school population where schools were located.

The use of national symbols in schools was also seen as potentially constituting an obstacle to access to returnee children. In this regard, the Implementation Plan for the Interim Agreement stipulated that 'Ministries of Education shall undertake all possible efforts to remove symbols and objects, and to replace school names, which may be viewed as offensive by returnee students, constituent peoples and national minorities' (OHR/EUSR, 2005b: 12). In order to address this issue, the OSCE established a commission to develop a set of criteria for school names and symbols. The criteria state that a school can be named after a recognized scientist, writer, or artist from the curricula used in schools throughout BiH, but not a date, event, military unit, or military figure from the 1992–1995 war. Additionally, schools are forbidden from organizing gatherings commemorating war or political events (Coordination Board, 2003). These criteria aimed to ensure that school names and symbols provided for an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, creating conditions that would encourage returnee children to attend local schools.



In spite of the provisions of the Interim Agreement, however, implementation remains incomplete and thus the educational integration of returnee children is far from guaranteed. For instance, the UNCESCR expressed in 2006 its 'deep concern that returnees, in particular those belonging to ethnic minorities, are often denied access to ... school education for their children ... thereby impeding their sustainable return to their communities' (UNCESCR, 2006: 2). Although Batarilo and Lenhart claim that by 2007 the Interim Agreement had significantly raised returnee enrolment in BiH, there is little doubt that problems persist. A 2008 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, for example, indicated that children belonging to a different ethnic group than the majority continue to face 'a lack of educational structures suited to their specific cultural needs' (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 23). In relation to the provisions of the Interim Agreement, parents do not generally opt for the curriculum associated with their ethnic/national group unless that group is present in significant numbers in the area to which they have returned.<sup>11</sup> Outside Brčko District, this remains extremely rare.<sup>12</sup>

This situation has led to two separate but related phenomena – 'two schools under one roof' and school bussing. With regard to the latter, where mono-ethnic schools teaching the curriculum of the dominant ethnic group offered no alternative other than assimilation, returnee parents frequently chose to bus their children across regional boundaries to schools of their 'own' ethnic group. For example, in 2002 it was estimated that each day between 5,000 and 10,000 pupils crossed the Inter-Entity Boundary Line – the border between RS and FBiH – to attend school (Batarilo and Lenhart, 2007: 130–131). Although Batarilo and Lenhart claim that the Interim Agreement brought about a decline in the bussing of pupils, it is clear that the practice continues, albeit in lesser numbers than in the immediate post-return period (Batarilo and Lenhart, 2007: 131). According to a 2007 OSCE report, parents fear their children will lose their national identity if taught the curriculum of a different ethnic group (OSCE, 2007b: 17). Indeed, for many parents, curriculum choice is more important than the quality of education or proximity of the school (OSCE, 2007b: 17). In theory, where there are 18 or more students in a grade from a constituent group other than that particular area's or school's dominant ethnic/national group, the school is obliged to offer them instruction in their national group of subjects. In practice, however, parents often feel uncomfortable if their children are in the minority, fearing that they may be subject to discrimination. They therefore choose to send their children outside their catchment area and across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line to a school in which their ethnic group predominates and their curriculum of choice is taught.

The phenomenon of 'two schools under one roof' describes a situation where a single pre-war school now houses two schools whose children study different curricula and are kept mostly or completely separate. 'Two schools under one roof' can take a variety of forms: for example, two legal entities, two branch schools, or one administratively unified school. The phenomenon is widely discussed and remains intensely controversial; the practice has been roundly condemned by the international community. In 2005, for example, UNCESCR urged the BiH authorities to ensure that the practice be discontinued (UNCESCR, 2006: 7). In 2006, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination similarly pushed for the elimination of mono-ethnic schools and two schools under one roof 'as soon as possible' (UNCERD, 2006: 7). In 2007, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education likewise indicated his disapproval of the practice when he remarked that 'although respect for diversity and multi-ethnicity is formally supported by the majority of relevant authorities, the presence of 54 "two schools under one roof" in the country indicates otherwise' (UN

11. Personal communication, Education Official, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, February 2009.

12. The case of Brčko District is exceptional in BiH. Brčko District is the only place in the country with integrated schools. It has its own curriculum and offers alternative teaching on subjects of ethnic significance.

