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| Sector definition | <p>Based on DAC definitions, the Education sector comprises the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic, secondary and post-secondary education; • Education policy and administrative management; • Education facilities and training; • Teacher training; • Educational research. <p>DAC codes: 110-114.</p> |
| DCF donors | Austria/ADA, France, Germany/GTZ, Italy/IC, Norway, Spain/AECID, Sweden/SIDA, USA/USAID, the EC, UNICEF, and the World Bank. |
| Other key international organizations (IOs) | The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CoE), the Office of the High Representative (OHR), and Civitas. |
| Key government partners | The BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the Entity, District and Cantonal Ministries of Education. |
| Total donor allocation to the sector in 2007 | € 9.1 million. |
| Sector strategies | There is no comprehensive state-level sector strategy. A draft strategy dealing with the whole sector has been prepared with the assistance of the EC, but not adopted as yet. There are other state-level strategies dealing with certain elements of the Education sector, such as the Strategy for Vocational Education and Training (VET) supported by the EC and the Strategy for Pre-School Education, developed by UNICEF. |
| Donor coordination | Semi-regular coordination meetings focusing on exchange of information. |

Introduction

Improvements to the Education sector are crucial for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as well as for the success of reforms in other areas. Indeed, this statement holds true for any country in the world. However, the case of BiH is special as the principle of ethnic division is implemented in schools as well as in curricula, thus further cementing this practice in all other spheres of life. BiH has to simultaneously overcome the legacies of both the 1992-1995 war and its communist past. BiH faces serious challenges on its way to democratic governance and European Integration. As the youth of BiH grow accustomed to segregation based on ethnic identity, the efforts to undo the distrust between ethnicities need to be even more consistent and harmonized.

As with most other sectors, Education in BiH is decentralized within the current constitutional structure. The BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA) is the state-level institution in charge of coordinating all issues relevant to education through its Department for Education, Science, Culture and Sport. There are 13 Entity, District and Cantonal Ministries of Education, which hold the real authority to affect change in the sector. In the Republika Srpska (RS), responsibilities lie at the entity-level, whereas in Federation of BiH (FBiH), mainly at the cantonal level.

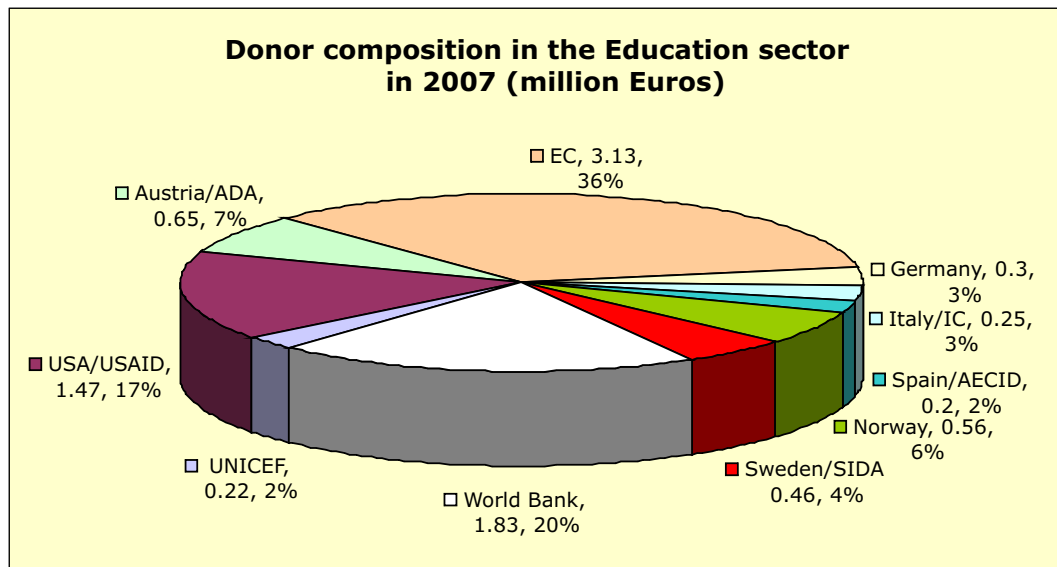
Difficulties and obstacles to reform the Education sector are numerous, and particularly affect access to and quality of education. The net elementary school attendance rate is approximately 98.4% while the net secondary school attendance rate is at 79.3%. Around 2.3% of children of secondary school age are still going to primary school. The estimated 6% of children who are not enrolled in elementary school as well as those adolescents who drop out of the education system after primary school represent especially vulnerable groups.

