

YOUNG PEOPLE NEED A YOUTH POLICY!

*Analysis of the Position of
Young People and the Youth
Sector in BiH*



Vijeće ministara Bosne i Hercegovine
Савет министара Босне и Херцеговине
Council of ministers Bosnia and Herzegovina



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Impresum

The Analysis of the Position of Young People and the Youth Sector in BiH was compiled through partnership cooperation between the Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues at the Council of Ministers of BiH, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH and the Project for Support and Development of Youth Structures in BiH of the German Technical Cooperation Society (GTZ). Following the adoption of research guidelines, the Commission members actively participated in the making of the study. This study is the first phase of drafting of the BiH Youth Policy 2009-2013.

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The Analysis of the Position of Young People and the Youth Sector in BiH can be found on the website of the Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH: www.mladi.gov.ba.

YOUNG PEOPLE NEED A YOUTH POLICY!

Analysis of the Position of Young People and the Youth Sector in BiH

Final Report prepared for the drafting of the BiH Youth Policy

2008

List of Abbreviations

ACIPS	Centar za interdisciplinarne postdiplomske studije Univerziteta u Sarajevu		the United Kingdom Government
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation		(Odjeljenje za međunarodni razvoj Vlade Ujedinjenog Kraljevstva)
	(Austrijska razvojna agencija)	ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
AIESEC	International Association of Students in Economics and Commerce (Međunarodno udruženje studenata ekonomije i trgovine)		(Evropski sistem transfera i akumulacije kredita)
		ERYICA	European Youth Information and Counseling Agency
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (Sindrom stečene imunodeficijencije)		(Evropska agencija za informisanje i savjetovanje mladih)
ARS	Anketa o radnoj snazi	EU	Evropska unija
BDP	Bruto društveni proizvod	FBiH	Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine
BiH	Bosna i Hercegovina	FKR	Fondacija za kreativni razvoj
bh.	bosansko-hercegovački	GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH
CCI	Centri civilnih inicijativa		(Njemačko društvo za tehničku saradnju)
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism		
	(Savjetodavna grupa za borbu protiv HIV/AIDS-a)	HIV	Humani imunodeficientni virus
		IBHI	Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues
CEPOS	Centar za policy studije		
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency		(Nezavisni ured za humanitarna pitanja)
	(Kanadska agencija za međunarodni razvoj)	ILO	International Labour Organization
CIK	Centralna izborna komisija		(Međunarodna organizacija rada)
CIN	Centar za istraživačko novinarstvo	IRI	International Republican Institute
			(Međunarodni republikanski institut)
CISP	Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (Međunarodni komitet za razvoj naroda)	ISIC	International Student Identification Card
CKD	Centar za kulturu dijaloga		
CRS	Catholic Relief Service (Katolički servis za pomoć)		(Međunarodna studentska iskaznica)
DAPSU	Državni akcijski planovi o socijalnoj uključenosti	IOM	International Organization for Migrations
DEI	Direkcija za evropske integracije		(Međunarodna organizacija za migracije)
DEP	Direkcija za ekonomsko planiranje		
		JIM	Joint Inclusion Memorandum
DFID	The Department for International Development of		(Zajednički memorandum o

	uključenosti)	SIDA	Sindrom stečene imunodeficijencije
KM	Konvertibilna marka	SOM	Savjetodavni odbor mladih
KS	Kanton Sarajevo	SUS	Svjetski univerzitetski servis
KUD	Kulturno-umjetničko društvo	SZO	Svjetska zdravstvena organizacija
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Study		
	(Studija mjerenja životnog standarda)	TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study / Trendovi u međunarodnim studijama matematike i nauke
MCP	Ministarstvo civilnih poslova		
MIOS	Mobilnost, informisanje, savjetovanje i rad sa mladima	UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS / (Zajednički program Ujedinjenih nacija za HIV/AIDS)
MSP	Mala i srednja preduzeća		
NAB	National Advisory Board (Nacionalni savjetodavni odbor)	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund (Fond za stanovništvo Ujedinjenih nacija)
NDI	National Democratic Institute		
	(Nacionalni demokratski institut)	UNDP	United Nations Development Program
NVO	Nevladina organizacija		
OIA	Omladinska informativna agencija BiH		(Razvojni program Ujedinjenih nacija)
OKC	Omladinski kulturni centar	UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund (Fond za djecu Ujedinjenih nacija)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe		
	(Organizacija za sigurnost i saradnju u Evropi)	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Organizacija Ujedinjenih nacija za obrazovanje, nauku i kulturu)
OSRS	Omladinski savjet Republike Srpske		
OZVO	Okvirni zakon o visokom obrazovanju	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Visoki komesarijat Ujedinjenih nacija za izbjeglice)
PDV	Porez na dodatu vrijednost		
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment	USM	Udruženje službenika za mlade
		YEP	Youth Employment Project (Projekat zapošljavanja mladih)
	Program za međunarodnu procjenu studenata	YERP	Youth Employability and Retention Programme (Program zapošljavanja i očuvanja mladih)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (Strategija za smanjenje siromaštva)		
		VCCT	Voluntary Confidential Counseling and Testing (Centra za dobrovoljno savjetovanje i testiranje za HIV/AIDS)
RS	Republika Srpska		
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Švicarska razvojna agencija)	VM	Vijeće ministara
		WHO	World Health Organization (Svjetska zdravstvena organizacija)
SEEYN	Southeast European Youth Network (Mreža mladih Jugoistočne Europe)		

Foreword by the Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH*Young people need a youth policy!*

The Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues at the Council of Ministers of BiH has been continuously working on a BiH Youth Policy 2009-2013. This document presents the results of the first phase of drafting this strategy. This is a report on the position of young people and the youth sector in seven priority areas in BiH.

We would like to thank the representatives of young people from across BiH who participated in the research conducted for the purposes of this study.

We would like to thank the Prism Research Team and Mr Dino Đipa for their cooperation. A special thank you to Ms Rubeena Esmail-Arndt and Mr Nedim Sinanović from the GTZ Youth Project who have fully contributed to the activities of the Commission since its founding. They, just like the Council of Ministers of BiH, recognised the importance of this study.

Our wish is for these findings to become the basis for creating priorities, not only in terms of youth policies, but also in terms of policies in BiH in general. We would like to point out that, despite the disparate image often presented, in the past 10 years, young people have organised themselves into associations and organisations, they joined youth sections of political parties, they initiated activities in youth work, they worked with support or without it. Young people have been proactive to the extent allowed by their environment and the socio-economic development of the country.

The relationship between young people and government institutions and bodies should be a two-way street. Government institutions in BiH must formulate institutional responses to the needs and problems of young people. At the same time, young people must give their full contribution and propose realistic measures for improving their living conditions. Young people are expected to come up with a functional and organised approach so that they may be recognised as a unique, equal, serious and reliable partner.

The Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues at the Council of Ministers of BiH will continue working on the Draft BiH Youth Policy 2009-2013. We expect the full support of both young people and the Council of Ministers of BiH. Because young people need a youth policy!

Nađa Lutvikadić

Chairperson of the Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH

Foreword by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

As the Youth Project Manager for the GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), it is my pleasure to express our compliments to the authorities and youth of BiH for their contributions and work on this study. This is the most comprehensive and the most serious study on young people to date.

The success and implication of this survey is even greater given the fact that BiH authorities have opted to first do a scientific study and then to create a youth policy based on facts. The survey not only gives clear indications on the challenges young people face in today's society but also of where the Bosnian governments need to put more effort and to ensure vertical and horizontal coordination among their institutions. It is the basis to create appropriate measures and action plans that directly address the needs and aspirations of young people in this country. Furthermore this survey can be seen as a base-line upon which a monitoring system can be developed to follow the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures to be implemented in the frame of the youth policy.

I would like to point out that the underlining guiding principles of this survey were taken from the European Union, as well as the Council of Europe documents.

Apart from assisting the BiH governments in their endeavour to draft a national youth policy, GTZ is also working closely with youth NGOs and local government to develop local youth strategies. So far more than 110 young people have passed the GTZ youth leader training program and 45 municipality employees have undergone training as youth officers. Much has been developed and implemented at local level that we hope will soon be supplemented through national and entity youth policy programs.

We are convinced that the Council of Ministers of BiH and the Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH will be successful in its endeavour to create appropriate youth policies to improve citizenship of young people and alleviate their most pressing needs.

The GTZ is committed to continue its partnership with the Bosnian governments to complete the next phase of the youth policy and write the action plan.

I would like to thank all those involved in the creation of this document, as well as all those who in any way contributed to the improvement of living conditions for young people in BiH. I am particularly grateful to all the young volunteers with whom it has been my pleasure to work with and get to know over the past few years. Their contribution is invaluable. They are the true heroes and heroines of BiH.

Rubeena Esmail-Arndt
GTZ Youth Project Manager

Introduction

The main intention of this study is to provide comprehensive information on the position of young people, as well as the existing legal and institutional framework for the development of policies concerning this part of the population. The study contains information from the qualitative and quantitative research on the position of young people in the seven areas selected by the Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH and GTZ. The aim of the research is to provide rounded information on the position of young people, including specific groups within this population such as young people with disabilities, young Roma, young people from rural areas, etc. The survey results are based on a representative sample of 1500 respondents from the population group aged 16 to 30 conducted in 53 local communities in BiH, as well as on the results from 21 focus groups conducted in nine cities throughout BiH with a total of 168 participants.

The study underscores the most important problems and challenges, and recommends concrete institutional changes in the youth sector as well as possible action programmes for young people. Additionally, the results of the study are a starting point for establishing an information system for young people that must primarily serve the needs of decision makers from the government sector as a basis for planning and prioritising the use of public funds, and in mapping the main indicators. The information system can enable monitoring of the action programme for young people and facilitate comparisons with other countries.

There is no doubt that this study will lead to better and greater inclusion of young people. The motto is: "If you think everything's alright – then nevermind"¹.

This the most comprehensive and serious study on young people in BiH to date.

Executive Summary

The study presents the main research finding, the key challenges and problems, and recommendations for overcoming them. The messages and recommendations are intended for all the protagonists presented in the responsibility matrix for youth issues in the government sector, but also for representatives of the non-governmental and private sectors. The problems described in this study require a multifaceted and well-coordinated approach from all sides responsible for the position of young people and their future perspectives. The study has very negatively characterised the existing relations, so at the very beginning, we point out two main messages as a precondition for positive development:

- Intra-state cooperation in most areas in the government sector must be urgently improved, both on the vertical and on the horizontal plane.
- A multi-sector approach to the problems of young people and inter-sector cooperation between the government, non-governmental and private sector must be at the basis of all policies relevant to young people.

The analysis of various areas of significance for young people leads to a number of additional conclusions that must be taken into account for a comprehensive understanding of the framework for the development of the youth sector in BiH:

- Insufficient institutional and legislative capacities cause delays in the process of accession to the EU and failures to comply with commitment undertaken by signing international charters on the rights of children and young people.
- All levels lack a programmatic and strategic approach of support for improving the position of young people.

¹ Peščanik, radio show B92

- There is a lack of systemic data gathering that disables creating and monitoring youth policies based on facts.
- Activities for the implementation of adopted policies are not conducted.
- Young people lack public spaces, as well as a unique centre for the promotion of youth policies.

It is necessary to harmonise the legal definition of the youth population group in BiH. In order to enable comparisons between trends in BiH and those in EU countries, the lower limit is suggested at 15 years of age. Due to the complexity of the situation faced by young people, the upper limit is suggested at 30 years of age as already recognised by the RS Law on Youth Organisations.

When it comes to areas of importance for the position of young people, the mid-levels of government in BiH, the entities and cantons, possess greater functional and fiscal competences. However, local communities have a long-term interest to ensure quality living conditions for this population, because young people are the ones that make long-term sustainable development possible. That is why local self-governance units must emphasise this disparity between their interests and the competences that reside with higher levels of government. The main message is planning and passing decisions with the participation of young people, that is, creating local strategies for young people in order to publicly point out the need for a multifaceted approach primarily on the part of government institutions with constitutional jurisdiction over most youth issues – RS and the cantons in FBiH.

The state level should ensure a coordinated and harmonised development of certain areas for the purpose of uniform and accelerated overall development. Thus, for example, it is necessary to bear in mind that the population aging trend is twice as rapid in BiH in comparison with EU countries. Today, there are approximately 607,100 people under 15 living in BiH today, which is some 420,000 less than in 1991. Also, the number of people aged 15 to 29 has dropped by about 315,000 (777,000 in comparison with 1,091,775). The working population is also reduced by more than 500,000 in comparison with 1991.

Depopulation or the 'white plague' deserves well-coordinated action on the part of all responsible sides.

Education System – part of the problem of social exclusion of young people; slow reforms and separation from the labour market

Almost every second young person in BiH coming out of the formal education system remains at the level of three-year secondary education or lower. This puts us significantly below the EU average when it comes to the portion of persons with completed four-year secondary or higher education. Every fourth person in BiH leaves the education process before completion, which is far above the average for most European countries.

Financial problems are the main reason for discontinuing education with only 7% of pupils and students receiving financial aid mostly in the amount of 100 KM and not above 200 KM.

Poor formal education qualifications or the lack of any qualifications leads to social exclusion and poverty of young people along with all the other risks accompanying these problems, and closes the circle of underdevelopment in the community. In a very specific way, this also pertains to vulnerable parts of the population such as the Roma, persons with disabilities, young people from poor families.

The priority for education policies should be increasing the level of education for young people on the whole, as well as the development of youth entrepreneurship in order to ensure a highly educated and competitive labour force. Apart from that, the education of vulnerable groups of this population requires a special and appropriate approach.

The incompatibility of the education system with the needs of the labour market in BiH and in the EU, and with the challenges of the future leads young people into a long-term disadvantaged position and makes the BiH economy non-competitive in the long term.

Every fourth employed young person works in a field different from what he/she was educated for

leading to significant lack of knowledge and skills necessary for the job. Young people with completed secondary vocational education have little perspective in the existing labour market. They are mainly unable to find work in the fields for which they were trained.

Apart from that, higher education institutions enrol the greatest number of students in the social sciences and humanities programmes. What kind of employment will they be able to find is a question without concrete answers.

In general, young people have the best chances of finding work in the informal labour market, in low quality jobs with poor working conditions and no security. This is the future for the majority of young people. It is a future they are aware of, and this awareness has long-term negative effects on their mental health, activity, family and social life.

Employment – The No. 1 Problem

Most young people see going abroad in search of employment as an alternative to working and living in BiH, which is entirely the result of a rational assessment of their existing possibilities and perspectives.

The unemployment rate among young people aged 16 to 30 is almost 60%. It is therefore unsurprising that two thirds of young people would leave BiH for temporary employment, marriage or permanent settlement in another country. Many of them have already undertaken concrete steps in this direction.

Unemployment is the cause of social anomalies, obstacles to forming a family and reproduction, and the main reason for leaving the country. For the simple reason that it affects all other areas relevant to the position of young people, unemployment is one of the greatest challenges for decision makers.

The low rate of active labour of young people in comparison to the EU, as well as the unemployment rate that is almost four times that of the EU average, and especially the unemployment rate for young women, best illustrate the position of young people from BiH in comparison to their peers in other countries.

This is why economic development should be the No. 1 priority for the whole country, and employment policies should be compatible with realistic needs.

There are discriminatory practices in the labour market, young people are at a serious disadvantage with obstacles such as corruption and nepotism, open discrimination, and for those seeking first-time employment, the widespread precondition of prior working experience. This is the reality most young people face on a regular basis. Discrimination against young women is even more pronounced. Apart from that, employment based on discriminating qualifications is present in all areas where research was conducted.