Human Rights Council, 2008: 24). Indeed, as recently as April 2009, the CoE Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities expressed its concern about the continued existence of ‘two schools under one roof’ as it appeared to indicate that segregation of individuals along ethnic lines in BiH was a ‘persisting trend’ (CoE, 2009: 22). The Committee argued that the practice of ‘two schools under one roof’ and the development of mono-ethnic schools in both entities ‘institutes *de facto* segregation of pupils by ethnic origin from the very beginning of their schooling’.

Underlining the importance of viewing this as a regional rather than simply a local (BiH) issue, the Committee also expressed concern about the fact that neighbouring countries were encouraging and supporting the setting up of mono-ethnic schools in certain parts of BiH where individuals of the same ethnic group live (CoE, 2009: 30). This kind of ‘kin-state’ support was found to be particularly disconcerting as in some cases it had allegedly resulted in increased ethnic separation (CoE, 2009: 39). As such, the Committee urged the BiH authorities ‘to carefully consider the impact of support from abroad in education on the overall educational policies and, where appropriate, to review its educational policies, in order to ensure that they do not lead to further segregation along ethnic lines’ (CoE, 2009: 39). Perry goes further, arguing that, as the area’s shared history will affect its common future, educational policies must be reviewed and reformed across the entire Balkan region if they are to have an impact on regional politics and development (Perry, 2003: 96).

The potential for education to contribute to reconciliation and the integration of ethnic groups has been widely recognized; hence recent calls for the BiH authorities to take ‘far more determined measures’ to end segregation and promote multi-ethnic education (CoE, 2009: 31). The international community sees a tolerant, multi-ethnic society as the only model for securing peace in BiH and the wider Balkans region. Separate education is viewed as an obstacle to achieving this because it ‘can only reinforce existing prejudices, intolerance and social divisions’ (UN Human Rights Council, 2008: 17). Segregation of pupils according to their national or ethnic group therefore constitutes a threat to the future stability of the country, actively strengthening the ‘centrifugal forces that are tearing it [BiH] apart’ (Pašalic-Kreso, 2008: 359).

## 8.8 Unemployed youth

Although the brain drain in BiH predates the war, it has become even more of a problem in post-war years. According to the UNDP, the economic situation in BiH ‘has promoted alarming levels of youth emigration that in turn is beginning to have a negative effect on Bosnia and Herzegovina’ (UNDP, 2002: 42). Between 1996 and 2001 alone, 92,000 young people left BiH, while 62 per cent of those remaining indicated that they would leave if given an opportunity (UNDP, 2002: 42). Indeed 8.7 per cent of all tertiary students from BiH study abroad – about four and a half times greater than the global average – with the top five destinations for outbound students being Croatia, Austria, Germany, Turkey, and the USA (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009: 48, 142). According to the UNDP, the reasons for the high levels of emigration among BiH’s young adults include lack of employment, economic crises, scarce financial resources, problems in housing, and ‘constant subjection to political manipulation’ (UNDP, 2002: 42). In relation to lack of employment opportunities, according to recent figures, the youth unemployment rate in BiH is 58.4 per cent – double that of the overall BiH unemployment rate and, according to some estimates, four times the EU youth unemployment average (UNDP, 2008).

One proposed explanation for this very high rate of youth unemployment is that the education system in BiH does not match well the projected needs of the labour market and lacks professional

orientation and career development for students (UNDP, 2008). The UNDP argues that 'educated young people offer a window of opportunity for reversal of the slide of BiH down the scale of human development' – but 'only if appropriate policies are pursued by a reform minded government which takes its responsibilities to the people seriously' (ibid.). Perry argues that, as well as being important for human development, the economic benefits of education must also be viewed as aspects of the country's security and stability (Perry, 2003: 97). In this regard, research undertaken by Collier and Hoeffler suggests that violent upheaval appears to be more likely where there are more unemployed young men – underlining the vital importance in the BiH context of addressing the mismatch between labour force education and skill levels on the one hand, and job requirements in the labour market on the other (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004: 563–595). Nelles similarly argues that 'those educated with high ideals but having few decent prospects' are a serious problem in BiH 'which may exacerbate underlying tensions and lead to violence' (Nelles, 2006: 232).