For the last decade both bilateral and multilateral international agencies have been supporting the Education sector in BiH. Multilateral donors 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. In addition, both bilateral and multilateral donors have supported civil society organizations that deal with education issues. Experience shows that it is often extracurricular initiatives provided by civil society organizations that are the most successful vehicles for counteracting ethnic division in schools and ethnicity-based interpretation of curricula. However, the majority of these bodies are still quite weak and they are not yet able to effect real policy change.

Donor activities in 2007

There are a number of international donors involved in the Education sector and most supranational organizations (including DCF and non-DCF members) present in BiH are engaged in providing assistance to this sector. This fact is indicative of the international community's understanding that education that does not promote tolerance can be a destabilizing factor in a post-conflict setting.

The DCF donors active in the sector are Austria/ADA, France,¹⁷ Germany/GTZ, Italy/IC, Norway, Spain/AECID, Sweden/SIDA, USA/USAID, EC, UNICEF, and the World Bank. Together, they contributed € 9.1 million to Education in 2007. Non-DCF members, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), also have a big influence on the work in this sector.



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 *Functional Review of the Education Sector*¹⁸ carried out by the EC in 2004. The EC is also promoting the introduction of 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.

The EC focuses on institutional development by assisting the government in developing an Agency for Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education, an Agency for Higher Education, and an Agency for Diploma Recognition. The EC promotes outcome-based teaching and curricula, i.e. the European Qualification Framework, which introduces standards and quality assurance in education. In the field of vocational education and training and higher education, the EC is supporting social dialogue in order to increase the employability of graduates. The EC also continuously supports the development of strategies in education. The Strategy for Vocational Education and Training (2008-2013) was adopted by the Council of Ministers (CoM) in 2007. The Strategy for the Reform of Education has been submitted to the CoM for adoption.

As the main problems in the Education sector are the divisions along ethnic lines and the lack of a unified curriculum, the EC, the OSCE, CoE and Office of High Representative (OHR) proposed the establishment of a Conference of Ministers, which reports directly to the Prime Minister's Cabinet. This Conference was founded in 2007. In October 2007, with support from CoE, the Conference participated in a study visit to the headquarters of the CoE in Strasbourg.

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

¹⁷ France is not featured in the pie chart, as this donor did not report any fund allocations in 2007. France did, however, continue its previous activities in the sector.

¹⁸ This document is available at <http://parco.gov.ba/eng/?page=125>.

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 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. Experience in education has shown that results at the community level need to be fed back to the policy-making level in order to ensure future sustainability. This upstream-downstream linkage is critical given the decentralized nature of the administrative structure and the weak vertical communication channels of the country. 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.

In addition to multilateral donors, there are several other DCF members involved in the Education sector. **France** has two separate projects, one for higher education and the other for secondary education and French-language teaching. The former of these initiatives supports exchange programmes in education and science between tertiary institutions in France and the eight public universities in BiH. France's second project creatively combines French language classes with integration at schools by having students from all ethnicities sit together during foreign-language courses.

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 supports the efforts of the OSCE, OHR and BiH authorities to recover the Mostar Prva Gimnazija building, an emblematic centre of secondary education, located in Mostar's Plaza de España. The centre teaches 400 students from diverse backgrounds.

Germany/GTZ concentrates on VET. This focus area, combined with Germany/GTZ's efforts in their other priority areas, is meant to improve the conditions for foreign investments by securing an adequately trained labor force for those investments. Germany/GTZ's major aim is to change the teacher-orientated education system into a student-centred one.