Therefore, legal policies must respond to the problems of the labour market that is not functioning on the basis of abilities, but on the basis of corruption, ethnic and political suitability and other discriminating qualifications both in the public and the private sector.

The transition of young people from education to employment in the formal sector must be facilitated, employment opportunities must be expanded and made widely available, and youth entrepreneurship must be recognised as a key mechanism.

The development of micro and small business among young people is an unexploited alternative for creating new jobs. Currently, one in three young persons would be prepared to initiate his/her own business. Agriculture and tourism are areas where young people see considerable potential for entrepreneurship and employment. Are they right to think so? What sectors can ensure sufficient growth for quality and sustainable jobs? In any case, governments must provide young people with support in their endeavours by appropriate investment policies and promotions, as well as by providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills and facilitating access to financing.

Most young people belong to a socially excluded group

The customary approach in social policy making must be abandoned, and a new approach more sensitive to the specific and contemporary needs and interests of young people must be urgently established. No responsible government responds to the challenge of juvenile delinquency by opening prisons for minors, police pressure or through ignoring the problem.

The current position of young people requires a multi-sector approach and cooperation of responsible institutions for social policy, education, labour and employment, healthcare, and youth work, which is the precondition for a sustainable policy of their social inclusion. Governments must ensure that competent institutions develop coordinated policies in various areas of significance for the position of young people, that they protect youth interests and promote positive attitudes among young people and in society in general.

Employment policies must turn a new leaf in their approach to the unemployment problem and provide young people with support from the very end of their education, through finding employment and social protection in cases of unemployment. Through their fiscal and income policies, competent institutions must start thinking about the housing problems of young people and allocate public spending based on an analysis of real needs.

The existing system of social aid and protection is not able to recognise and respond to the needs of households with insufficient income, and especially not to the complex problems faced by particularly vulnerable groups. A fourth of young people between 16 and 24 live in households whose total average monthly income is below 430 KM, i.e. 60% of the average income of the overall population (713 KM). Only 7% of young people living in households with low incomes receive a certain amount of social aid.

The basis for defining sustainable and effective social policy is determining the real social position of the population. Due to the developed informal economy and large scope of unregistered income, it is particularly difficult to determine the real social situation of an individual. It is, therefore, necessary to establish a mechanism to select social aid beneficiaries based on an assessment of the total income situation. This approach would be much better for solving the poverty problem than the existing system based on a categorical approach. In view of the real indications, it seems that most of those who receive social aid do not belong to the category of the poor, while most of those in need of aid do not receive any social aid.

And finally, the slow resolution of housing problems of young people has negative effects on forming families, but also on other private and social aspects of young people's lives. 93% of young married couples do not have their own living space. Additionally, only 1% of young people live in student dorms, which speaks volumes about the conditions for students, their numbers and the amount of organised social support.

The healthcare system is inflexible; lack of information about risks; high rate of cigarette smoking

Young people in BiH live in a country with thirteen health ministries, eleven separate public health insurance funds and practically no monitoring or planning for public funds spending and transfer to the healthcare sector. This system is unable to ensure adequate redistribution of public funds, nor can it ensure full healthcare protection for a set of basic healthcare services.

Despite inter-entity and inter-cantonal arrangements, individual rights are almost exclusively valid in the territory of the insured persons administrative unit of residence. When crossing the administrative border, healthcare services are mainly available only if the patient covers the total costs.

What needs to be applied is a regulatory framework that would ensure equal access to healthcare protection and insurance, optimal coverage through preventive measures and that would respond to the healthcare needs of particularly vulnerable groups.

Apart from that, the role of the local administration in healthcare protection must be improved. Also,

the formation of a healthcare fund on the level of BiH for particularly severe healthcare cases would help many, while the risk would be distributed over a wider population. This fund would actually be an alternative to current humanitarian actions through the media involving children and young people.

Through data on the health status of young people and hazardous behaviours, the study indicates smoking as the most pressing problem. A third of young people in BiH between 16 and 24 smokes cigarettes, which is about 6% more than the EU average. 83% of young smokers smoke less than 20 cigarettes a day. This is about 9% more than the EU average. Is it truly necessary, in the 21st century, to point out the direct link between smoking and serious illness? Among young people, it absolutely is.

The effect of media campaigns on prevention in healthcare is positive, because every campaign has been noticed by every second young person.

When it comes to intimate relations, research has shown that men have more frequent sexual relations with more partners than women, which places them in a higher risk group in terms of sexually transmitted diseases. Every fourth man who has sexual relations with more partners does not use contraception.

Hazardous habits must become a topic of discussion for decision makers and the basis for institutional cooperation, participation of young people and finding inter-sector solutions.

Only 8% of young people know that their local communities provide healthcare services specifically intended for young people, and only 5% of them have used these services. Although they are not accustomed to using healthcare services outside of healthcare institutions, young people see this as a way to avoid the difficulties they otherwise face: long procedures, lack of discretion and sensitivity for specific needs of young people, impolite staff behaviour, etc.

In order to improve matters, the study provides recommendations for all public institutions, especially those that are part of the education system, to be more sensitive to the healthcare needs of young people.

Young people as apolitical; underdevelopment of volunteer work and participation in the non-governmental sector

The ultimately uncertain position of young people caused by an inefficient approach of government institutions to improving the position of young people is the main reason for their apolitical behaviour, poor participation in public life, the non-governmental sector and community initiatives.

Three out of four young persons aged 16 to 30 claim to be uninterested in politics. Young people express a high degree of distrust of politicians. They believe that all ruling parties and their leading politicians are incompetent, corrupt and only after their own interests.

The participation of young people in activities of public importance, as well as their influence on decision making and public policies in all sectors must be supported and institutionally regulated.

Still, young people can do a lot more to represent their own interests and should do more to get involved in the decision-making process.

Only 2% of young people are members of local youth councils, and not more than 1% of them are members of youth commissions at local administrative bodies, which is how many of them participated in the creation and development of youth strategies.

In the past year, 3% of young people, 5% in FBiH and 2% in RS, has participated in organising youth activities on the local level.

Young people make up a somewhat higher percentage of membership in political parties and their youth wings, about 8%.

Lack of support through youth work, counselling and information; low level of youth mobility

Local economic development could be improved significantly by stimulating cultural exchange and tourism within the country, and along with international exchanges, this would encourage quality development of young people.

Young people who travel outside their municipality/city mostly go to places within their own entity, but young people from RS cross the entity border much more frequently. Excursions abroad and within entities are the most frequent programmes of organised travel. Neighbouring countries are the most frequent destinations of young people from BiH, and 80% of young people goes to other countries as tourists or to visit family and friends.

Apart from financial obstacles, the prejudice created through political propaganda is the main impediment to greater youth mobility. Youth mobility for the purpose of acquiring international experience should be supported, and the formation of a government fund for this purpose is a solution suggested by young people. Programmes and initiatives of this kind should take into account the fact that every third person is not prepared to participate in organised forms of socialisation and travel with members of other nationalities from BiH and from abroad.

Governments at all levels must provide planned, appropriate and informed support to young people so that they can become involved in the life of the community and ensure opportunities for young people to create their own futures. Quality information, facilitated internet access and support for intensive learning of foreign languages is only one part of the necessary mechanisms of support for young people. Legal regulations and adequate programmes for youth work must become part of the contemporary and active relation of governments to young people.

Young people are most frequently in need of information on employment and education opportunities, as well as leisure activities. Apart from television as the most represented medium for acquiring information, for information on education opportunities, young people most frequently use the internet, while for information on employment, political and cultural events, and scholarships, they most frequently turn to the print media.

With only 30% of households with internet access, BiH is far below the EU average. Two thirds of young people use the internet, which is about 22% less than the EU average, while BiH students and pupils are considerably below the EU average of internet usage in their peer group.

Neglect for young talents in culture and sports

Most young people are dissatisfied with the support of local authorities for organising cultural and sports events. The number of young people dissatisfied with physical education classes exceeds that of those who are satisfied with these classes. Friends and classmates, followed by television, have the highest degree of influence on decisions of young people to participate at cultural events.

Only 7% of young people are involved in sports activities within an organisation or association, and most of them are satisfied with the available sports events. Every fifth young person has spent money on sports or other physical activities in the past month.

The lack of an appropriate approach of government institutions to sports and culture is a direct neglect of young talents.

Shopping, helping out in household chores, watching television and going to cafés are the activities young people spend most of their free time doing.

The lack of legal regulation for support of government institutions to youth work, their leisure, as well as culture and sports has created a stereotype of young people.

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Organisational structure of government institutions responsible for youth issues in BiH

	BiH	RS		FBiH			Brčko Distrikt BiH
		RS	Opštine	FBiH	Kantoni	Općine	
Formal and Nonformal Education, Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Civil Affairs - Sector for education Conference of Education Ministers in BiH and Council for general, secondary vocational and higher education Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance BiH Information and Recognition Centre for higher education Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education Directorate for EU integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education and Culture Pedagogical Institute Agency for standardisation and evaluation Universities Primary and secondary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local self-governance (co-financing of expenses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education and Science Coordination of ministries of education Pedagogical Institute Agency for standardisation and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Pedagogical Institutes Universities Primary and secondary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local self-governance (co-financing of expenses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for education
Employment and Unemployment Measures, Youth Entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Civil Affairs - Sector for work, employment, health, social protection, and pension fund Agency for work and employment Directorate for economic planning Commission for coordination of youth issues in BiH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Work and Protection of Veterans and Invalids (Department for work and employment) Agency for employment and Centre for Employment Support and Active Employment Measures Inspection Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment bureau 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Work and Social Policies (Department for work and employment, Unit for implementation of projects for socio-economic support, training and re-employment) Federal Agency for Employment Inspection Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries of Work Agencies for employment Services for employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment bureau 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for economic development Employment bureau Board for employment Sub-department for human resources and employment
Healthcare, Prevention and Protection, Youth Reproductive Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Civil Affairs - Sector for health Medicines Regulatory Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health and Social Protection Health Insurance Fund Agency for health protection Medicines Regulatory Agency Clinical centres, hospitals, health centres, pharmacies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry for health Health Insurance Fund Agency for public health Medicines Regulatory Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries of Health Health Insurance Agencies Agencies for public health Clinical centres, hospitals, health centres, pharmacies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for health Health Insurance Fund Clinical centres, hospitals, health centres, pharmacies Counselling centre for reproductive health Centre for mental health
Social Protection of Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Civil Affairs Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees Ministry of Justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health and Social Protection Centres for social work or social protection Ministry of spatial planning (housing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centres for social work or social protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry for work and social policies Ministry of spatial planning (housing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries for Social Policies Centres for social work or social protection Ministry of Spatial Planning (housing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centres for social work or social protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for health Centre for social protection Sub-department for refugees, displaced persons, and housing policy
Active Participation of Young People in Public Life, Development of Civil Society and Volunteer Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Justice Ministry of Civil Affairs Commission for coordination of youth issues in BiH Board of civil society Advisory board for youth of BiH Presidency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Family, Sports and Youth Board for youth issues in RS Parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissions or boards for youth issues Youth Referents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry for culture and sport - Centre for youth Commission for youth issues in FBiH Parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory boards for youth (Canton 4 and Canton 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissions or boards for youth issues Advisory boards for youth Youth Referents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sub-department for tourism, culture and sport Youth Referent
Information, Youth Counselling and Working with Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Civil Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs Commission for coordination of youth issues in BiH Directorate for EU integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Family, Sports and Youth Ministry of Health and Social Protection Ministry of Education and Culture Primary and secondary schools Board for youth issues in RS Parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Referents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of work and social policies Ministry for health Ministry of education and science Ministry for culture and sport - Centre for youth Commission for youth issues in FBiH Parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries for social Policies Ministries of Health Ministries of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Primary and secondary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Referents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for health Department for education Youth Referent Primary and secondary schools Counselling centre for reproductive health
Youth Culture, Sports and Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Civil Affairs Commission for coordination of youth issues in BiH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education and Culture Ministry of Family, Sports and Youth Board for youth issues in RS Parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for social affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry for Culture and Sport Commission for youth issues in FBiH Parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departments for education, culture and sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Službe za obrazovanje, kulturu i sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for economic development / Sub-department for tourism, sport and culture

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Analysis of institutional framework and public policies



Formal and Informal Education, Lifelong Learning

→ Introduction and Summary

Today, education is one of the main criteria for competitiveness, wealth and power. Good education can help annul differences in gender, social and other origin relatively quickly.

Apart from employment and the economy, education and training are undoubtedly among the most important elements determining the social and economic position of young people, and the most important elements of youth policies. According to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms¹ (1950), education is a basic human right. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a signatory of this Convention, and therefore obliged to guarantee these rights. Education is also classified among social and economic rights.

Apart from employment and the economy, education and training are undoubtedly among the most important elements determining the social and economic position of young people, and the most important elements of youth policies.

After adopting the Lisbon Strategy (EU 2000)², and through the Bologna³ (EU 1999) and Copenhagen Process⁴ (EU 2002), the European Union instituted education reform as a priority for governments of all Member States.

Due to the sensitive nature and significance of education for the identity and tradition of each Member State, more than 50 years after its founding, the European Union still does not have an official 'joint education policy'. However, there is complete consensus on the EU level about the most important principles, goals and values to be incorporated into and promoted by all education systems.

The aim of the Lisbon Strategy is to develop the economy of the European Union by 2010

"as the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment."⁵

The Bologna Process is therefore the most important and comprehensive higher education reform in Europe. The end result of the Process is the establishment of the European Higher Education Area by 2010 in which student and staff qualification will be recognised throughout the EU enabling greater mobility and facilitating employment.

¹ Council of Europe, *European Convention on Human Rights and Freedoms* (Rome, 1950). http://www.coe.ba/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=45&Itemid=34

² Council of Europe, *The Lisboa Declaration* (Lisboa, 2000). http://consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm

³ European Commission, *European higher education area (The Bologna Declaration)*. (Bologna, 1999). www.unsa.ba/pdf/Bolonjska%20deklaracija.pdf

⁴ European Commission, *Copenhagen Declaration* (Copenhagen, 2002). http://ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc125_en.pdf

⁵ Directorate for European Integrations, *Strategy for integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union* (2006). <http://www.parco.gov.ba/?id=1353>

The part of the BiH EU Integration Strategy (DEI 2006) dealing with the free movement of persons defines additional measures for diploma recognition, as well as the necessary measures for harmonising the BiH education system with the labour market and entrepreneurship needs in BiH. An integral part of this process is harmonising the criteria of higher education institutions with those of the EU. The two latter areas contain the most problems when it comes to young people and education, and these need to be resolved in the period 2008 – 2013.

The BiH Education System will be eligible for participation in various EU programmes, but will have to change its structure and form, as well as its curricula.

In view of the increasing globalisation awaiting the immediate and wider surroundings, as well as BiH itself, improvements in a number of key areas are in the interest of young people (15 to 30):

- **Development of informal education programmes with the purpose of developing the abilities, skills and knowledge of young people, which generally boils down to youth work;**
- **Development of secondary education, as well as secondary vocational education and training with the aim of, on the one hand, acquiring knowledge necessary for further education, and on the other, for creating highly competitive professional abilities for employment;**
- **Development and improvement of university education which will secure highly productive labour force (with higher education) and enable the development of new production processes and the modernisation of the economy as a whole;**
- **Development of the concept of lifelong learning and enabling the improvement of working, as well as the acquiring of new knowledge and abilities.**

The education system in BiH is relatively expensive, however, it does not correspond to the demands of the existing labour market⁶ and cannot facilitate greater investment into the BiH economy. The latter means that potential foreign investors can count on relatively small number of adequate business peers and partners in terms of management. Furthermore, the capacity for knowledge and familiarity with contemporary technological processes is limited in BiH, and the resulting labour force does not correspond to the needs of potential investors.⁷

Youth policies and strategic programmes of overall development policies in BiH must place central focus on this issue. In policy making processes, the education system must take on the responsibility for developing human capacities based on competitiveness. Apart from significant domestic resources devoted to this purpose, BiH will have at its disposal EU pre-accession and accession funds.