## 9 Role of the international community

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Although local politicians have without doubt played a role in the politicization of the education debate in BiH, it is important to acknowledge the international community's role in education reform and in the wider political arena. Dayton was, after all, brokered by external actors, and the international community continues to play an important role in shaping the post-war political landscape in BiH. A recent report by CRISE points out that international involvement in post-conflict countries varies according to factors such as humanitarian concerns, international media attention, historical associations, and the political, economic, and national security interests of powerful states (Brown *et al.*, 2008: 15). The amount of foreign aid such countries receive in the aftermath of violent conflict differs greatly and is often, but not always, related to the recipient country's geopolitical significance. In this regard, the CRISE report cites the examples of Cambodia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cambodia received around US\$34 of Official Development Assistance (ODA) per capita in the first three post-conflict years (1992–1995) (Brown *et al.*, 2008: 16). Meanwhile, in the first three years (1996–1999) after the signing of the Dayton Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina received approximately US\$246 – more than seven times the per capita amount received by Cambodia (Brown *et al.*, 2008: 16). The reasons behind this discrepancy are complex and beyond the scope of the current study. However, it is important to bear such discrepancies in mind when considering the role of the international community in BiH, not least because they serve as a reminder that external actors have differing, sometimes competing, remits and priorities which are inevitably linked, explicitly or implicitly, to wider geopolitical issues and concerns.

Although Dayton provided a clear mandate to organizations tasked with policing and electoral reform, no specific organization was mandated to implement educational reform in BiH. However, as education became linked to other priorities, for example state-building and minority refugee return, the international community's involvement in the education sector expanded (Palmer, 2005: 53–54). Exclusive education, in particular, was seen as an obstacle to the sustainable return of refugees and internally displaced persons – one of the mandated activities of the OHR, OSCE, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Peace Implementation Council (PIC) underlined the need for change in education for the first time in December 1997:

The Council emphasises that education must promote understanding and reconciliation among the ethnic, religious and cultural groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while recognising the right of parents to choose the nature of the education that their children receive. The Council notes with concern that educational policy and programmes in the Federation and Republika Srpska do not comply with these basic principles. The Council urges the competent authorities to work together to ensure that all persons are educated according to their needs and in a manner which also contributes to tolerance and stability within a multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to develop without delay an education programme consistent with these principles, in co-operation with the High Representative, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the OSCE, UNICEF, the World Bank and other relevant Organisations. (PIC, 1997)

According to Perry, the oversight in the peace agreement 'denied education the legitimacy or inclusion and the dedicated help of a designated responsible body' (Perry, 2003: 42). The list of organizations included in the PIC Communiqué is an indication of the variety of actors that became involved in educational reconstruction and reform in the war's aftermath, in the absence of any one organization being given a specific mandate. Educational reconstruction efforts – including donations to educational reconstruction – were hampered by a lack of coordination (Perry, 2003: 60). More crucially, with regard to education's potential to exacerbate and/or

mitigate fragility, Perry points out that no effort was made to tie funding to the creation of a more inclusive education system – an approach that might have radically altered the progress of educational reform in post-war BiH (Perry, 2003). Indeed, Palmer argues that it was not until external actors took steps to strengthen their powers, coordinate their actions, and develop an implementation plan that they were able to begin to work towards more inclusive education (Palmer, 2005: 53–54). Importantly, the implementation plan targeted resistance to reform, both at the political and professional levels, with clear incentives and sanctions, and included a monitoring framework.

At a meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Education, convened by the OHR and CoE in May 2000, BiH's three education ministers declared their commitment to the fundamental reform of education 'as a matter of high priority, as requested by the Council of Europe within the process of access of BiH, as well as the International Community as a whole' (OHR/EUSR, 2005a). At the instigation of the international community, the ministers unanimously agreed that:

Education must no longer be used to divide and fragment the communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina; on the contrary, it should be used to bring them together and live in tolerance with one another. Any existing forms of segregation must be removed from the parallel education systems of the Federation and Republika Srpska, and co-ordination assured in order to facilitate the return of refugee families throughout the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. (OSCE, nd)

In 2002, as part of the streamlining of the international community's work in BiH, lead responsibility for education was given to the OSCE. The objective of the OSCE's newly established Education Department was to promote political and legislative changes to ensure the development of 'a holistic education system accessible, acceptable and effective for all citizens, irrespective of their ethnic background, gender or socio-economic status, thus supporting the long-term stability and security of the country'. This signalled a recognition that discrimination in education, in particular against returnee children and teachers, had the potential to impact negatively on the future stability of BiH (OSCE, nd). Unlike previous reform efforts, according to Palmer 'this time there was an effort to create shared goals among external actors, a clear mandate for reform, a coordinating structure among external actors, and a strong external field presence devoted to monitoring implementation of education reforms' (Palmer, 2005: 83). Meanwhile, at the political level, international actors tied education to 'significant incentives' (Palmer, 2005: 85).