Austria/ADA assists two areas: vocational training and higher education. The former of these has two components 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, Norway, Sweden/SIDA and USA/USAID all support the delivery of education programmes at either secondary or tertiary levels. **Italy/IC** sponsors the 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** is financing the 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, Sweden/SIDA also supports the master's programme in Gender Studies at the University of Sarajevo. **USA/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 of business administration degree in BiH. **Norway** is supporting a post-graduate programme on religion and its ties to politics, nationalism, violence, and human rights. Norway also organizes a teaching exchange in the same field.

Non-DCF organizations like the OSCE and the CoE have also been significantly engaged in the Education sector and this map would not be complete without mention of their work. 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.

An OSCE priority is supporting a reform environment that will result in the removal of divisive national politics from the classroom. This is done through a history and geography textbook reform effort conducted in cooperation with the CoE and the Georg Eckert Institute, and endeavors to monitor the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of the 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.

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, *Strengthening Higher Education in BiH*, 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 CoM in December 2007 and published under the title *7 Key Strategies and Guidelines to Implement the Bologna Process*.

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.

Sector strategies

In the past, there have been several attempts to draft and popularize state-level education reform strategies. A key document in this regard is the Education Reform Agenda - A Message to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina,¹⁹ developed by local stakeholders and adopted in 2003. The sectoral study of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) also provides a comprehensive picture of the key issues, goals, objectives and priorities within the sector. However, these existing strategy papers reportedly failed to spell out the most urgent need to guarantee common, state-level standards for education, access to all and a system that promotes tolerance. Other topical issues that remain to be addressed are the development of laws and by-laws, protocols, operational plans, feasibility studies, action plans, and budgetary allocations.

In recognition of the need for a joint strategy, the EC assisted in the development of the recent draft Strategy to the Reform of Education 2008-2015. The Strategy was adopted by the Conference of Ministers of Education and submitted to CoM.

The EC has also assisted in the development of the Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2007- 2013, which was adopted by the CoM in 2007. A state-level Strategy for Pre-School Education has also been developed by UNICEF.

Positive developments and challenges in the sector in 2007

Within the Education sector, the year 2007 can be considered successful in terms of legislative reform. During 2007, three major laws were adopted: the Law on Agency for Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education, the Framework Law on Pre-School Education, and the Framework Law on Higher Education. The last of these establishes the aims of higher education and sets uniform criteria for higher education institutions. Its development was an outcome of a two-year (2006-2008) joint project by the CoE and the EC. The aim of the initiative was to assist BiH in preparing state-level reforms in three major areas: the recognition of qualifications, quality assurance, and a framework for higher education qualifications. In addition to the Higher Education Framework Law, the project developed seven key strategies and guidelines for implementing the Bologna Process in BiH over 2008, 2009 and 2010. Execution of these laws will be a challenge in 2008 and beyond.

¹⁹The complete document is available at www.oscebih.org/documents/26-eng.pdf.

In spite of the general satisfaction following the adoption of the aforementioned legislative framework for Education, most donors are concerned by the complications ensuing from the current fragmented, institutionally complex structure of the sector. However, the Conference of Ministers of Education provides a potential common institutional ground for discussing current issues regarding education. The birth of the Conference has been jointly assisted by the EC, the CoE, OHR, and the OSCE. However, donors observe that rather than focusing simply on sharing information about ongoing initiatives and developments, the Conference of Ministers meetings should actually serve as a state-level mechanism for guaranteeing that standards are set that ensure equal access to education throughout all of BiH. As a signatory to many international human rights conventions, BiH as a state is responsible for guaranteeing educational rights.

Donors expressed their satisfaction that during 2007 a Road Map and an Action Plan for EU community programmes for Life Long Learning (LLL) and Youth in Action (YiA) were drafted and submitted to the CoM for adoption. If adopted, it is foreseen that two agencies will be established for LLL and YiA respectively which will enable BiH to access EU funds for education and youth.