Apart from its direct link to the economy and the labour market, education in BiH also has direct repercussions on social cohesion through the following two specific characteristics:

⁶ The Link between Economic Demand and Education Supply in BiH] CEPOS, Sarajevo, Dec. 2005

⁷ Working document *FBIH Employment Strategy* (Sarajevo, 2008).

- The ‘nationalisation’ of curricula that effects the mobility of young people and academic staff, incompatible curricula, in some instances implemented under the slogan of modernisation of the education system, but actually leading to segregation or assimilation;
- Administrative fragmentation of the education system resulting in the existence of 14 ministries and ministers responsible for education.

The latter characteristic has to do with the legal framework regulating this area.

In order to become EU-compatible and competitive, the education system of BiH must urgently begin responding to the concrete demands of the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes. At the same time, it is necessary to develop long-term sustainability by overcoming current political, administrative and other obstacles.

Comprehensive education reform must and can be improved by establishing at least four equally important frameworks: the legislative, institutional, and strategic public policy framework as well as a financial framework. In that respect, the education system in BiH must be based on and developed through close cooperation and coordination between primary and secondary education institutions on all levels. This will entail developing and harmonising laws, education policies, strategies and development plans.

It is important to bear in mind that creating appropriate frameworks is merely a precondition, and not the goal of education reform.

→ Legal Framework

Apart from the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH⁸, the long-awaited Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH⁹ has been adopted, and in mid-2008, the Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training in BiH¹⁰ was also adopted, which makes for a rounded education legislation on the state level in line with the demands of the European Partnership for BiH¹¹. These processes initiate a modern, EU-compatible and future-oriented legal framework. With a comprehensive legal framework—that is implemented—we can expect BiH to become part of the European Higher Education Area¹² and the European Research Area¹³. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure consistent implementation of the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes in higher and secondary education.

In a positive sense, the Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH¹⁴ (FLHE) should contribute to:

- **the integration and strengthening of university autonomy;**
- **significant and obligatory participation of students in the decision making process;**
- **harmonising the three main cycles of study – the undergraduate cycle, the cycle leading to a master’s degree and the cycle leading to a doctoral degree;**
- **harmonising programme evaluation through the introduction of ECTS¹⁵ (Conference**

⁸ Draft Law on primary and secondary education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. BiH Official Gazette number 18/03.

⁹ Draft Law on higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. BiH Official Gazette number 59/07.

¹⁰ Draft Law on secondary technical education (apprenticeship) and training in Bosnia and Herzegovina. BiH Official Gazette number 63/08.

¹¹ Directorate for European Integrations, Action Plan for implementation of priorities set forth in the document European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina (2008). <http://www.dei.gov.ba/ba/?ID=960>

¹² European Education Ministers’ conference, European higher education area (Bergen, 2005). <http://www.unsa.ba/pdf/bergen%20Komunike.pdf>

¹³ European Commission, Toward a European research area. (Brussels, 2000). http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/towards-a-european-research-area_com_2000_en.pdf

¹⁴ www.mcp.gov.ba/admin_zakoni/data/upimages/Draft_Law_on_higher_education_in_BiH-b.doc

¹⁵ European Commission, European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). (2003). http://ci.univ-lille1.fr/english_version/pdf/ects_definition.pdf

of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education 2003), that is, the European Credit Transfer System, and the standardised diploma supplement as well as the diploma itself;

- **easier and faster diploma and qualification recognition through the BiH Information and Recognition Centre (currently being founded);**
- **student and teacher mobility.**

According to this law, through the Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance, BiH is responsible for:

“determining criteria,... giving recommendations on criteria and standards for establishment or termination of higher education institutions... licensing higher education institutions and study programmes,... giving recommendations on the lowest fees for all students at higher education institutions...”

The FLHE stipulated a six-month deadline for harmonising higher education laws in BiH, which was up on 15 February 2008, but has not been fulfilled by either the RS or any canton in FBiH to date (October 2008).

The FLHE also foresees internal integration of universities within a year, but little has been done in this respect. A number of universities have neglected the integration deadline. The Universities in Tuzla and Zenica are positive examples. The Universities in RS started integration processes in line with the Law on Higher Education of RS¹⁶ before the FLHE was adopted.

The Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Training and Education in BiH is aimed at adapting and harmonising education with contemporary trends, as well as involving labour and employment sector representatives and business subjects in the decision making and planning processes.

With the above Laws, BiH is on its way to create a legal framework for the education sector in line with the requirements of future EU integration processes. In order for this framework to be fully rounded and to correspond to EU requirements, apart from the above laws, a state-level Framework Laws on Adult Education and on Lifelong Learning are also needed.

Apart from this set of framework laws necessary for BiH’s accession to the EU in the area of education and training, lower levels of government must urgently pass corresponding laws harmonised with the state-laws, as well as legislation on pupil and student standards and organisations.

However, a significant problem is that harmonisation of legislation on lower levels is seriously lagging behind, so that do date, only the Tuzla Canton has adopted a harmonised Law on Higher Education¹⁷.

An additional problem is that the implementation of education framework laws in BiH lacks surveillance and control, as well as implementation mechanisms. Whether and to what extent framework laws will be implemented is almost entirely left up to the good will of competent authorities at lower levels.

→ Institutional Framework

In line with the administrative organisation of BiH, the key institutions for education reform are all of 13 ministries at the entity, cantonal and Brčko District level. Since 2003, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH has been responsible for coordinating activities in the education sector in BiH, as well as with respect to European integration processes and international cooperation.

Apart from this, the Sector for Education of the Ministry is responsible for inter-sector cooperation, and especially for cooperation with the Direction for European Integration and the Public

¹⁶ The Republika Srpska Law on higher education. Republika Srpska Official Gazette numbers 12/93, 14/94, 99/04, 92/05.

¹⁷ The Law on higher education. Tuzla Canton’s Official Gazette number 8/08.

Administration Reform Coordinator's Office. This Sector also takes the role of a secretariat for the Conference of Education Ministers in BiH, and will take on the role of a secretariat for the Education Councils currently being founded.

The Minister of Civil Affairs is also the Chairperson of the Conference of Education Ministers in BiH. The Conference of 13 ministers responsible for education on the state, entity and cantonal levels and representatives of the Education Department of the Brčko District of BiH was founded on 11 March 2008. The main tasks of this Conference include harmonising:

- **education policies and strategic plans,**
- **education legislation,**
- **the development and creation of education standards,**
- **activities for EU integration,**
- **regional and international cooperation in education.**

The Conference should soon acquire advisory bodies in the form of councils for general, secondary vocational and higher education with representatives of young people.

The Ministry of Education and Science of FBiH does not have original competences in education, but deals with cooperation and coordination with the cantons. The Federal Minister of Education is the Chairperson of the Federal Coordination of Education Ministers made up of cantonal education ministers.

The Ministry of Education and Culture of RS, cantonal ministries of education and the Education Secretariat of the Brčko District of BiH have full original competences in education in their respective administrative territories. These competences include education policy, legislation, administration and financing, implementation of acts adopted on the state or international level, as well as representing the administrative unit in the overall process of education reform.

The role of the municipalities in education is regulated differently in the RS and individual cantons in FBiH. For now, this role is mainly limited to maintenance of school facilities and covering a portion of the material costs.

In line with the EU practice of functional decentralisation and strengthening of the role of the local community in the area of education, the new role of the municipality should include participation in creating part of the curriculum of importance for the local community, about 20% to 25%, as well as a say in the process of staff appointments.

As in the area of youth work and care for young people through extracurricular activities related to culture, sports and leisure, local communities have the opportunity to adapt these equally important educational contents to their own needs for socio-economic development.

There is a risk that due to uneven financial and staff capacities, smaller and poorer municipalities will be unable to fulfil these new competences and organise extracurricular activities.

In terms of preschool, primary and secondary education, the existing pedagogical institutes are responsible for monitoring the quality of education and providing support for its development. These institutions have competences on the entity and cantonal levels.

The BiH level lacks an adequate institutional structure to respond to the needs of higher education. The Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance is currently being founded, and it will be situated in Banja Luka. The Council of Ministers of BiH has appointed the Director of the Agency and will soon appoint its Steering Board. The Agency was founded so as to represent BiH in the European Quality Assurance Network and contribute to fulfilling the requirements of the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area.

Apart from the Agency for the Development of Higher Education, the National Information and Recognition Centre for higher education should also start operating soon. This institution is also

currently being founded, its seat will be in Mostar, and the Council of Ministers of BiH is supposed to appoint an interim Director and Steering Board for the Centre. The Centre will be part of the European Network of Information Centres¹⁸.

When it comes to quality assurance in education and support for its development on lower levels of education, an Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education should soon be founded with a seat in Mostar and departments in Sarajevo and Banja Luka.

Among other things, this state-level Agency will set standards for knowledge by assessing results, which includes a 'national school-leaving exam'. Apart from that, the Agency will develop common core curricula for preschool, primary and both general and vocational secondary education and training, as well as adult education and training and lifelong learning. Additionally, the Agency will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the status of education in BiH, and for preparing and participating in international development projects and research studies in education (TIMSS¹⁹, PISA²⁰).

Apart from all of these institutions and agencies responsible to education, the Direction for European Integration should, together with the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, manage the structural and content harmonisation of the BiH education system in line with the requirements of European integration processes.

→ Public Policy Framework

Characteristic of BiH in the present time are numerous and rapid internal and external changes and challenges including reconstruction and transition, European integration, decentralisation and globalisation. Appropriate changes in education cannot, of course, be the only, but they are a necessary part of responding to all these processes.

The concept of lifelong learning has been developed on a wider European and Global scale as a response to rapid social changes and the transition to a 'knowledge society'²¹, as well as the constant need for acquiring new knowledge and skills. The concept entails continuous acquisition of knowledge throughout life and is realised through formal and informal education and training. Economic changes entail changes in the labour market and structure of professions, and require new knowledge and rapid growth of information technologies.

On the basis of these changes, apart from linguistic and mathematical literacy, at the beginning of the 21st century, the EU defined five new key competencies that must be developed by every education system:

- **Literacy in natural sciences;**
- **Foreign languages;**
- **Information and communications technology competencies;**
- **Technological culture; and**
- **Entrepreneurship and social skills.**

In this context, each individual must learn how to learn, think and act, which requires new ways of planning, implementing, evaluation and quality assurance in education.

The strategic directions of development and education policy in BiH should be adapted to this external context. At the same time, they must also respond to the internal challenges including:

¹⁸ ENIC – European network of information centres vs. NARIC – national recognition and information centre.

¹⁹ www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/timss/timss_home.cfm

²⁰ www.pisa.oecd.org

²¹ European Commission *Knowledge society – homepage*.
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/knowledge_society/index_en.htm

- **an extremely high rate of unemployment and lack of competitiveness of the labour force,**
- **very poor links with the labour and employment sector,**
- **insufficient educational structure and ICT development,**
- **evidently increased social exclusion of children and youth among returnees and rural populations, as well as impoverished groups and groups of persons with disabilities.**

Here we have to stress the extremely high rate fall outs from the further schooling in secondary, as well as in tertiary education. The enrolment rate of young people in secondary education in BiH is 76.2%, of which only 54% complete secondary school in the foreseen timeframe. Only 20 % of secondary school students complete general secondary education, and only 30% of those enrolled in secondary vocational schools complete four-year schooling. The enrolment rate of young people in higher education is only 24%, of which only 10% complete their studies in the foreseen timeframe²².

Apart from the above, the new education strategy titled “Strategic Directions of Development of Education in BiH and Implementation Plan for 2008-2015” lists the following as main directions of development in education:

- **improved effectiveness, equal access and fairness in education and training;**
- **expanding opportunities for adult education and training;**
- **modernisation of teaching and learning on all levels of education;**
- **developing links between the world of education and the world of labour;**
- **compulsory continuous professional development for teaching and administrative staff of educational institutions,**
- **public administration coordination in the education sector.**

When it comes to young people, this concretely means drastic changes in secondary and higher education. The reform process of secondary vocational education in BiH is being implemented since 1999 through EU projects, but with very limited results. In line with the BiH Development Strategy for Secondary Vocational Education and Training 2007-2013²³ next guideline has to be implemented:

“vocational education and training are a key generator of economic and social recovery and further development of BiH, as well as its integration into EU and global processes.”

One of the goals of development of vocational education and training is:

“ensuring a capable labour force and support for innovations in production.”

In reality, this segment of education is currently perhaps the most problematic: the fragmentation of professional profiles in vocational education, of which at least half are completely irrelevant and unnecessary. On the one hand, this considerably increases expenses, while on the other, students completing the education do not acquire the necessary general knowledge and skills and are not prepared for entering the labour market or for continuing their education.

In line with EU standards, the main strategic goals at this level of education are:

- **increase secondary school enrolment to 90%, of which enrolment in classic secondary schools and four-year vocational schools should be increased to 80%,**

²² BiH Council of Ministers, *Strategic directions of development of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with an implementation plan, 2008 – 2015*. (2008). http://www.mcp.gov.ba/admin_zakoni_hr/data/upimages/Strategija_HRVATSKI_JEZIK.doc

²³ *Strategy for development of the secondary technical/apprenticeship education and training for the period 2007-2013*. BiH Official Gazette number 65/07.

- **ensure opportunities for continuing education, i.e. transition from three-year to four-year vocational education, and**
- **introduce compulsory school-leaving exam at the end of four-year secondary education.**
- **in vocational schools, the goal is to develop less specialised and more flexible education able to rapidly adapt to labour market needs, as well as to develop a qualifications framework for lifelong learning in line with the so-called European Qualifications Framework²⁴.**

The main strategic goals at this level of education are:

- **increase enrolment in higher education to the level of the regional average of at least 32%,**
- **implement the Lisbon Convention (through the work of the National Information and Recognition Centre currently being founded),**
- **implement functional integration of universities in line with the Bologna Process,**
- **establish and develop a unique system of three study cycles (with consistent introduction of master’s and PhD study cycles),**
- **establish and develop a system for quality assurance and control,**
- **link higher education with scientific and research work,**
- **enable student and teacher mobility through consistent introduction of the ECTS, and**
- **adopt a qualifications framework in higher education on the BiH level²⁵.**

In terms of ensuring equal access to education and prevention of poverty and social exclusion, the first thing that must be done is to improve the student standard.

The new education strategy treats adult education and training as one of its main priorities. In terms of lifelong learning, adult education and training contributes to social cohesion and greater competitiveness on the labour market by becoming an integral part of the education process and system organised around the principles of general openness and accessibility.

In the whole of BiH, this segment of the education system comprises only a few institutions offering professional development or adult education and training. The criteria and standards for this level of education must be developed on the state level with a focus on decreasing illiteracy and expanding adult secondary education. The priority target groups are adults who have not completed primary or secondary school, adults with secondary school certificates insufficient for the needs of the labour market, persons with special needs or socially marginalised and vulnerable groups (Roma, returnees, the indigent, etc.), as well as all those who wish to advance and develop their knowledge and skills.

In view of the wide range of needs, a network of various education institution will have to be developed in conjunction with other providers of education services (e.g. private business). A domestic qualifications framework needs to be developed in line with the European Qualifications Framework.