The OSCE continues to lead education reform efforts in the country. In addition to its Sarajevo office, the OSCE has education staff based at its 14 field offices overseeing reform implementation across BiH. The OSCE notes on its website that BiH 'will only be as successful, stable and united as its schools', underlining what the international community continues to see as the crucial link between education and post-war stability in the country (OSCE, nd).

## 10 OECD–DAC Principles

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In a recent paper, Berry uses three of the *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*, drawn up in April 2007 by the OECD–DAC, to develop a framework for assessing the effectiveness of education aid in fragile states (Berry, 2009: 1–12). He identifies these three principles – coordination, state, building, and ‘do no harm’ – as being of particular relevance to education. Certainly these principles are directly relevant to issues raised in the reform process in BiH: for example, the need for coordination and the links between education and state-building. OECD–DAC Principle 8 asserts the need to agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors and, where possible, to work with reformers in government and civil society to develop a joint analysis of challenges and priorities (OECD–DAC, 2007: 3). In the immediate aftermath of the war, a mutually reinforcing negative cycle began to emerge whereby lack of BiH political cooperation vis-à-vis education reform proved a disincentive for funding agencies, while the lack of cooperation among funding agencies and the wider international community proved a disincentive for local and national politicians to cooperate on education issues. Different priorities led to significant tensions between members of the international community which in turn militated against inter-agency cooperation. As Galloway puts it, ‘Fragmentation of aid agency initiatives is a symptom of the international community speaking with many voices, and thus being easier to ignore’ (Galloway, 2006: 269).

With regard to OECD–DAC Principle 2, the principle of ‘do no harm’, in BiH well-intentioned but poorly thought-through education interventions have at times resulted in unexpected negative consequences, actually heightening political instability. For instance, Bieber argues that frequent changes in international priorities in BiH have had a negative impact on the long-term development of local capacities and structures (Bieber, 2002: 28). In his estimation, local NGOs are ‘de-facto commissioned to carry out Western donors policy priorities, being largely reduced to ‘service provision’’, thus creating a culture of aid dependency (Bieber, 2002: 28). Meanwhile, a World Bank project appraisal document makes reference to ‘intractable questions associated with the political control of education resources and content’, becoming more entrenched as a result of efforts on the part of donors to force cooperation (World Bank, 2000: 7). Perry gives a concrete example of how the international community’s involvement in educational reform impacted adversely on fragility, namely plans for the removal of offensive or ‘inflammatory’ material from BiH textbooks. While not denying the need to purge books of such content, she argues that the international community’s initial focus on such an obvious and controversial issue served only to politicize discussions about education reform from the very beginning (Perry, 2003: 48). She highlights the implications of such a focus for the quality of education in BiH, suggesting that it took attention away from other much-needed, non-political reforms such as teacher training, standards and assessment, and skills-focused curricula (Perry, 2003: 33). Underlining the potential long-term consequences of poorly thought-through approaches to education reform, she further contends that the preoccupation with textbooks and the national group of subjects ‘damaged relations between international authorities and BiH politicians and communities, thus creating an atmosphere of distrust that would impact the pace of future education reforms’ (Perry, 2003: 49). This example serves as a reminder of the potential for international interventions to inadvertently exacerbate societal divisions – a phenomenon the OECD–DAC ‘do no harm’ principle is expressly intended to minimize, if not prevent.