With the year 2007 came improvements in several thematic areas within the Education sector. Donors are satisfied with the progress in civic education and history teaching while cautioning that support in this area will be necessary for the long-term reforms to take deep and lasting root. New history textbooks and teaching manuals have been developed and are being used in a number (but not all) schools, and many teachers have been trained to teach civic education. An unbiased interpretation of history and modern civic education is crucial for counteracting the side effects of the current practice of ethnically segregated classrooms.

One donor expressed the view that BiH has the best education laws in Europe, yet the adoption of these laws constitutes the first and perhaps the easiest step towards reforming the education system in the country. Implementation continues to remain a challenge. Unfortunately, international agencies cannot draw on relevant experience in the Education sector from other countries, as the case of BiH is rather specific.

The politicized education system in BiH limits donors' efforts to affect change in the sector. At the same time, some international agencies acknowledge there have been too many small projects in the Education sector, which have not been synchronized. Examples of initiatives of a more limited scope include projects implemented in a number of schools or small donor-supported, NGO-run projects in local communities. The bottom-up approach, while critically important to the stakeholders directly involved, may not have a significant impact on the upper levels of governance from which greater coherence in education policy will eventually need to come. At the same time, in terms of making tangible achievements at the local level, in the long term, the bottom-up approach might be very effective. This argument is corroborated by the fact that donors who worked closely with civil society organizations in the country admit that their cooperation with or support of local NGOs has begun to yield concrete results in the field of education.

Coordination and ownership

Donors are concerned that the current complex institutional structure within the Education sector makes coordination among BiH authorities difficult. Even more importantly, international agencies agree that this multilayered structure leads to inefficient education spending and relatively low education outcomes. As far as donor coordination is concerned, international agencies note that previous formal mechanisms (such as the Education Issues Set Steering Group, which was a meeting of Heads of Agencies) have been replaced with ad hoc and informal coordination and communication, producing mixed results.

Donors do take part in semi-regular meetings, convened by the OSCE, which mostly serve as opportunities to share information. They regard this exchange among programme managers as a minimally satisfactory way of being informed. However, these meetings do not necessarily translate into real coordination. Discussion is ongoing as to who should organize and chair future gatherings. Donors would rather have a local institution lead their coordination effort. Proposals for people or institutions that could harmonize agencies' activities include but are not limited to: the Coordination Board on Education at MoCA, MoCA itself, the Minister of Civil Affairs Mr. Nović, the Conference of Ministers, the to-be-established Education Agency, or other local

authorities. Ultimately though, the harmonization of donor activities is dependent upon the personalities of the representatives involved in the coordination meetings.

Donors suggest that perhaps a way to improve the current situation would be to financially engage domestic authorities in education reform, thus imposing on them the responsibility to assume decision-making roles as well. Reportedly, for the last decade the authorities have not been involved in cost-sharing in any of the major projects in the field of education. By encouraging current beneficiaries to also become co-financers of education reforms, ownership of the process is expected to improve. However, the capacities of MoCA are said to be too limited to tackle all aspects of educational reform. Donors report that the only real ownership in BiH is found at the university level.

Future activities

The most important priority in the Education sector is to remove the politics that divide students, schools and communities. Solving this problem will be a long-term effort, and will depend on good governance in schools, civic education, democracy and participation, history textbook and teaching reform, and grass-roots activities aimed at bringing together divided communities.

Despite the support of education reform, to date, the financing the Education sector has not yet been covered by donor activity.²⁰ That said, the EC will provide support for this issue through IPA funds and other DCF members have indicated that they will assist initiatives that deal with the financial side of implementing the legal framework adopted in 2007.

Another priority area identified by donors is the furthering of the reform of the vocational education system: adopting the existing draft VET law, rationalizing the number of vocational schools, and adjusting VET curricula to the current and future needs of the market in BiH. At present, some 72% of all secondary schools in BiH are VET ones. Currently there are about 100 professions offered at VETs and only 40 of them are covered by the appropriate curricula. In practice, parents often have no choice but to send their children to VET schools rather than to general high schools. The problem is that the former do not provide adequate preparation for higher education.