As mentioned above, in the summer of 2008, the Council of Ministers of BiH adopted a new Education Strategy for the period up to 2015. Prior to adoption, the Strategy was reviewed and approved by those involved in its development and those who will be tasked with its

²⁴ “Strategic Directions of Development of Education in BiH and Implementation Plan for 2008-2015”, adopted by CoM on 3 June 2008

²⁵ “Strategic Directions of Development of Education in BiH and Implementation Plan for 2008-2015”, adopted by CoM on 3 June 2008

implementation: international and domestic experts from all education segments and all parts of BiH, ministries of education in the entities, the cantons and the Brčko District through their newly founded Conference of Education Ministers of BiH.

Since there is consensus on the BiH level about the necessity of European integration processes, including those related to education, in the upcoming period, the priority of the Conference should be a systematic introduction of European standards, the European dimension and European contents into the BiH education system.

As for the standards, they primarily pertain to secondary vocational education and training, and the implementation of the Copenhagen Process, as well as to higher education and the implementation of the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Convention.

As for the European dimension and contents, this particularly pertains to higher education, that is, subjects and curricula dealing with European law, economics, politics, institutions, and EU languages. These contents are intended to prepare young people for concrete work on EU integration processes. Unfortunately, at the moment only a small number of faculties offer this type of contents as part of their undergraduate and graduate study programmes.

In view of the possibilities and perspectives for the development of higher education within and for European integration, it should be noted that small higher education systems, such as the one in BiH, simply cannot develop on their own. They cannot reach the necessary degree of quality in higher education, science and research in all the disciplines and programmes needed for harmonious development of the individual, the state, society, culture and the economy.

Sustainability and progress within the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education and Research Area would be made a lot easier if higher education institutions were to join forces and develop their programmes on the BiH level before going on to the regional level, primarily within the *mutual intelligibility* zone (Croatia, BiH, Serbia and Montenegro). This would make for the most efficient use of institutional, human and financial resources. At the same time, this is the most effective way to satisfy the economic and social needs of these countries.

Another priority should be the development of international cooperation and exchange, and a greater availability of so-called *joint degree* programmes implemented jointly at domestic and foreign higher education institutions. These programmes, along with automatic diploma recognition, simultaneously contribute to quality assurance and stimulate student and teacher mobility.

There are few such programmes in BiH. One of the rare successful exceptions is the Centre for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies of the University in Sarajevo (ACIPS), which has offered a varied of joint degree programmes since 1999. Programmes are implemented in cooperation with some of the best European and American higher education institution. This Centre can serve as an example for other higher education institutions to develop similar programmes.

When it comes to the obstacles on the way to this type of reform, among the most prominent is the exceptionally low level of availability and use of information technologies at all levels of education. Apart from that, the low level of knowledge of foreign languages among professors and students is an obstacle in terms of access to research and scientific texts. The latter is particularly pertinent if we take into account that in the future students would be required to spend a semester studying not only away from their university, but outside their country and their linguistic area. This is a necessary precondition for the active participation of BiH in EU programmes for development and exchange in higher education, such as for example *Erasmus* and *Socrates*).

→ Financial Framework

Education in BiH is almost exclusively financed from public budgets: of the entities, cantons, the Brčko District of BiH, and in some cases from municipality budgets as well. The amount of funds allocated from the CoM BiH budget is minimal. Although the percentage of budget allocations for education is relatively high, the resources are insufficient because the budgets themselves are relatively meagre. The budget allocation for education in RS is 4%, in FBiH it is 6%, while the Brčko District allocates 11.2% of its total budget for education²⁶.

On all levels of education, there are great discrepancies in budget funds per pupil or student, as well as in terms of salaries for staff employed in this sector. The budget mainly finances the gross salaries and other remunerations for employees, as well as material costs. The criteria for financial planning in primary and secondary education are almost uniform throughout BiH. Resources for salaries and remunerations are planned on the basis of the number of employees, with a view to pedagogical standards, and the number of classes and class hours, which goes against the main European trend of planning on the basis of the number of pupils and students.

The planning of material costs coverage is mainly based on the criteria of consumption of energy and public utilities. Depreciation costs for equipment and buildings are not planned at all, and the same could practically be said of capital investments. Of the total planned budget allocations for education, on average 88% is allocated for gross salaries and remuneration, 8% for material costs, and 4% on capital investments²⁷. After the war, most devastated and damaged education facilities were reconstructed with donor resources. The availability of such resources today is minimal.

Every reform process has its price. It is, therefore, necessary to increase funding for certain segments and purposes in education, such as for example secondary vocational education and training and the improvement of quality in education. Sources of self-financing are becoming increasingly important for educational institutions, as evidenced particularly in the sector of higher education.

Despite initial resistance, the treasury system of education financing has mainly proven to be successful and has increased transparency and accountability in the spending of both public and own funds.²⁸

In the period from 1997 to 2005, the birth-rate in BiH decreased by 43.3%²⁹. The paradox is that we are at the same time faced with an increased percentage of unemployed young people.

With the reduced birth-rate and consequently reduced number of schoolchildren and young people, urgent adaptations are needed, i.e. it is necessary to develop a new network of primary and secondary schools, and the funds saved in this manner can then be used for other purposes. Already in comparison to the EU average, BiH has a surplus of classes and teachers for its number of pupils (in the EU 1:20, in BiH 1:14 in primary schooling), which means an unwarranted surplus of expenditure per pupil.

Reporting on and monitoring of efficiency in financing education in line with international standards is not developed on the school, cantonal and entity levels, while it is practically non-existent on the state level. One of the obstacles in this respect is the lack of statistical data and indicators for education. Education authorities should cooperate with statistic institutes on their respective levels in order to develop education statistics in line with the procedures and requirements of the European Commission and EUROSTAT. In that way the entry indicators will be established in order to develop necessary programs.

²⁶ "Strategic Directions of Development of Education in BiH and Implementation Plan for 2008-2015"

²⁷ "Strategic Directions of Development of Education in BiH and Implementation Plan for 2008-2015"

²⁸ *The Law on Treasury of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, FBiH Official Gazette numbers. 58/02, 19/03; 14/00.

²⁹ "Strategic Directions of Development of Education in BiH and Implementation Plan for 2008-2015"



Unemployment and Youth Entrepreneurship

→ Uvod

→ Introduction

The complexity of the unemployment problem and a lack of policies as well as slow reforms, especially in the education system, have put the youth population into a long-term disadvantaged position and have made the BiH economy non-competitive.

All the gathered data indicate that unemployment is the *major problem* when it comes to young people in BiH.

Despite these indicators and repeated studies and surveys undertaken in the last years clearly marking youth unemployment as a major issue, this area lacks adequate policies both in terms of employment and in terms of support to youth entrepreneurship in BiH.

At the end of 2006 the Commission presented a Study on Youth Employment in BiH³⁰. As an indirect result of the findings from this study in 2008 and 2009 a number of important initiatives have been undertaken by international development agencies regarding youth employment.

The complexity of the unemployment problem and a lack of policies as well as slow reforms, especially in the education system, have put the youth population into a long-term disadvantaged position and have made the BiH economy non-competitive.

An overview of findings on youth employment and entrepreneurship can be found in the following explanation from the report of the Delegation of the European Commission to the EU Council on progress in BiH in the realm of employment and social policy³¹:

„Unemployment among young people is more than 60% (Labour Force Survey – LFS – 2006), and most of them are unemployed for a longer period. Only 13.4% of unemployed have been unemployed for less than 12 months; half of the unemployed have been unemployed for over 2 years and a fifth for over 5 years.”

The same EC report also states the following:

“Little progress has been made regarding employment policies - No State-level Action Plan for Employment has been established.

The labour market situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains worrying in the whole country.

³⁰ Davorin Pavelić, *Study on youth employment in BiH* (Commission for coordination of youth issues in BiH: Consortium of Italian organizations – CISP, 2006).

³¹ Commission of European communities, *The 2007 Progress Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Brussels, 2007), 38. <http://www.delbih.ec.europa.eu/files/docs/reports/bih>

There is no job creation to absorb the growing labour force.

Informality remains high.

The employment rate remains at very low levels (29.7%, Labour Force Survey – LFS – 2006).

Unemployment already at extremely high level continues to increase. The unemployment rate stood at 31% (LFS based) in 2006.”

A study about youth conducted at the beginning of 2008³² indicates the unemployment rate of 58,5% among this population.

The Labour Force Survey³³ (LFS – Statistics Agency of BiH 2007) provides the following data:

„The unemployment rate is highest among young people aged 15 to 24. It amounted to 58.4%, of which 55.6% referred to men and 63.1% to women.”

Some major reasons for the difficult labour market situation have been pointed out before:

“there is no job creation to absorb the growing labour force”³⁴.

Unemployment is partially inherited from the previous system (in 1991, the unemployment rate was 24% in BiH)³⁵, as well as the following characteristic of the BiH economy:

“the unfavourable economic structure is based on sectors of low added value and characterised by the predominance of basic and raw material economic branches.”³⁶

On the other hand, the transition process has so far been extremely disadvantageous for the BiH economy. Apart from the repercussions of the conflict and their negative effect on all segments of society, there is also the following discourse:

“Activities of government bodies in the past nine years have mainly revolved around the process of ‘privatisation’ of public enterprises.

Since government bodies in BiH have not focused on the financial, organisational and managerial restructuring and modernisation of public enterprises, the result is the destruction of over half of all such enterprises and a tremendous loss of jobs.”³⁷

³² Commission for coordination of youth issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina and GTZ, *Analysis of the position of youth and the youth sector in BiH* (Sarajevo, 2008). <http://www.mlad.gov.ba/images/stories/aktuelnosti/Analiza%20polozaja%20mladih%20i%20omladinskog%20sektora%20u%20BiH%5B1%5D.pdf>

³³ BiH Statistics Agency, *Survey on labor force 2007*. (2007). <http://www.bhas.ba/ankete/radnaSnaga.pdf>

³⁴ Commission of European communities, *The 2007 Progress Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina*. (Brussels, 2007), 38. <http://www.delbih.ec.europa.eu/files/docs/reports/bih>

³⁵ Working document *FBIH Employment Strategy* (Sarajevo, 2008).

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Coordinator of the Association of Independent Economists, Manojlo Babić, Sarajevo, 30 October 2008

The following assessment deals with the same topic:

“Large public enterprises that used to be the main sources of employment have either stopped operating or operate with 20% of their pre-war capacities, waiting either for privatisation and/or restructuring.”³⁸

Finally, one of the causes of unemployment in BiH is given below:

“The processes of establishing new enterprises and developing entrepreneurship have not been strong enough to mitigate the great loss of jobs.”³⁹

The above circumstances mean that BiH needs a much higher rate of growth of its gross domestic product than the 5.5% average annual growth from the past few years⁴⁰. Only then would the employment rate in BiH increase.

On top of that, the second half of 2008 brought to the surface the world financial and economic crisis that is bound to negatively affect the BiH economy for sure. A reduced GDP growth rate is expected, which will make the unemployment problem even worse in the future.

An additional labour market characteristic in BiH is that of dualism – the existence of a formal and informal labour market. The overall situation in the BiH economy has given rise to an informal labour market generating the greatest number of new jobs. It is precisely these low-quality jobs, without the rights accorded to those who are formally employed, that recruit a significant number of young people in the labour market. Recent research findings on young people speak to this effect:

“One out of five employed young people does not have a signed contract with his/her employer. According to this indicator, the informal labour market is somewhat more extensive in FBiH (23%) than in RS (16%).

On average, young people with work experience spend two thirds of their total employment as registered, and one third as unregistered employees.”⁴¹

The key characteristic of the existing institutional framework in employment is its inadequacy. Employment services and bureaus have an inadequate role, inadequate working conditions and serve government bodies as services to keep records of the social needs of citizens. In most cases, young people register with the bureaus solely for the purpose of health insurance. On the other hand, the social security network for unemployed young people in BiH is non-existent⁴². There is also a lack of qualified staff, a problem shared by the relevant ministries.

The key problem with the legal framework is that the laws pertaining to this matter are not implemented. There is also room for improvement in terms of the legal provisions for employment contracts, minimal wages, and sought minimum experience.

In order to alleviate the present pressing unemployment problem one must consider that:

“Youth employment cannot be regarded as a separate matter outside the context of the overall economic and labour market situation in the country.”⁴³

It is, therefore, necessary to make economic development the No. 1 priority for the entire country.

However, the poor economic situation in BiH creates increasing problems in the long term of which the lack of perspective for young people is most distressful. This resulted in the exodus of young people – brain drain:

³⁸ Working document ‘FBiH Employment Strategy’ 2008

³⁹ Working document ‘FBiH Employment Strategy’ 2008

⁴⁰ Directorate for the economic development BiH

⁴¹ GTZ, Commission for coordination of youth issues in BiH, *Analysis of the position of youth and youth sector in BiH*, 2008.

⁴² Pavelić, *Study of youth employment in BiH*.

⁴³ Study on Youth Employment in BiH. Commission – Cisp, 2006

“In the period of 1996 – 2002, some 100,000 young people left BiH.”⁴⁴

Further statements from the RS Small and Medium Enterprises Development Strategy for 2006-2010⁴⁵, underline the brain drain:

“Many entrepreneurial and promising young people still go abroad to start their careers. The government has not established measures to keep them in the country, such as for example providing support to the development of youth entrepreneurship.”

And in a recent research study on youth in BiH⁴⁶, the data pertaining to this matter shows similar findings:

73% of young people would leave BiH either for the purposes of education or temporary employment, marriage or permanent settlement in a foreign country.

67% of young people would leave BiH for at least one of the above reasons excluding education.

9% of young people, 13% from FBiH and 5% from RS have already undertaken concrete steps to leave the country.

According to Dr Howard Williamson⁴⁷: **“With findings like these, government bodies must create and implement youth policies.”⁴⁸**

However, as in other areas of significance for young people, there is no programmatic or structured approach to improving the situation. Cooperation between the relevant stakeholders is weak both on the horizontal and the vertical plain leaving a large proportion of available resources unused.

In many respects the education system in BiH contributes to the dismal situation in this area. Since unemployment and youth education are directly related, lagging education system reforms lead to a weak link with the labour market and future labour demands. Therefore, the main assessments characterising the BiH education system in relation to the labour market are as follows⁴⁹:

I. Poor quality education system;

II. An education system preparing young people for professions that are not in demand on the labour market;

III. An education system based on poor knowledge, providing a certain degree of theoretical knowledge, but without a practical component of learning.

The lack of a practical component in education, as well as the overall lack of internship opportunities leaves young people unprepared for employment. On the other hand, the low level of labour productivity in BiH negatively affects competitiveness.⁵⁰ Additionally the education system does not provide support or training for young people in terms of easing their transition from school to employment.⁵¹

⁴⁴ UNDP, *Youth in BiH 2003*. (2003). http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/bridges/bosnia/UNDP_Mladi.pdf

⁴⁵ Agency for development of small and medium enterprises in Republika Srpska, *Strategy for development of small and medium enterprises in Republika Srpska for the period 2006-2010*. (Banja Luka, 2006).

⁴⁶ *Analysis of the position of youth and the youth sector in BiH*.

⁴⁷ Professor of European Youth Policy. University of Glamorgan. Wales, United Kingdom. Since 2002 he has been the UK's nominated **expert** for the Council of Europe's network of **youth**

⁴⁸ Belgrade, October 2008 Regional Conference on Youth Issues under the patronage of VE, EU and the Serbian Ministry of Youth and Sports.

⁴⁹ Pavelić, *Study of youth employment in BiH*.