Perry argues that early reform efforts focused too heavily on political issues to the detriment of more practicable and necessary technical reform (Perry, 2003: 56). Focusing early reform efforts on non-political change – for example, bringing BiH's education system in line with EU standards – might have avoided turning education into a divisive, highly politicized issue at such an early stage in the post-war reform process. Indeed, educational reform is key to the EU accession process in BiH. Aware that EU accession is a goal all three constituent groups share, the EU is trying to use the lure of eventual membership as an incentive to encourage forward movement on the part of BiH politicians (ICG, 2009: 2). Although Stabback points out that earlier attempts to use accession to the CoE to encourage reform of BiH's parallel education systems did not prove a 'catalyst for action', Hromadžić suggests that linking the reform of education to EU accession is bearing more fruit (Stabback, 2007: 454; Hromadžić, 2008: 544). However, Palmer argues that incentives alone are not sufficient, and that in order to ensure full implementation of inclusive education reforms a continued external presence committed to the professionalization and training of education staff, and monitoring, is also necessary (Palmer, 2005: 94).

In order for international interventions in education reform to mitigate rather than exacerbate fragility, Hromadžić urges the international community in BiH to 'listen far more attentively to local political communities' – linking up with OECD-DAC Principle 7, 'aligning with local priorities' (Hromadžić, 2008: 559). Weinstein *et al.* likewise point out how crucial it is to involve local stakeholders – including parents, teachers, students, and administrators – in post-war education reform: 'The principal stakeholders or beneficiaries of education reform in the aftermath of mass violence hold strong opinions both about the problems that schools face and what options may be available for change' (Weinstein *et al.*, 2007: 65). Local ownership is thus key for the success and long-term sustainability of education reform. In this regard, Perry cites the example of a public information and awareness campaign launched by the OSCE in October 2002 to better inform the BiH public of the need for education reform, suggesting that such initiatives can not only help to secure local buy-in but also increase the transparency of the reform process (Perry, 2003: 53, 86). As an extension of this campaign, entity and cantonal ministers held meetings with returnee communities to explain the provisions of the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children, and to encourage them to enrol their children in local schools instead of bussing them to mono-ethnic schools (Palmer, 2005: 92).



## 11 Perspectives of children and young people

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With regard to the need to consult with local stakeholders, it is worth noting here that few studies examining the relationship between education and conflict/fragility in BiH incorporate the perspectives of children and young people. With regard to their involvement in decision-making processes in schools, in theory at least, children's participation is recognized by the BiH education authorities. The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education provides for the establishment of student (and parent) councils in all schools. However, as with many other aspects of education reform in BiH, implementation remains a problem (Feinstein and O'Kane, 2008: 48). According to a recent study undertaken by Save the Children, genuine opportunities for children's participation in decision-making processes remain lacking (Feinstein and O'Kane, 2008: 49). Kasumagic argues that in BiH young people are not sufficiently 'regarded as legitimate agents for social change and key assets for community development' (Kasumagic, 2008: 378).

Children's right to be heard and their participation in matters affecting them is laid down as a fundamental right in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), however, and it is therefore crucial to consult with children and young people in matters relating to education reform – not least because they are the ultimate beneficiaries of such reform. Indeed, according to the United Nations Report on the *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, children and young people 'remain the greatest hope and the greatest resource in rebuilding war-affected communities' (Machel, 2001: 4–5). Research undertaken by Save the Children shows that children in BiH (as well as in other post-conflict contexts) understand the difficulty of disentangling the causes and consequences of the war. Recognizing that the underlying causes of the war remain largely unresolved, for example, young people identified discrimination among the different constituent groups both as one of the root causes of the war, and as a key obstacle to achieving long-term stability in BiH (Feinstein and O'Kane, 2008: 88).

The Save the Children study also highlights children and young people's lack of understanding of the history of the conflict. To counteract this, it recommends that the roots of the conflict be explored in the education curricula (Feinstein and O'Kane, 2008: 101). A study by Weinstein et al. indicates that children in BiH feel their parents, in particular, too often avoid discussing the war with them and that, as a result, they want 'history teaching that would directly address the events that led up to the war and its consequences' (Weinstein et al., 2007: 62). Young people interviewed in BiH as part of a recent University of Ulster study likewise believed that education has a positive role to play in helping successive generations understand the recent history of violent conflict, even though it may be sensitive and, some would argue, too recent (Magill et al., 2009: 107). For instance, while acknowledging the difficulties inherent in addressing complex and sensitive war-related issues with children and young people, one 11-year-old pupil interviewed by the author nevertheless believed that they should know what happened:

Somehow I feel that if we talked more about it, it might be too difficult for us. It might frighten us too much. And then again, if we don't talk about it, then we will not know anything. We should know what happened.