Ensuring pre-school and universal primary education for all BiH children constitute additional concerns raised by donors. According to UNICEF, currently 27% of girls are leaving primary school and re-enrolling them is very difficult. Donors and local institutions alike need to devise strategies to effectively prevent girls from dropping out of school. According to the latest Multiple Cluster Indicators Survey,²¹ only 6.4% of children in the relevant age group (or 12,800 out of an estimated 200,000) attend nursery and pre-school centres in BiH. Furthermore, some 64% of Roma children do not attend primary school and almost none pre-school.

The initial training of teachers needs to be improved because in-service training is often insufficient and, as a result, ineffective. In fact, it is not only the university education of teachers that is considered wanting. For example, during interviews with donors supporting the legal and economic development of the sector, they brought up the issue of inadequate university training for Law and Economics students. The implementation of the Law on Higher Education and the corresponding seven strategies and guidelines will support BiH in fulfilling its commitments under the Bologna process, thereby making up for the current deficiencies in BiH's higher education system.

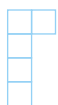
Generally speaking, international agencies are acutely aware that they cannot let politics hijack the process of education reform. However, there are differing interpretations as to how to respond to such trends. This is not to say that political issues are to be ignored. It means donors need to keep advocating for overcoming political barriers, without necessarily conditioning their involvement in the sector on the eradication of these obstacles. A good example of this tactic is France's focus on the methodological issues of history teaching or the teaching of French to students from all ethnicities who otherwise sit in ethnically segregated classrooms. International agencies would also like to see parents more involved in the schools. Donors hope that parents' active engagement will counteract the current, common practice of politically appointing members of school boards.

²⁰ As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the World Bank has developed a project aiming to, among other things, finance the Education sector. However, the practical application of this project is still pending as BiH authorities need to take decisive steps towards its implementation.

²¹ Multiple Cluster Indicators Survey, *Situation of Women and Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2006* (Sarajevo: UNICEF, September, 2007).



Donors note that it's necessary to ensure that the education system and curricula are gender sensitive. UNDP, through its *Implementation of Gender Law* project, has been supporting the Working Group on Gender and Education in developing recommendations on how to incorporate gender in the education system and in the primary, secondary and tertiary education curricula. However, further efforts are necessary.



One donor also highlighted that there is a need to establish the Community Programme Agencies for LLL and YiA in order to enable universities and young people to access EU funds for education. It is equally important to raise awareness about existing funds that are available under the Tempus, Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window.



Finally, several international agencies noted the need to further strengthen the capacity of the Education Department at MoCA as a priority area. Some donors are sensitive to the need to also enhance the capacity of domestic NGOs working in the broadly defined area of education. In the case of NGOs, this area includes but is not limited to education regarding health issues, gender equality, youth issues, human rights, environmental awareness and civic education.



Conclusion

Education is a “soft” sector as it is, by definition, entangled with many sensitive issues. It is a sector vital to development, especially in post-conflict countries. Education can be a powerful tool for instilling ideologies into the hearts and minds of young generations. As such, Education should become a priority sector for all stakeholders genuinely interested in bringing up a generation espousing modern democratic values like tolerance, individual responsibility, participation in civic life, and respect for other cultures.

Yet, donors recognize there is not one perfect solution to the problems in BiH's Education sector. The right way out of the current situation should come through the active, meaningful participation and on-going involvement of all stakeholders and members of the community, through the implementation of integrated strategies (bottom-up and top-down), and through the revision and harmonization of policy and financial frameworks. Also, a good way to increase local ownership as well as improve coordination among all donors would be to involve representatives of BiH's civil society sector, dealing with education issues in donor coordination meetings. Most of all, further reform of the Education sector is contingent upon the genuine commitment of local authorities, politicians, donors, teachers, parents, students, and civil society in general to offer the young generations a competitive education, thus improving the likelihood that they will want to stay in their country.