⁵⁰ Working document ‘FBiH Employment Strategy’ Sarajevo, 2008

⁵¹ Working document *FBiH Employment Strategy*.

Data from the Labour Force Survey (2007) indicate that more than two thirds of the unemployed, or 69.9% have secondary school or lower levels of education, while 26.1% are persons with primary education. The proportion of those with higher education or university degrees among the unemployed is only 4.1%.⁵²

This immediately brings to light the inadequacy of some past employment programmes in BiH⁵³ geared at highly educated young people. Young people with higher education degrees are able to find quality jobs in the formal sector in BiH. Actually young people with secondary school and lower levels of education should be given priority for government supported internship programs since their position is one of greater disadvantage and vulnerability.

In most cases young people correctly perceive the main problems regarding their job perspective. The "Study on Youth Employment in BiH" clearly reflects the problems of young people⁵⁴. It is the first comprehensive document to deal with youth employment issues. Focus group interviews were held in June and July 2006 in the following municipalities: Donji Vakuf, Bugojno, Novi Travnik, Vitez, Fojnica, Busovača, Sokolac, Višegrad, Teslić and Bihać. Young people pointed at these issues as the major obstacles to secure employment:

- **Poor economic situation in the country and no job vacancies in their communities;**
- **Corruption and personal ties, mostly related to jobs in public administration;**
- **Insufficient capabilities for contemporary working conditions stemming from the education process;**
- **Inability to fulfil the (sought) work experience criterion.**

It should be noted that although all the participants in the focus groups were registered with employment bureaus as unemployed, almost half of them were informally employed and in some municipalities this was the case for the majority of the participants. Furthermore, although formally unemployed, only a handful had actually sought employment in the previous two months.

This feedback from young people shows that claims regarding the widespread grey economy and informal employment, as well as the lack of active young people in the labour market are realistic. An assessment dealing with the "Shadow Economy in BiH" says that the grey economy accounts for 57.74% of the GDP⁵⁵. According to the LSMS⁵⁶, **more than 18% of the total number of those employed in the informal sector are people below the age of 25.**

Forced passivity of young job seekers:

- **Young people from the focus groups 'admitted' to their passivity when it comes to seeking employment in the formal sector and pointed out that there were no vacancies in their communities. Almost half the young people are discouraged after a long period of failing to find work and they become inactive. Although employed at temporary and informal jobs, some of them have up to 9 years of work experience without ever having been registered.**

Poor work conditions in the informal sector:

- **The high inactivity rate among young people is the result of inadequacy of the government system of support and the lack of assistance for young people in their transition from unemployment to employment.**
- **Additionally, many young people employed in the informal sector have been in situations where they worked for a few months, but never received any pay or only**

⁵² BiH Statistics Agency, *Survey on labor force 2007* (2007). <http://www.bhas.ba/ankete/radnaSnaga.pdf>

⁵³ CEPOS, *Effects of the program of incentives for employment of youth with high education* (Sarajevo, 2005).

⁵⁴ Pavelić, *Study of youth employment in BiH*.

⁵⁵ Pavelić, *Study of youth employment in BiH*.

⁵⁶ BiH Statistics Agency, *Survey on labor force 2007*. (2007). <http://www.bhas.ba/ankete/radnaSnaga.pdf>

received half their pay. This has been confirmed by focus groups in all the municipalities and it seems this 'model' is widespread in BiH.

Corruption, nepotism and inequity based on rights of young people, or gender:

- **According to focus group testimonies, the two main obstacles for young people in obtaining employment in the public sector are corruption and lack of work experience. Additionally, official and regular jobs are kept for those with strong family, personal and political ties.**
- **Young people are expected to pay money for employment. This practice is especially widespread in state institutions and public enterprises that offer salaries above the average.**
- **The labour market in BiH still does not function on the basis of competence, because apart from the corruption and nepotism widespread in this area, there are many other criteria such as ethnic, political and social that one must fulfil in order to get the job.**
- **There are also problems with employers wanting to mostly hire young unmarried women without family obligations and with no plans for marriage in the foreseeable future.**

It is because of the above facts that most focus group participants in all the municipalities believe that skills, the level and type of education play no role in ensuring better employment opportunities. It is, therefore, unsurprising that a third of young people do not complete their secondary education leading them into a vicious circle of social exclusion and poverty⁵⁷.

→ Legal Framework

According to the findings of the study on youth employment, labour laws in BiH seem modern and partially in line with EU legislation⁵⁸.

However, the main problem when it comes to young people is that these laws are not applied. Young people are illegally employed without an employment contract. Without a contract, they cannot prove their work experience and therefore they cannot initiate procedures to realise their rights, especially after being made redundant. These rights include: access to legal aid, registration with the employment bureau or agency, initiating the procedure for realising the right to unemployment benefits, regulating health insurance, etc.

The system determining minimal wages has a negative effect on labour mobility especially that of young and non-qualified workers - the two groups with the greatest problem in terms of employment in the informal sector. This is because the system relies on collective contracts over which private sector employees hold little sway.

To improve the employability of young people the World Bank has proposed introducing minimum wages⁵⁹. The recommendation aims to solve the problem of high unemployment rates among young people and the existing obstacles young people face when seeking employment in the formal sector.

Although labour laws in BiH determine that workers have the right to health protection and other forms of social security, as stated above, the failure to implement these laws puts young people who make up the largest portion of those employed in the informal sector, into a very disadvantaged position.

There are also limitations when it comes to mediation in finding employment. In view of the fact that the role of public employment services is minor, there is considerable room for improvement

⁵⁷ Centres for Civil Initiatives, 15 October 2008 <http://www.ccibh.org/main.php>

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ BiH Labour Market Update, November 2005, World Bank

in this area, for example to legally enable job placements through private employment agencies.

And finally, young people have little opportunity to find employment in the public sector, because the existing legislation requires a minimum of two years of previous work experience. Since most young people have no proof of formal employment, this automatically disqualifies them for employment in the public sector – not even qualified voluntary work based on trainings for volunteers is recognised and accepted as job experience.

→ Institutional Framework

The state institutions directly responsible for the employment and labour sector are the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH (MCA BiH) with its responsible Department for labour, employment, healthcare, social protection and the pension fund, and the Agency for Labour and Employment of BiH. The primary task of both these bodies is coordinating administrative bodies from lower levels of government and cooperation with relevant international organisations.

The vertical review of the employment sector in BiH that defines the main functions of the Agency for Labour and Employment states the following:

“The main functions of the Agency for Labour and Employment of BiH include inter alia international representation and cooperation under the leadership of MCA BiH and in cooperation with the entities. The Agency assists MCA BiH in preparing for EU accession, provides technical support to the entities in planning and implementing measures for an active labour market, labour market assessment and surveillance and evaluation of projects and programmes in the labour market, as well as assisting MCA BiH in the implementation of the information system for the whole of BiH in line with EU, EURES and ILO standards.”⁶⁰

Apart from MCA BiH and the Agency for Labour and Employment, there are two more standing bodies within the Council of Ministers crucial for developing youth employment policies: the Direction for Economic Planning and the Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Direction for Economic Planning was established in September 2006 as a standing body of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina in line with the Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law on the Council of Ministers of BiH⁶¹. Its departments for economic research and coordination of preparations, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of development documents and social inclusion work on matters of entrepreneurship, employment, the labour market and social inclusion. The Direction is also responsible for creating two strategic documents: the BiH Development Strategy for 2008-2013 and the Social Inclusion Strategy.

In line with the Decision on its founding (CM BiH 295/04), the Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH started working at the beginning of 2006. The role of the Commission is to contribute to the adoption of the main principles for coordinating youth activities, harmonise the plans of entity bodies related to young people, define the youth strategy on an international level, analyse youth issues in BiH, coordinate youth projects and gather and disseminate information relevant to young people.⁶²

In cooperation with the consortium of Italian non-governmental organisations led by CISP, in December 2006, the Commission compiled the Study on Youth Employment (Commission, CISP 2006). This was the first study on youth of its kind compiled for use by BiH institutions. The indirect results of the work of the Commission and its study are two youth employment initiatives by international agencies in BiH (YEP and YERP) to be realised from 2008 to 2011.

⁶⁰ Vertical overview of the employment sector in BiH; <http://www.europa.ba>

⁶¹ Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law on the Council of Ministers of BiH, Official Gazette 81/06

⁶² Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH www.mladi.gov.ba

In FBiH responsibility for employment is shared between the Government of FBiH and the cantons. The relevant institutions on the level of FBiH are the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Federal Agency for Employment and the Inspection Services. The key bodies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy are: the Department for Labour and Employment and the Unit for Implementing Socio-Economic Aid Projects, Training and Re-Employment. The responsibilities of the Federal Agency for Employment are stipulated by the Law on Employment and Unemployment of FBiH and include coordination, harmonisation, statistical data on the labour market and unemployment in FBiH.

All the cantons have ministries responsible for labour and employment issues, as well as agencies for labour and employment and /or a network of employment services. Cantonal employment services and the Federal Agency for Employment are financed from the income tax so that 70% of the funds are allocated to the cantonal employment service, while 30% are allocated to the Federal Agency for Employment. Cantonal employment services are obliged to report to the Federal Agency for Employment on a monthly basis. Apart from registering unemployed persons, gathering data, mediating in finding employment and, as of recently, implementing measures of active seeking of employment, cantonal services are also responsible for providing social protection to the unemployed.

The administrative body responsible for employment in RS is the Ministry of Labour, Veterans and Disability Protection – Department of Labour and Employment. RS also has an Inspectorate and Agency for Employment with six regional centres of which each is responsible for a certain number of municipal employment bureaus. The Centre for Employment Support and Active Employment Measures within the Central Services of the RS Agency for Employment are crucial for the creation of youth employment policies.

The Brčko District of BiH used to have three employment bureaus, but now has a one Employment Bureau. According to the Law on Employment, the Bureau is responsible for employment, unemployment insurance, unemployment rights and the preconditions for realising them, as well as keeping records of persons seeking employment. The Section for Economic Development of the Department for Economic Development, Sports and Culture deals with the matter of business development including youth entrepreneurship.

Although responsible for young people, institutions responsible for labour and employment lack the capacities to deal with youth employment issues.

Employment services and bureaus have an inadequate role, inadequate working conditions and serve government bodies as services to keep records of the social needs of citizens. There is also the problem of a lack of qualified staff shared by the relevant ministries⁶³.

The key problem is that policies that should be coordinated and programmed so as to make the best use of sparse resources are simply non-existent, both on the state, the entity and the cantonal level in BiH. Therefore, the institutional framework in this area is not pragmatic, efficient or effective.

The results of the project “Employment Policy Reform and Establishment of the Labour Market Information System” (EuropeAid/123680/C/SER/BA) financed by the European Union are expected in 2008. This project will contribute to the development of Employment Strategies on the levels of RS, FBiH, and the Brčko District of BiH.

It is expected that the above project will support the institutional framework in this area to efficiently monitor unemployment and employment data, as well as data on labour market trends and demands, which has not been the case thus far. It was also not the case with the youth population.

Educational institutions do not contribute to the systematic promotion of youth entrepreneurship and do not offer young people the necessary business skills. There are a small number of economics faculties, secondary schools and secondary vocational schools from the PHARE VET programme that offer specific education for entrepreneurship. As it is stressed earlier, slow reforms in the education system, directly negatively affects young people.

⁶³ Pavelić, *Study of youth employment in BiH*.

→ **Public Policy Framework**

International organisations have adopted a number of declarations about the position of young people, appealing to governments to adopt and implement policies, strategies and action plans to improve the position of young people in the labour market⁶⁴.

One such document is the Millennium Declaration appealing to governments to “develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.”

In 2002, the UN General Secretary initiated the creation of a Youth Employment Network. Based on this initiative, in December 2002, the General Assembly adopted a Resolution on promoting youth employment. This Resolution encourages member states to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment.

As a result of this Resolution, guidelines for preparing the national reviews and action plans were sent to all UN member states in March 2003 and governments were invited to submit their action plans to the UN Secretariat no later than March 2004.

Apart from the above initiatives, it is worth mentioning two other documents that define the framework and provide recommendations and guidelines for issues to be addressed in terms of youth employment.

At the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, convened by Portugal in cooperation with the United Nations, in Lisbon, in August 1998, governments committed to developing and implementing national youth policies, and Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes was adopted on 12.08.1998. The Lisbon Declaration defines the framework for national youth policies and this framework addresses the issues of youth participation, development, education, employment, health, substance abuse and addiction.

The development, design and implementation of youth employment policies and programmes should be based on regular research on youth unemployment that would also take into account the labour market trends and demands. In the section devoted to youth employment, the Declaration proposes that national youth policies should ensure equal opportunities for paid work for young women and young men, as well as equal protection from discrimination. The Declaration accords great importance to creating a partnership between public authorities, the private sector and educational institutions, along with civil society initiatives for the purpose of promoting youth employment. Governments should promote employment-oriented education and training and ensure that education is continuously adapted to the changing economic environment.

Education and training institutions should provide young people with career counselling.

Governments should also invest in the entrepreneurial capacity of young people, providing them with the skills and resources necessary to start their own businesses, with a special focus on rural areas.

The semi-annual report (2004) on the BiH Midterm Development Strategy (PRSP) states that unemployment is probably the greatest problem affecting young people. However, young people are not treated as a separate age group in this document.

The BiH-level the Study on Youth Employment in BiH (Commission, CISP 2006) is the most comprehensive analysis of the position of young people in relation to unemployment conducted to date.

In the section devoted to youth employment policies, the Study's author Davorin Pavelić provides a number of recommendations. Although the document was publicly promoted in December

⁶⁴ Pavelić, *Study of youth employment in BiH*.

2006 under the auspices of the Commission and the Member of the Presidency Mr Željko Komšić, and with the financial support of CISP and Cooperazione Italiano, the findings from the Study have not been applied in any development document created by governments in BiH. This confirms the following two statements: a) young people are not a priority to governments in BiH; b) there is no coordinated and programmatic public sector approach to these issues.

In the action programme of the FBiH Government, 'Action Policy and Main Strategies of the FBiH Government in the Mandate Period of 2007-2010', young people are mentioned in only a few places. Still, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has announced its participation in creating Action Plans for Employment on the BiH level that will include young people, Roma, etc⁶⁵. This activity is related to the project "Employment Policy Reform and Establishment of the Labour Market Information System" financed by the EU.

Young people have similar representation in the document 'RS Development Programme 2007-2010'⁶⁶. Still, in its 'Small and Medium Enterprises Development Strategy of RS for the period 2006-2010', the RS Government correctly detects the main obstacles to SME development as follows:

“Lack of motivation on the part of young people to start up their own businesses is due to the inadequate education process for entrepreneurship purposes, and due to the underdeveloped market and marketing orientation in business.

Many entrepreneurial and promising young people still go abroad to start their careers. The government has not established measures to keep them in the country, such as for example providing support to the development of youth entrepreneurship.

Programmes for developing creative youth entrepreneurship are lacking.”

The document proposes a range of measures, and parts of them rightly refer to the education system.

Also, item 23 of the 'Action Programme of the RS Government for 2008' foresees the development of a "Special Programme for Youth Employment"⁶⁷, and sets the implementation deadline for May-June 2008.

The above circumstances contributed to the following assessment from the Study on Youth Employment (Commission, CISP 2006):

“Slow transition to a market economy, rather sloppy implementation of structural reforms and an unfavourable business environment are the obstacles to achieving sustainable economic development and creating jobs.”