Thus, when the opportunity is afforded them, young people more than demonstrate their ability to voice their criticisms of policies that impact negatively upon them, their friends, families, and indeed communities – be they government policies or the policies of the international community. For example, children as young as 11 criticized the 'two schools under one roof' phenomenon, with one pupil telling the author:

In our school, I would like it if we were not divided. I mean, there are schools where children do not go to school at the same time if they are different religions. ... They are not allowed to talk to teach other. We shouldn't have these kinds of problems. I mean we should understand that we are all people, we were all born and we will all die, and we should concentrate on the nice things and make sure that peace prevails.

Given that the hopes, fears, and viewpoints of children and young people are likely to be different from those of adults, even parents/guardians, it is important to engage them directly and not rely exclusively on the views of older generations (Hart and Tyrer, 2006: 14). As Hart and Tyrer point out, although generally speaking children are afforded less power within society than adults, they are nonetheless able to contribute to their own development and the development of policies that impact upon them (Hart and Tyrer, 2006: 8). For example, as shown above, in the BiH context children and young people often are themselves aware of the importance of sustained contact in learning and in social interaction – between members of constituent groups as well as national minorities – for the future of the country and its citizens. Consulting with children and young people can thus enhance the quality and relevance of education projects, policies, and curricula, as well as increasing the potential for such initiatives to contribute to a peaceful future, rather than continued fragility, for BiH's young people.

## Matrix: the relationship between education and drivers of fragility in BiH

	SOCIAL	GOVERNANCE	SECURITY	ECONOMIC	ENVIRONMENTAL
Impact of fragility/ conflict on education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Massive displacement of population during war.</li> <li>- Issue of returnees, politically charged issue of minority integration.</li> <li>- Discrimination based on ethnic group, religion, language.</li> <li>- With regard to schooling, returnee children often faced with choice between assimilation and rejection.</li> <li>- This leads to the emergence of 'two schools under one roof'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education highly decentralized in FBiH (to ten cantons) and highly centralized in RS, after Dayton.</li> <li>- Dayton Agreement did not mandate any specific organization to implement educational reform.</li> <li>- Decentralization of education in FBiH has led to inefficient governance and financing structures.</li> <li>- Political buy-in necessary for change.</li> <li>- Coordination in international efforts also necessary.</li> <li>- Argument over priorities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- politicized issues vs. technical reform?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BiH remains fragile due to internal and regional political instability.</li> <li>- Ongoing disagreement about BiH's fundamental identity and future, political stagnation.</li> <li>- Leaders in BiH (esp. Serb in RS and Croat in FBiH) challenging the Dayton Agreement, role of the OHR.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BiH recovering from war but also transitioning from a communist to a market economy.</li> <li>- Significant duplication of education provision, educational bureaucracy post-Dayton means inefficiencies in education spending.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The UN estimates that over 3 million mines were laid in BiH during the 1992–1995 war.</li> <li>- Mines continue to represent an obstacle to the safety of citizens as well as to economic and social development.</li> <li>- Mines contaminate approximately 3% of the land in BiH.</li> <li>- There are more than 200,000 mines and explosive remnants of war throughout BiH.</li> <li>- Mines and/or unexploded ordinance directly affect the safety of around 900,000 people in BiH.</li> <li>- In 2008 there were 33 mine-related incidents/ injuries in BiH.</li> </ul>

	SOCIAL	GOVERNANCE	SECURITY	ECONOMIC	ENVIRONMENTAL
Impact of education on fragility/conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-war education perpetuated ethnic and religious stereotyping and promoted divisive political histories.</li> <li>- Discrimination still a feature of schooling in BiH, esp. against returnee children.</li> <li>- Education in BiH very segregated – at least three parallel ‘ethnically coloured’ curricula in use (Serb, Bosniak, Croat).</li> <li>- Issues relating to language of instruction, alphabet (Roman vs. Cyrillic), the teaching of religion and the national group of subjects, textbook revision and symbolism in schools all intensely controversial and politicized.</li> <li>- Lack of understanding of the roots of the recent conflict among BiH’s children and young people?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fractured nature of education system post Dayton impacts on fragility in BiH.</li> <li>- Some sections of the international community support enlarging the state’s responsibilities in the field of education.</li> <li>- Political resistance to/interference in education reform/modernization.</li> <li>- Political influence in schools – e.g. in school boards, nomination of school directors, appointment of teachers.</li> <li>- Lack of reliable and standardized public information on educational inputs, outputs and outcomes, statistics and indicators, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crucial role of education in building security in BiH widely acknowledged.</li> <li>- Segregated nature of education system in BiH seen by the international community as a major obstacle to sustainable peace and reconciliation in BiH.</li> <li>- Lack of contact between children and young people from different ethnic/national backgrounds problematic.</li> <li>- Some curricula and textbooks promote separate, exclusive national and ethnic identities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Issues regarding relevance of education provision (or lack thereof) to livelihoods and employment.</li> <li>- High rate of youth unemployment.</li> <li>- Youth emigration – desire to leave BiH still strong among young people.</li> </ul>	

## Lessons learned

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- 1. The political environment.** The main driver of fragility in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) continues to be a lack of consensus about its long-term political future. In this respect, the Dayton Agreement may have been successful in *transforming* the situation by bringing an end to the war, but it has not *resolved* the underlying question about the political future of the territory. Post-Dayton developments in education therefore reflect the strengths and weaknesses of that agreement, and it could be argued that education has become the new battleground for struggles between the Dayton focus on state-building and competing arguments for the self-determination of the Republika Srpska. Dayton's recognition of three constituent peoples also institutionalized the concept of separate nationalities within the same state and created legitimacy for nationalistic education. There is very little room for neutrality in this struggle since education is perceived as a key instrument for the formation of national identity and citizenship.
- 2. The impact of decentralization.** One of the most important legacies of Dayton was decentralized governance. Education was not the primary focus of the agreement, but its implications for the future development of education have been crucial. The highly decentralized system (a single, centralized RS; ten cantons in the Federation; and a separate Brčko district), coupled with weak state authorities, means that the system is difficult to coordinate and susceptible to control by nationalistic interests. With foresight Dayton might have reserved more control of education to a single state education authority, but it is difficult to see how this can be reclaimed with the difficulties that have been experienced in securing cooperation for a common curriculum and qualifications authority. In this respect it could be argued that any further strengthening of the decentralized system may in fact contribute to greater instability since it increases the likelihood of separate education and the development of separate national identities that threaten state cohesion.
- 3. Teacher education and development.** There is some evidence to suggest that there has been insufficient investment in teacher education and development as part of post-war reconstruction in BiH. This may have significant consequences for a number of reasons. In the short term, inadequate supply of teachers has a detrimental effect on the quality of teaching and learning, and recovery from this lack of capacity is likely to be impeded by a fragmented teacher education system and poor terms and conditions of appointment. Over the longer term, the success of education reforms is likely to be dependent on the quality of teachers and their commitment to the reform process.
- 4. Language of instruction.** A consequence of Dayton's recognition of three languages has been the strengthening of arguments for separate languages of instruction in school. Despite a high level of agreement about common linguistic roots and mutual intelligibility, the post-war developments have politicized language and script in a way that strengthens separate development rather than state cohesion.
- 5. Shared or separate schools?** An area of significant concern is the extent to which children are attending shared or separate schools. This varies depending on the location and demography of local districts. One argument is that the existence of separate schools reflects a lack of consensus at national level about a shared future, and so separate schools reflect the lack of trust between communities. Another argument is that shared schooling can make a contribution towards establishing trust and state, building, and so should be positively encouraged. BiH

provides conflicting evidence on this issue. In situations where there are significant numbers of minority pupils it appears that parents will avoid their nearest school and travel some distance to enrol their child in another school associated with their own 'national identity', which suggests that separation is a consequence of fears of assimilation. The case of 'two schools under one roof' seemed like a positive example of encouraging returnee children to integrate, but has come to represent a very sharp form of educational segregation. The Brčko District is most often cited as an example where separate education systems have been integrated successfully, but the anomaly is that the main reason given for this is that the Office of the High Representative (OHR) had sufficient powers to make integration compulsory. The evidence is therefore ambivalent about whether level of integration is a symptom (lack of trust) or an instrument for establishing new relationships.