In order to illustrate the necessary policies lacking in BiH, it is worthwhile to take up the example from Ireland. The former minister of finances in the Irish Government, Charlie McCreevy sees the reasons for their success as follows⁶⁸:

“I think that of all the countries we were the best at most effectively using EU funds. But this stemmed from the fact that we had good programmes, we knew what we wanted, and at the same time we had an effective and top-quality administration.

Also important was the state's decision to allocate extensive funds for education.

Today's young people are far better educated than their predecessors. With the openness of our economy, this proved to be the most attractive bait for (foreign) investors.

⁶⁵ Politics of action and main strategies of the FBiH Government in the mandated period 2007.-2010. . <http://www.fbihvlada.gov.ba>

⁶⁶ Republika Srpska's Government. *The RS Development Program 2007-2010*. (Banja Luka, 2007). www.komorars.ba/bbm_azzuro/dokument.php?id=1350

⁶⁷ RS Government. *The RS Government's Work Plan for 2008*. (Banja Luka, 2008).

⁶⁸ Charlie McCreevy, *Jutarnji list*, 21.09.2007.

The tax policy is only part of the package that attracted investors. This package also includes sound regulations, an open market and an educated labour force, to name only the most important elements.”

This development policy example from Ireland stresses the direct link between the policies for the development of human resources with the overall development of the country. Stimulating education reforms is directly linked to economic growth and development.

In today's globalised world, a highly productive and educated labour force is the main competitive advantage a country can have. In order to attract foreign investors and enable greater investment domestically, a highly productive and educated labour force is needed, which also includes good managers.

On the other hand, this type of labour force is also necessary for the development of small and medium enterprises including youth entrepreneurship.

However, the main condition for positive changes is a public administration with the capacity to create and implement programmes to improve conditions for investment in economic development.

In this respect, domestic decision makers believe that it is not the administration that should be dealing with these issues, but the free market⁶⁹. However, the public sector is still the largest employer in BiH with expenses amounting to over 50% of the GDP⁷⁰. Furthermore, through collective contracts that the private sector holds little sway over, the public sector defines some of the limiting factors related to youth employment⁷¹.

In view of the previously stated 'conditions' for employment in the public administration, the abilities and quality of knowledge of the staff working in the public sector from local to regional levels are questionable. This, in fact, 'explains' the results of the BiH administration in terms of measures to combat unemployment.

→ Activities for Young People

The project "Employment Policy Reform and Establishment of the Labour Market Information System" financed by the European Union is being implemented in 2008. This project will contribute to the development of Employment Strategies on the levels of RS, FBiH, and the Brčko District of BiH. It is expected that young people will be represented as a target group in these documents.

Additionally, in 2008 and 2009 two other projects will deal with implementing measures for youth employment.

The first is the "Youth Employment Project in BiH" (YEP) with the support of the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), and under the leadership of GOPA. This project will be implemented in cooperation with domestic consultancy agencies.

The second initiative is the UN agencies programme YERP. This programme will work to strengthen the abilities of creating opportunities for employment of young people in the next few years.

⁶⁹ Pavelić, *Study of youth employment in BiH*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*



Healthcare and preventive protection; Reproductive health of young people

→ Introduction

Health is the main precondition for overall social development, it is the responsibility of the individual, the community and state institutions. Working on these issues is a long-term investment. According to the estimates of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the healthcare sector contributes only about 10% to the health of the population, while the rest is the result of the work of other sectors, such as education, housing, water distribution and sanitation, agriculture, transport, etc.⁷²

Therefore, the starting point for an overview of youth health should be an understanding of the term itself:

“the key determinants of health lie beyond the competencies of the healthcare sector. They correlate with living conditions, environmental factors, lifestyles and biological factors, such as age, gender and heredity. Health is the result of activities involving many sectors of the society, as well as the population at large, through individual and collective decisions and actions.”⁷³

Consequences of armed conflict are still evident in all spheres of life in BiH. Young people are especially vulnerable to the effects caused by war and deteriorated living condition and are exposed to numerous risks in that respect. Some of the most visible risks are: increased substance, alcohol and tobacco abuse, poor mental health with an increase in the suicide rate among young people, poor physical health caused by inactivity, peer violence, lack of information about sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, etc.

Due to all of the above, the issue of youth health requires a multidimensional and multi-sector approach in order to adequately resolve current problems, while care for young people and their health is in the general interest of the whole of society and is one of the priority areas for mobilising all available resources.

The issue of youth health requires a multidimensional and multi-sector approach in order to adequately resolve current problems, while care for young people and their health is in the general interest of the whole of society.

⁷² Directorate for economic planning, *The BiH mid term development strategy 2004-2007 (PRSP)*, Revised document. http://www.dep.ba/dwnld/Revidirana%20SRS+AP_lokalna_latinnica.pdf

⁷³ *Ibid.*

The strengths of the healthcare system in BiH regarding young people are:

- **Affirmative frameworks in the form of legislation, policies and strategies. This forms a basis for further development of youth health. Apart from a legal framework relatively well harmonised with international standards and practices, there are also other initiatives geared at youth health. Here, we primarily mean the development of the coordinated strategy document “BiH Youth Policy 2008-2013” and entity policies and strategies expected to create additional capacities for activities in this area in 2008;**
- **Clear accreditation quality standards for healthcare institutions leading to inter-sector cooperation at all levels have been formulated**
- **Healthcare and social system institutions provide some services for youth health through their regular activities and diverse programmes, primarily in the area of mental health, reproductive health, addiction, youth violence and in relation to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases; Youth organisations compensate for certain gaps within government programmes, especially in terms of reaching vulnerable and highly vulnerable groups of young people;**
- **Cooperation between the government and non-governmental sector has been increasing and we are witnesses of greater and closer cooperation between these two sectors;**
- **New models of institutional cooperation between local authorities and youth organisations in sectors of importance for young people are more visible;**
- **Although there is a trend of withdrawal on the part of international organisations that had been the main financiers of youth organisation programmes, there is still a significant number of those committed to continue supporting youth organisations and their commitment to youth health issues.**

However, despite the fact that youth issues, including health issues, have been recognised as a priority, there is a lack of strong and inter-sector coordination among government institutions for this purpose on both the horizontal and the vertical level. In view of the limited resources, this reduces the possibility to implement a more efficient approach and reduces the priority of resolving youth health issues.

The main weaknesses of the healthcare system in BiH as related to youth health are:

- **Lack of coordination within the healthcare sector, primarily in terms of promoting youth health and healthy lifestyles;**
- **A lack of coordination between the healthcare sector and other sectors, primarily the social and education sectors in the process of addressing and working on youth health issues;**
- **A lack of support to the youth sector in terms of financing activities of non-governmental organisations in the area of youth health;**
- **Insufficient and unclear mechanisms on all levels when it comes to youth participation in the processes of planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects treating youth health issues;**
- **An insufficient (both in terms of quantity and quality) number of programmes related to young people, and especially vulnerable groups within the 15 to 30 age range.**
- **A lack of indicators for monitoring youth health on the state level, as well as on the entity levels;**
- **An evident lack of awareness on the part of healthcare workers about the necessity of a friendly approach to young people;**

- **University and secondary school curricula are insufficiently focused on acquiring communication skills and raising awareness about specific youth problems.**

In BiH, there are a range of institutions and associations dealing with youth health, often with a special focus on vulnerable groups. However, most institutions face the fact that their services are not sufficiently open to young people and in most cases they do not offer confidential services adapted to the needs of young people, i.e. youth friendly services. Therefore, young people often refrain from using these services, because they fear an invasion of their privacy that may result in their marginalisation or isolation in the community.

On the other hand, there are some positive developments in this field, i.e. educators in the healthcare and non-governmental sectors who provide an adequate approach to young people, especially in terms of confidentiality, openness and adequate information.

In view of the basic definition of health as provided by the WHO according to which health is defined as **“a state of complete physical, psychological and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity,”** it is clear that health is not just an issue for the healthcare sector. Other sectors, primarily the education and social sector must also be involved, in order for youth health issues to be successfully resolved.

Poverty and poor health often form a vicious circle. Unemployment and deteriorated socio-economic health determinants result in poorer health of the population. This pertains to young people both directly and indirectly, because they are exposed to the full effects of the adverse socio-economic situation in BiH.

About 10% of the youth population in BiH does not have a health insurance coverage⁷⁴. Also, the financial unavailability of healthcare for the poor, a group with a considerable proportion of young people, is often a reason to postpone the need for healthcare services until symptoms have advanced to a stage that makes treatment even more expensive.

One of the limitations in conducting this study is the lack of data about youth health. Young people within the 10 to 26 age range (WHO) have not been categorised as a separate age group in statistics and data gathering activities. Therefore, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of measures related to youth health is not possible.

There are new approaches to youth health issues in BiH, primarily in terms of “peer-to-peer education” and participatory methods such as “join-in-circuit”. However, plans and programmes intended for healthcare professionals at various educational levels are out-of-date and do not reflect today’s needs and standards in the approach to working with young people.

Young people do not trust healthcare workers and are afraid of being stigmatised, which is especially evident in matters of HIV/AIDS counselling and testing in smaller communities. This is one of the most significant reasons why young people avoid using healthcare services of this kind even when they are made available on the local level at family medicine clinics and dispensaries for children and youth at healthcare centres. There they can undergo systematic check-ups and counselling on substance abuse, alcoholism, behavioural issues, prevention, as well as receive diagnostic services and aid in case of an injury, etc.

The decentralised structure of healthcare in FBiH and the division of competencies and funds between the canton and the entities in BiH is another problem facing young people in terms of their right to health insurance. Namely, the right to health insurance can be realised only within a certain canton in FBiH, or within the entity of residence, while the application of this right in other cantons and entities is practically impossible due to administrative and procedural obstacles. This primarily affects students, as well as young people seeking employment and those

⁷⁴ Commission for coordination of youth issues in BiH and GTZ, *Analysis of the position of youth and the youth sector in BiH*. (Sarajevo, 2008). <http://www.mladi.gov.ba/images/stories/aktuelnosti/Analiza%20polozaja%20mladih%20i%20omladinskog%20sektora%20u%20BiH%5B1%5D.pdf>

who wish to start a family in another canton or entity.

In light of this, it is necessary to take into account the impossibility for young people to seek advice or go for a health check-up outside their community of residence in order to ensure confidentiality of data and avoid possible stigmatisation. This particularly pertains to smaller communities that are often closed off and insensitive to issues of sexual and reproductive health, addiction, and especially to the matter of confidentiality of services provided.

Due to a lack of adequate institutions to provide information in local communities, and the impossibility of using health insurance in a nearby larger urban centre in another canton or entity, young people often forgo check-ups and counselling. The result of this situation is that young people are exposed to unsafe behaviour often leading to unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and other problems. The competence structure in health insurance, that is, the effects of this system are contrary to the freedom of movement promoted by the EU.

The problem is further compounded by the fact that many institutions lack adequate space to provide services that respond to the needs of young people. It is, therefore, understandable why many young people today see the current system as unacceptable, or only relatively accessible.

Furthermore, youth participation in decision-making is very low, although there are some mechanisms in place in the form of legal regulations and organisations representing youth interests. In about one-third of the municipalities in BiH local youth policies have been adopted. These are slowly but surely providing representation of youth needs at local level. However, there are no clearly defined and generally accepted methods and techniques of youth inclusion in planning, preparing, implementing and evaluating programmes related to youth health. In RS, the RS Youth Council is a counterpart to government bodies, while the FBiH lacks an organisation that would adequately represent youth interests.

Youth participation is also characterised by a 'weak voice' of young people through their organisations. Although they have been recognised as an important factor in the youth health sector, an approach entailing partnership and stronger support have not been forthcoming from government bodies.

The survival of youth organisations has to a large extent been conditioned by the presence of international organisations as the main financiers of their activities. We are currently witnessing a withdrawal trend by international organisations in BiH, and the youth sector faces the problem of insufficient support to youth work. Since governmental support is still weak, although growing at local level, the number of youth organisations and the scope of their activities are decreasing.

As in other sectors, this area suffers from a general lack of a programmatic approach to resolving youth issues. The lack of programmatic activity and budget planning by government bodies in resolving youth issues creates poor coordination and underdeveloped partnerships. This in turn results in greater rivalry and unhealthy relations between youth organisations instead of their competitive spirit being expressed through well written project proposals implemented in partnership with competent government bodies.

As stated before, youth health issues require a multidimensional and multi-sector approach in order to find adequate solutions. We are right to expect that the adoption of legislation indirectly related to youth health will create opportunities for a programmatic approach in this field. The pieces of legislation still missing are the Law on Youth Issues of FBiH, the Law on Youth Work of RS and the Law on Youth Organisations of the Brčko District of BiH.

TWENTY SEVEN ABORTIONS PER 100 BIRTHS⁷⁵

27 pregnancies are terminated per every hundred births in the Sarajevo Canton. According to the data of the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Health, 1263 abortions were performed last year in public healthcare institutions, of which 1122 for women from the Sarajevo Canton, and 141 for women from other cantons in FBiH, from RS and the Brčko District of BiH.

Eleven pregnancies were terminated for girls below 18, 34 for women from 19 to 20, and 1077 for women above 21.

289 abortions were performed in private clinics, but this number is estimated to be higher since not all abortions are registered.

The doctors testify that young women enter into intimate relations earlier, but are insufficiently informed about contraception. They warn that many young men and women are infected with the HPV (Human Papillomavirus), as well as those who are HPV positive. This does not mean they will fall ill, but they can still be carriers of the virus. It has been proven that the HPV virus causes cervical cancer.

→ Legal Framework

In terms of youth health, BiH possesses a solid legal basis forming a framework of opportunities for effective activities. Most of the regulations are contained in 41 laws in BiH. Of those, 17 are laws of RS, 14 are law of FBiH, and 10 are laws of the Brčko District of BiH.

The solutions presented by some of these laws contain provisions directly aimed at protecting the health of young people. The provisions of other laws pertain to all citizens and as such affect young people as well. In terms of the relevant regulations for the health of vulnerable groups, so far attention has been devoted only to offenders and addicts, and to improving the statues of women with respect to reproductive health. Barring a few exceptions, the legislative treatment of vulnerable and highly vulnerable groups has largely been neglected. These issues would have to be tackled through an inter-sectoral approach and regulations, especially when it comes to these groups of the population.

There are four laws on the BiH level with provisions indirectly regulating youth health issues:

- **Law on the Prevention and Suppression of Hallucinogenic Drugs⁷⁶** - although young people are not mentioned as a separate category, the main provisions and measures stipulated pertain to young people;
- **Law on the Principles of Road Safety in BiH⁷⁷** - is not strictly focused on young people and their health, but provides a legal framework for regulating traffic and education in this areas that should contribute to improving traffic conditions and safety in the long term, and therefore reduce traffic accidents as one of the causes of youth mortality;
- **Law on Gender Equality in BiH⁷⁸** - contributes to decreasing gender discrimination. Although it is not directly related to youth health, it is clear that in the long term, this Law

⁷⁵ „Sexual Education – What Kids Know about Sex“. Magazine Start, Sarajevo, December 2008.

⁷⁶ Law on the Prevention and Suppression of Hallucinogenic Drugs. Official Gazette BiH, No. 8/06

⁷⁷ Law on the Principles of Road Safety in BiH. Official Gazette BiH, No. 6/06

⁷⁸ Law on Gender Equality in BiH. Official Gazette BiH, No. 16/03

will contribute to improving access to services, reducing violence against women, improving education on sexual and reproductive health and hazardous behaviour, as well as generally empowering young women;

- **Framework on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH⁷⁹** - Article 3 defines education as, among other things, intended to ensure optimal development for each individual, including persons with special needs, in accordance with the individual's age, abilities and mental and physical capacities⁸⁰. This is an important framework for enabling schools and communities to organise activities for the promotion and protection of children and young people.