6. **Curriculum.** It may be unrealistic to expect that curriculum reform can have a significant impact on the overall political dynamics in BiH. However, there are arguments about aspects of curricula that may have a bearing on the dynamics of conflict. One is that a curriculum based too much on content (syllabi) rather than values and skills has a detrimental effect. The curriculum becomes overburdened with content, and students spend too much time learning 'facts' rather than transferable skills. Learning tends to be passive and uncritical and therefore more susceptible to politicization. Another argument is that care is needed in the development of potentially controversial areas of the curriculum, particularly areas such as history, culture, and religion, since these are associated with identity formation and can be exclusive and partisan, with potentially negative impacts. Other arguments are that certain forms of curriculum such as life skills, peace education, multicultural, human rights, and citizenship may have beneficial effects because they promote respect for difference. There is little evidence from curriculum programmes in BiH to draw any firm conclusions about the overall impact of such interventions on conflict. In broader terms there is an unresolved issue about whether it is better for post-conflict curriculum reforms to concentrate more on improving overall quality of education rather than focus on potentially controversial issues such as changes to textbooks and curriculum content.
7. **Rights-based arguments for change.** It is worth noting that in the case of BiH, rights-based arguments have been used to advocate both greater integration and separate development. For example, the constitutional recognition of national groups provides a strong basis for parents to argue for separate languages of instruction. Another example is the tension between 'the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions' (Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 to the ECHR) and the child's right to education in 'preparation for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin' (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 29).
8. **Role of international community.** In spite of the fact that the OECD-DAC *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States & Situations* were developed relatively recently in April 2007, 12 years after the signing of the General Framework Agreement (GFA) for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, valuable lessons can still be learned by applying the Principles retrospectively to post-war education reform efforts in BiH.
  - Consistent with Principle 8 ('agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors'), the BiH case study highlights the challenges that emerge when no specific organization is mandated to coordinate the implementation of educational reform, and underlines the need to ensure coordination among the international community – for

example, by establishing a steering group to help coordinate international reform efforts and/or drawing up memoranda of understanding governing interaction between external actors on the ground. To some extent this lesson may already have been learned with the establishment of education clusters in post-conflict situations.

- With regard to OECD–DAC Principle 7 ('align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts'), the BiH case study emphasizes the importance of understanding the local context. However the international community is not value-free in its engagement in BiH – for example, the international community's strong commitment to state-building is not necessarily supported by all local actors. Principle 7 thus raises questions about the desirability of aligning with local priorities in a context where local actors are often sceptical, if not openly critical, of reform initiatives aimed at creating a more inclusive and integrated education system.
- Lastly, regarding Principle 2 ('do no harm'), the BiH case study demonstrates the potential, in a highly volatile post-war political climate, for well-intentioned education reform efforts to 'do harm' when not sufficiently thought through. For example, decentralization has led to greater politicization of education rather than the establishment of a high-quality, common education system. This suggests the potential benefits of undertaking comprehensive peace and conflict impact assessments before seeking to effect change on the ground in fragile contexts.



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## The study

Although not widely considered to be a 'fragile state' by the international donor community, Bosnia and Herzegovina nevertheless remains fragile due to internal and regional political insecurity. The current political stagnation and absence of social trust in Bosnia and Herzegovina are due in no small part to ongoing disagreement about the country's identity and future. Such disagreement has implications for the education of the country's children and young people.

It has been argued that the manner in which education was delivered during the 1992–1995 war supported the conflicting agendas of the three constituent peoples by stereotyping and promoting divisive histories. After the war, education was manipulated to perpetuate these divisions. The General Framework Agreement left a chaotic legacy for education, creating an institutionally complex structure which makes the task of educational reform exceptionally challenging.

This desk review is part of a larger INEE research project, 'Situational Analyses of Education and Fragility'. It examines the post-war period in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in 1995, through to the present day.

## The author

Clare Magill is a Research Associate at INCORE, the University of Ulster's International Conflict Research Institute. She is currently working on a two-year project funded by the International Development Research Centre focused on trauma, development, and peace-building. Previously, Magill worked at the UNESCO Centre, University of Ulster, where she coordinated a two-year international comparative research project funded by the European Union's Peace and Reconciliation Programme – 'Education and Reconciliation: The Perspectives of Children, Young People and Educators in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Northern Ireland'. She holds an MSc in Social Research Skills with a specialism in researching peace and conflict in divided societies from the University of Ulster (2009) and an MA in Modern History and Spanish from the University of St Andrews (2002).