The youth health protection legislation in RS is similar to that in FBiH, it is regulated through a range of laws as well as the RS Constitution. Namely, Article 68 of the RS Constitution provides for measures for social protection, healthcare, education and care for children and youth, while health protection is concretely dealt with in Chapter II and Articles 36 and 37. Thus, for example, Article 36 stipulates that the family, mothers and children, as well as minors without parental guardianship enjoy special protection. Furthermore, Article 37 stipulates the right to health protection for all in line with relevant laws, while children, pregnant women, the elderly and other special categories of persons have the right to protection covered by public funding.

The following Laws regulate healthcare in RS:

- **Law on Health protection⁸¹** - determines the health protection for individuals, families and the society as a whole through a range of health protection institutions and organisations as defined by the law. However, this law does not stress children and young people, or guidelines for healthcare education and general education in health;
- **Decision on the Minimal Basic Package of Health protection⁸²** - is attached to the law and stipulates that full health protection is provided to certain population categories such as children up to 15 years of age, pregnant women and mothers up to one year after the birth of the child;
- **Law on Health Insurance⁸³** - similar to the counterpart Law in FBiH, this Law determines health protection for children up to 15 years of age within the family of the insured party, and for young people up to 26 years of age during regular schooling. For persons who interrupt their regular schooling to serve a term in the military, the Law provides health protection up to 27 years of age (Article 16). Furthermore, the Law foresees waiving participation in the expenses of health protection for children up to 15 and for pregnant women (Article 45).
- **Law on Social Protection⁸⁴** - defines population categories requiring social protection, including certain categories of minors (Article 10). This Law determines measures of material and social support. Also, Article 18 of the Law defines measures for adults with socially unacceptable behaviours, a category that includes young adult addicts.
- **Law on the Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders⁸⁵** - pertains to the treatment of children and young people through establishing special wards for the psychiatric treatment of this population category (Article 13).

⁷⁹ Framework on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH. Official Gazette BiH number 18/03

⁸⁰ Framework on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH. Official Gazette BiH number 18/03;

⁸¹ Law on Health protection. Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No. 18/99, 58/01i 62/02.

⁸² Decision on the Minimal Basic Package of Health protection. Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No. 21/01

⁸³ Law on Health Insurance. Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No. 18/99, 51/01 and 51/03

⁸⁴ Law on Social Protection. Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No. 5/93, 15/96 i 110/3

⁸⁵ Law on the Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders. Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No. 46/04

- **Family Law⁸⁶** - determines protection for the family and child (Article 3), as well as stipulating the obligation of the parents to care for the life and health of children, their upbringing and education (Article 6). Just as the Family Law in FBiH, this RS Law foresees measures against abuse and neglect in the family, i.e. giving custody of the child to the other parent, guardian or institution (Article 97), and in extreme cases revoking parental rights (Article 106).
- **Labour Law⁸⁷** Similar to the counterpart Law in FBiH, this Law determines protection for minors under an employment contract, and stipulates special measures for employment of this category of persons.
- **Law to Ban Smoking of Tobacco Products in Public Spaces⁸⁸** Apart from regulations prohibiting smoking in public spaces, this Law also foresees measures for rooms where smoking is allowed, namely, that a sign must be posted forbidding entrance to minors (Article 4).
- **Law to Ban Sale to and Use of Tobacco Products by Minors⁸⁹** As mentioned in the section dealing with legal regulations in FBiH, legislation in RS is more advanced in terms of defining the prohibition of sale of tobacco to minors as per the provisions of the World Health Organisation. This Law bans the sale of tobacco and tobacco products to minors, and bans sale at locations in the vicinity of institutions frequented by minors, as well as stipulating the obligations of educational institutions in terms of banning the sale and use of tobacco products (Article 1).

The RS Youth Policy⁹⁰ (2006) foresees the adoption of the Law on Youth Work. This Law would further expand the opportunities for a multi-sector approach to youth health issues.

Access to health protection in FBiH, for both the general population and young people, is regulated by the following laws:

- **Law on Health protection⁹¹** - regulates the distribution of competences in health protection between FBiH and the cantons. This Law also regulates prevention activities and healthcare education for citizens, as well as the principles for implementing health protection (in terms of their comprehensiveness, continuity, and access to primary healthcare), improving health, etc. The Law pertains to the entire population of FBiH, with a special focus on primary healthcare for children and young people, as well as women in the period before, during and after giving birth.
- **Law on Health Insurance⁹²** - regulates the health insurance of children and young people via the family of the insured party (father, mother or guardian), as well as universal health insurance for children up to 15 years of age. Young people over the age of 15 may have health insurance by being members of families of ensured persons up to the age of 26, provided they are enrolled in regular schooling either as pupils or university students (Articles 3, 4, and 22). This Law does not provide for special measures for young people, nor does it include gender distinctions, but it does provide for health insurance for persons incapacitated for independent life and work (Article 26).

⁸⁶ Family Law. Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No. 54/02, 41/08

⁸⁷ Labor Law. Official Gazette of Republika Srpska No. 38/00, 40/00, 47/02, 38/03, 66/03, 20/07

⁸⁸ Law to Ban Smoking of Tobacco Products in Public Spaces. Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No. 46/04

⁸⁹ Law to Ban Sale to and Use of Tobacco Products by Minors. Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No. 46/04

⁹⁰ Republika Srpska Government. *Youth Policy of Republika Srpska from 2006 to 2010*. (Banja Luka, 2006). <http://www.msd.ba/SNSD/themes/default/documents/Omladinska%20politika%20Vlada%20RS.pdf>

⁹¹ Law on Health protection. Official Gazette of FBiH, No. 29/97

⁹² Law on Health Insurance. Official Gazette of FBiH, No. 30/97

- **Law on Principals of Social Protection, Protection for Civilian War Victims, and Protection of Families with Children**⁹³ - defines categories of children and young people eligible for social protection as follows: children without parental care, neglected children, abandoned children, children with developmental problems due to family circumstances, persons with disabilities and persons with arrested physical or psychological development, persons unfit for work (Article 12); as well as persons with socially unacceptable behaviour, i.e. those who “engage in loitering, wandering, begging, prostitution, alcoholism, drug abuse and other forms of socially unacceptable behaviour” (Article 17) – as well as measures for working this these categories, such as material aid and training for life and work, as well as other forms of social support (Article 22, 23, 29, and 87). The Law ascribes competences for determining social protection to the cantons, which means that it only provides frameworks and definitions of social protection on the FBiH level.
- **Family Law**⁹⁴ - protection and health of children and young people within the family, as well as the obligations of parents and guardians with respect to the health and protection of children are one of the focus points of this Law. Thus, this law stipulates that parents are obliged to protect children from all forms of abuse, maltreatment and neglect (Article 127), as well as all forms of vices (drugs, alcohol, prostitution, sexual abuse, economic exploitation, etc. (Article 134). If the family is unable to provide adequate protection for children and young people, the law stipulates measures whereby a person may be entrusted to an institution or foster family, as well as measures of judicial revocation of parental rights in extreme cases, in the best interest of the child (Article 147 and 154). Accordingly, this Law is of extreme importance for the health of children and young people, and for their protection.
- **Labour Law**⁹⁵ - quite strict in terms of young people and employment. According to this Law, young people between 15 and 18 years of age are entitled to special protection in employment. Also, a young person under 18 cannot enter into an Employment Contract that may jeopardise his/her health, morality or development (Articles 15 and 51), and cannot undertake overtime and night-time work (Articles 32 and 36). Such violations are further determined by provisions of the Criminal Code.
- **Law on Restricted Use of Tobacco and Tobacco Products**⁹⁶ - In line with the need to prevent and remove the negative consequences of tobacco use, Article 3 of the Law stipulates bans on the use of tobacco products in educational institutions, institutions where children and students are accommodated, healthcare institutions, social institutions, as well as other public institutions. Furthermore, Article 12 expressly prohibits the sale of tobacco products in a 100 m radius from preschools and schools, as well as within sports and recreational facilities. The same Article also prohibits the sale of tobacco products to persons under the age of 15. In terms of preventing and removing the negative consequences of tobacco use in young people, it is important to note that this Law set the age limit for prohibition of sale of tobacco to young people at a lower age than that determined by RS regulations and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control adopted by the World Health Organisation. The age limit stipulated by the RS Law and in line with the WHO Convention is 18.

Although the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports, in cooperation with the Commission, GTZ and the Association of Youth Officers in BiH, has drafted a Youth Law FBiH, this legislation has not been adopted yet. The Law is expected to introduce a programmatic approach to resolving youth issues in FBiH, including those related to youth health.

⁹³ Law on Principals of Social Protection, Protection for Civilian War Victims, and Protection of Families with Children. Official Gazette of FBiH, broj 36/99

⁹⁴ Family Law. Official Gazette of FBiH, No. 35/05

⁹⁵ Labour Law. Official Gazette of FBiH, No. 43/99 and 29/03

⁹⁶ Law on Restricted Use of Tobacco and Tobacco Products. Official Gazette of FBiH, No. 6/98, 35/98 and 11/99

Healthcare and social protection are an important sector of functions and competences in the Brčko District of BiH, and as such, they are determined by Article 9 of the Statute. The regulations determining or related to youth health are:

- **Law on Health protection**⁹⁷
- **Law on Health Insurance**⁹⁸
- **Law on Social Protection**⁹⁹
- **Law on Child Protection**¹⁰⁰
- **Law on Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders**¹⁰¹
- **Law on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools**¹⁰²
- **Labour Law**¹⁰³
- **Law on Protection at Work**¹⁰⁴

Certain specificities of the Brčko District of BiH legal framework are that the Law on Health protection lists young people as a separate category of the population and deals with their education for self-protection (the Law stipulates that the Department of Healthcare of the Brčko District shall also be responsible for health education in preschools and schools in cooperation with the Department of Education), as well as dealing with their primary healthcare (Article 17). Also, in contrast to similar laws in the entities, the Law on Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders¹⁰⁵ determines a requirement for the institutionalisation of a child or minor whereby the court is obliged to receive an opinion from a psychiatrist specialising in treating children and minors, or with 3 year of experience in working with children (Article 23).

Additionally, the Law on Youth is currently undergoing the adoption process in the Brčko District of BiH. This Law should devote special attention on adopting and implementing programmes of health protection, as well as other programmes contributing to the health of minors.

In the upcoming period, within the process of EU accession, BiH will harmonise its administrative and judicial system, as well as leading capacities and institutions with EU standards. The criteria for EU accession determined by the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993¹⁰⁶ will have to be held up, where one of the criteria is the adoption of the so-called *acquis communautaire*. In practice, this means that all documents directly or indirectly referring to the health of young people in the EU for the basis for harmonising legislation within this process. Regulations pertaining to youth health on the international and European level provide guidelines to BiH about how to regulate youth health issues. We can, therefore, expect that additional efforts will be needed to create a modern framework to promote human and social rights in line with international standards.¹⁰⁷

As mentioned before, the healthcare sector and legal regulations directly pertaining to youth health issues fall under the jurisdiction of the entities. This is also true of all other questions pertaining to youth health, but which belong outside this sector. Legislators and decision makers will, therefore, face the challenge of harmonising certain issues both as regards youth health in BiH and with respect to international standards.

⁹⁷ Law on Health protection. Official Gazette of the Brčko District, No. 2/01

⁹⁸ Law on Health Insurance. Official Gazette of the Brčko District, No. 1/02

⁹⁹ Law on Social Protection. Official Gazette of the Brčko District, No. 1/03

¹⁰⁰ Law on Child Protection. Official Gazette of the Brčko District, No. 1/03

¹⁰¹ Law on Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders. Official Gazette of the Brčko District, No. 12/0

¹⁰² Law on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools. Official Gazette of the Brčko District, No. 9/01, 28/03 and 29/04

¹⁰³ Labor Law. Official Gazette of the Brčko District, No. 7/00, 8/03, 33/04 and 29/05

¹⁰⁴ Law on Protection at Work. Official Gazette of the Brčko District, No. 31/05

¹⁰⁵ Law on Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders. Official Gazette of the Brčko District, No. 12/06

¹⁰⁶ European Commission. European Union Accession Criteria. (Copenhagen, 1993). http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accesion_process/criteria/index_en.htm

¹⁰⁷ Balkans Youth and Health Project. Legal Regulation and Policies Regulating and Impacting Youth Health in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Sarajevo, 2007). http://www.canbhp.org/balkan-youth-and-health/documents/Youth_Health_Policy_BiH.pdf

→ **Institutional framework**

According to the Dayton Peace Agreement¹⁰⁸, healthcare jurisdiction is at the entity level, i.e. within the competences of the Ministry of Health of FBiH, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of RS, and the Department of Health of the Brčko District of BiH. Accordingly, health legislation has been adopted on the entity level, while certain health strategies and policies have been passed on the state level.¹⁰⁹

On the state level, coordination in healthcare is conducted through the Sector for Health of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH. This Ministry is responsible for a series of activities such as reporting to international institutions, coordinating the work of entity healthcare institution, as well as gathering data for indicators in health.

The healthcare systems in FBiH and RS are differently organised. FBiH is decentralised and most competences, functions and responsibilities reside with the cantons. The Ministry of Health of FBiH sets the frameworks for health policies and laws, determines the need for healthcare services, and coordinates the work of the cantons.

Ten cantonal ministries of health take on the responsibility for specific legislation related to cantonal organisation of healthcare. Additionally, they carry out the following activities:

“providing advice on technical issues of implementing provisions, organising healthcare services, planning healthcare policies in cantonal hospitals, healthcare centres, clinics, pharmacies and other cantonal healthcare institutions”¹¹⁰

The system is comprised of the Federal Institute for Health Insurance and Re-Insurance¹¹¹, as well as Cantonal Institutes of Health Insurance responsible for organising health insurance in the cantons.

Apart from these institutions, there are eleven Public Health Institutes in FBiH – one on the entity level and one in each of the ten cantons. The Federal Public health Institute is a scientific and educational institution performing the functions of gathering data on the health of the population and needs in healthcare, as well as performing analyses, planning, setting norms, standards, laws and provisions, etc. in cooperation with the cantonal Institutes.

In some cantons, there are Counselling Centres for Sexual and Reproductive Health. These Counselling Centres were launched as a partner project of UNFPA, state, entity and local authorities, and representatives of the non-governmental sector. Their organisation varies from canton to canton. It is important to note that Counselling Centres are also present in RS and the Brčko District of BiH.

In Bihać, for example, the Counselling Centre is part of the Healthcare Centre and its staff comprises a gynaecologist, a nurse, a psychologist and a dermatovenerologist.

An important segment in this approach are non-governmental associations working in the local community and fully coordinating with providers of healthcare services to promote and refer young people to these specialised institutions.

Apart from this example, there is also an approach where the Counselling Centre is organised outside the healthcare system institutions as part of a non-governmental association. The XY Association in Sarajevo provides counselling services in sexual and reproductive health in a doctor's office, which also provides dermatological and gynaecological services. The situation is similar in Zenica, where the Plus-Mladi za mlade organisation provides health protection through family medicine services, gynaecology services, addiction counselling, etc. Still, these are just a few good examples, which could be transferred to many other places in FBiH, where this kind of

¹⁰⁰ Opći okvirni Sporazum za mir u Bosni i Hercegovini (Dejtonski mirovni sporazum). <http://www.oscebih.org/overview/gfap/bos/>

¹⁰¹ Srednjoročna razvojna strategija BiH 2004-2007 (PRSP).

care of young people is missing.

The RS healthcare system is centralised. The RS Ministry of Health and Social Protection is responsible for the healthcare sector and for creating policies and strategies, for planning and coordination of activities in the healthcare sector of this entity, for sanitary and health inspections, as well as for reporting to the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH and for participating in various projects and activities. The RS Ministry of Health and Social Protection is the umbrella institution coordinating the work of the RS Health Insurance Fund, the RS Health Protection Institute, the RS Pharmaceuticals Agency, as well as clinical centres, hospitals, healthcare centres and clinics in RS.

The RS Health Insurance Fund is responsible for health insurance and negotiating healthcare services. The Fund has a network of eight regional branches responsible for their administrative areas, while the central office coordinates their activities.

The RS Health Protection Institute is responsible for research and education in public health, health promotion and monitoring of the population's health. The Institute has five regional offices that cover the activities in this entity.

In RS, Healthcare Centres are the key institutions for providing services to young people. Similarly to FBiH, Healthcare Centres in RS have family medicine teams responsible for promoting health, prevention, treatment and counselling in matters of child and youth health.

Healthcare within the Brčko District of BiH¹¹² is organised within the Department for Healthcare and Other Services responsible for primary healthcare, as well as hospitals and public healthcare. This Department contains a Health Insurance Fund that “sets up a database covering all insured persons in Brčko”¹¹³. Apart from these institutions, the Brčko District of BiH has four healthcare institutions – one hospital and three healthcare centres.

It is important to note the importance of mental health centres as parts of Healthcare Centres. The mental health centres generally deal with issues of mental health, addiction and violence, as well as, in some cases, reproductive health. As part of the organisation of their activities, the mental health centres offer the following programmes:

- **activities to counter violence against children and women, education and aid to violence victims; particular focus on peer violence, violence in schools as well as other types of violent behaviour;**
- **education of young people about domestic violence, mental health, gender equality, as well as youth counselling;**
- **programmes of addiction prevention.**

Although the centres offer a wide range of programmes for young people, most young people do not make use of their services. The factors that affect this are the inadequate openness of such centres towards young people, as well as the prejudice among young people against these types of programmes.

Non-governmental associations play an important role in some rural and urban areas in BiH, promoting health and prevention among young people. In the post-conflict period, these organisations have successfully filled the gap created by the failure of the government sector in these areas. Their work involves professional staff as well as a large number of volunteers who jointly work on implementing their activities.

¹⁰⁸ General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (The Dayton Peace Agreement). <http://www.oscebih.org/overview/gfap/bos/>

¹⁰⁹ BiH Midterm Development Strategy 2004-2007 (PRSP), http://www.dep.ba/dwnld/Revidirana%20SRS+AP_lokalna_latnica.pdf

¹¹⁰ Strategy for EU Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Direction for European Integration

¹¹¹ Strategy for EU Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Direction for European Integration

¹¹² Strategy for EU Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Direction for European Integration

¹¹³ Strategy for EU Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Direction for European Integration

Youth organisations, along with partners from the public sector and international partners are the most active in terms of sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and human trafficking. One of the important characteristics of youth organisations is that they are places where a young person can receive information from peers in a direct, confidential and adequate way, as well as being able to learn skills and make use of services in matters of vital importance for growing up, primarily in the area of sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and mental problems.

Youth organisations also provide services in field work, which enables them to reach young people much more efficiently than the official healthcare sector institutions. This type of support is particularly important when it comes to working with young people from vulnerable and highly vulnerable groups.

Still, the activities of youth organisations are predominantly financed through donations and grants made by international agencies and organisations present in BiH. Only a small portion of funding necessary for their work and implementation of activities stems from government sector funds.

An additional problem to this approach to resolving youth issues is the lack of a Law on Youth in FBiH and the Brčko District of BiH, the Law on Youth Work in RS, and a framework law on the BiH level that would regulate support to youth work.

→ Activities for Young People

An important international document dealing with youth policies, and concretely with youth health, is the World Programme of Action for Youth¹¹⁴, which gives an overview of all the factors affecting youth health, as well as their vulnerability to hazardous behaviours. This Programme defines the actions that governments need to undertake in order to solve youth health issues as follows:

- **adopt regulations on basic healthcare services,**
- **develop health education,**
- **promote healthcare services,**
- **information on HIV infection and AIDS among young people,**
- **promote good sanitation and hygienic practices,**
- **prevention of infections and diseases among young people,**
- **elimination of sexual abuse of young people,**
- **combating malnutrition among young people.**¹¹⁵

By elaborating the actions and measures to be undertaken by governments, this Programme provides a framework for prevention and health protection favourable to child development.

The WHO has also passed a series of concrete conventions of health protection of interest for young people. Primarily, there is the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (2003) that expresses concern due to the **“escalation in smoking and other forms of tobacco consumption by children and adolescents worldwide,”**¹¹⁶ and presents a series of measures related to protecting children from the consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to smoking. Apart from these measures, the WHO also actively promotes the concept of youth oriented schools, schools that provide space for healthy learning, work and development of young people.

¹¹⁴ United Nations General Assembly. *The World Youth Program*. (Resolution 50/81, 1995).

¹¹⁵ United Nations General Assembly. *The World Youth Program*. (Resolution 50/81, 1995).

¹¹⁶ World Health Organisation. *Framework Convention on tobacco control*. (2003).

Considerable attention has also been devoted to the prevention and fight against HIV/AIDS, especially among young people, and on a global level. The UN has founded the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS – UNAIDS bringing together various UN agencies. This Programme has created a range of measures and activities to fight HIV/AIDS among young people seen as a population at risk of being infected.

All of the above documents for the promotion and protection of youth health provide general guidelines for programmes and strategies governments should adopt. As a signatory of the above conventions, BiH is obliged to integrate these principles into its policies and legislation for the protection of youth health.

On the EU level, a range of documents was adopted stipulating specific measures for the protection of youth health and focusing on the general harmonisation of healthcare systems, as well as providing recommendations for healthcare reforms. Although young people are not directly included in the EU Public Health Action Plan¹¹⁷ as a separate population category, this document sets the goals of a general public healthcare reform, as well as research in the field of specific problems such as tobacco and alcohol abuse, malnutrition, mental health, HIV/AIDS, etc.

Apart from this, the EU Public Health Programme for 2003-2006 was adopted and provides instruments for working in the area of mental health. This document is augmented by various Council of Europe recommendations in relations to the following:

„smoking prevention¹¹⁸, alcohol consumption among young people¹¹⁹, prevention and reduction of the health hazards of drug addiction¹²⁰, as well as documents containing recommendations for the health of children and physical activity of young people¹²¹, mental health¹²², the first Action Programme for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS and Certain Communicable Diseases¹²³ (1996) that preceded the 2005 document ‘Combating HIV/AIDS within the EU and Neighbouring Countries 2006-2009’.

It is worth noting that the European white paper on youth ‘New Impetus for Youth in Europe’¹²⁴ deals with youth social issues as part of its general youth policy matters. Although it does not contain a special chapter on healthcare, the document provides recommendations for improving the healthcare structures and services in order to create youth friendly services and improve mental and physical health, avoid drug abuse, provide social protection for young people and healthcare prevention programmes for young people.

This document is the result of wide-ranging consultations with representatives of various stakeholders focusing on many segments of the life of young people, as well as the corresponding policies. The leading health concerns stated during consultations were:

„smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, mortality due to accidents, as well as the high suicide rate among young people in the EU“

The following were also stressed:

„the need for better information on sexual and reproductive health, access to contraception, legalisation of abortion, the need for peer education, which has been

¹¹⁷ European Commission. *The European Environment & Health Action Plan 2004-2010*. (2004). European Parliament and Council of Europe. *Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008)*. (2002).

¹¹⁸ Council of Europe's recommendation for prevention of smoking and initiative to increase tobacco control (2003/54/EC). Council of Europe 2002.

¹¹⁹ Council of Europe's recommendation on consumption of alcohol by youngsters (2001/458/EC). Council of Europe 2005.

¹²⁰ Council of Europe's recommendation for prevention and reduction of health damaging addition to drugs (2003/488/EC). Council of Europe 2003.

¹²¹ Green Paper: Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases (COM(2005)637). European Commission 2005.

¹²² Green Paper: Improving the mental health of the population (COM(2005)484). European Commission 2005.

¹²³ HIV/AIDS Action Programme 1996-2000 (96/647/EC). European Council 1996; also adopted by the European Parliament

¹²⁴ European Commission. *The White Book “New impulse for youth in Europe”*, COM(2001) 681. (Brussels 2001). http://www.youth-sport.net/fileadmin/fm-youthsport/allgemeines/whitepaper_en.pdf

recognised as the best method of engaging the youth population on these issues.”¹²⁵

Worth noting in relation to the BiH Midterm Development Strategy – PRSP (2004-2007) is that one of its segments dealt with the issues of health and provided guidelines for improvement. On the other hand, this strategy did not directly deal with youth issues.

The BiH priorities within the targets of the Health for All in the 21st Century¹²⁶ adopted by the World Health Organisation are:

youth health, improvement of mental health, reduction of number of injuries resulting from violence and accidents, a health and safe environment, healthy lifestyles, combating the harmful effects of alcohol, drugs and smoking, a healthy environment, etc.

These priorities are part of the Health for All Citizens of BiH resolution of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly adopted on 24 April 2002.

The Analysis of the Position of Young People and the Youth Sector in BiH (Commission and GTZ) is the first step in creating the coordinated youth strategy ‘BiH Youth Policy 2008-2013’ coordinated by the Commission.

The Canadian CIDA has supported the process of creating the Youth Health Policy in FBiH 2008-2012 and the Youth Health Policy in RS 2008-2012. Both these documents were adopted by relevant entity institutions, i.e. by the Government of FBiH in FBiH and by the RS Assembly in RS. Making these documents operational and developing and adopting entity strategies for youth health as integral parts of the BiH Youth Policy 2008-2013 is expected by the end of 2008.

RS has passed the Health Promotion Strategy¹²⁷ and the Health Policy Programme to 2010¹²⁸. Apart from that, RS has adopted the RS Youth Policy¹²⁹ that includes improving legal regulations pertaining to youth health as one of its goals.

Commission on youth issues of the Parliament of FBiH has approved the procedure of adoption of the Youth Law FBiH. The adoption of the law could be expected at the end of 2009.

BiH is, therefore, on the right path to adapt its healthcare policies to the needs of young people. Current government measures and programmes in BiH underscore the ‘good will’ of decision makers as related to youth health needs, but this is not sufficient for an effective approach in this field. Also evident are the desire for and visible progress in many segments, from thematic activities of special interest for young people to youth participation and support for youth organisations, as well as efforts to raise awareness among healthcare workers and society as a whole about the needs of young people.

We will focus on two categories of health issues related to young people in BiH: sexual and reproductive health and combating addiction.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS

Activities to raise awareness, as well as counselling, education and medical check-ups related to sexual and reproductive health are an area that received considerable support from international organisations, primarily the UNFPA.

Through their activities to promote sexual and reproductive health among young people, efforts were invested into the education of so-called peer educators who continue to spread information, multiply

¹²⁵ *Ibid*

¹²⁶ World Health Organisation. *Declaration on Occupational Health For All*. http://www.who.int/occupational_health/en/oehdeclaration94e.pdf

¹²⁷ RS Health Insurance Fund. *Strategy for promoting of health*. http://www.zdravstvo-srpske.org/zakonska_reg_zastita.htm

¹²⁸ *Ibid*

knowledge and skills, and promote the importance of adequate protection for young people in selected towns. Counselling, check-ups and youth education have been organised through a number of youth organisations providing these services as part of their activities in selected towns and geographical areas.

Closely related to the issue of sexual and reproductive health is the issue of sexually transmitted diseases, and especially HIV/AIDS. BiH belongs to the group of countries with low HIV/AIDS prevalence, which is why activities in this domain are mainly based on prevention, information and raising awareness about the risks of HIV/AIDS, that is, on education.

Although it does not focus exclusively on this population category, this segment has proven to be the most organised and complex segment within the scope of youth health issues. The commitment of entity and state-level authorities to this segment is evident.

On the state level, there is a National Advisory Board (NAB)¹³⁰ lead by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH. This Ministry was responsible for developing an HIV/AIDS strategy and support to the strategic planning process on the state level.

Also, both entities have state coordinators for HIV/AIDS. There is also the Advisory Group for combating HIV/AIDS in BiH (CCM).¹³¹ Thanks to the activities of the CCM in 2005, a project proposal to combat HIV/AIDS in BiH¹³² was prepared and financed by the Global Fund against HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis. This project was implemented by UNDP BiH. A large segment of this project involves raising the awareness of citizens, and especially young people, as well as education and support for vulnerable groups.

Local citizens’ associations mentioned previously are active participants in the implementation of activities within this project. Apart from this Advisory Group, the UN Thematic Group for HIV/AIDS was with the participation of UN Agencies in BiH (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR, UNESCO, ILO, World Bank, IOM).

According to available data, in the period from 1986-2006, 134 HIV positive persons were registered in BiH (81 in FBiH, 53 in RS), of which 103 are men, 30 are women, and one person did not provide gender information.

It should be noted that in terms of the manner of infection with the virus, the primary mode is infection through heterosexual intercourse (55%), male homosexual intercourse (17%), intravenous drug use (14%), MTC (1%), while in 13% of the cases, the manner of infection is unknown. All the registered HIV cases have been covered by antiretroviral therapy in the period from 2006 to 2007.¹³³

In the past few years, much effort was invested in raising awareness about hazardous behaviour and the ways to prevent this disease. Within the education system, education on HIV/AIDS is present in 8.57% of primary and 62.41% of secondary schools¹³⁴. Special attention is also devoted to vulnerable groups and groups at risk, where concrete work is of great importance. These are primarily intravenous drug users, sexual workers, men who have sex with men, as well as the youth population that is considered vulnerable in general due to a lack of information and skills in terms of the methods of protection, and general vulnerability caused by their difficult economic, social and political marginalisation. Although efforts to raise awareness on health issues are present in the educational system the quality and intensity does not match with the real needs as can be seen by the number of abortions in canton Sarajevo.

An important characteristic of this segment of the youth health sector is partnership and cooperation between various stakeholders. As mentioned before, the most prominent among the international organisations are those tied to UN agencies. The following is a brief overview of some of these organisations with the most significant programmes in this field.

UNICEF has worked on providing support to the development of a state system of monitoring and evaluation, and to strengthening the second generation of monitoring systems related to HIV/AIDS.

¹²⁹ Republika Srpska’s Government. *Youth policy of Republika Srpska from 2006 to 2010* (Banja Luka, 2006).

¹³⁰ UNGASS Country Progress Report. Bosnia and Herzegovina 2008; p. 12

¹³¹ Country Coordinating Mechanism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. <http://www1.theglobalfund.org/programs/CCMMembers.aspx?countryId=BIH&lang=en>

¹³² Global Fund. *Proposal HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis Components*. (Geneva, 2005). http://www1.theglobalfund.org/search/docs/5BIHH_961_0_full.pdf

¹³³ UNGASS Country Progress Report, 7.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 7.

UNICEF has cooperated with Centres for Voluntary and Confidential Testing.

UNFPA is working on building the capacities of healthcare workers, psychologists, social workers and teachers in sexual and reproductive health, including issues of HIV/AIDS. It also supported healthcare centres that provide confidential youth friendly services in creating a network of service providers in 4 local communities in BiH.

Apart from the UN agencies, there is also the CIDA Youth and Health in the Balkans Project that focuses on developing youth health policies and strategies in BiH at the entity level, developing the capacities of healthcare and non-healthcare professionals working with young people, and developing a data gathering and reporting system in the field of youth health.

GTZ has recently - end of 2008 - commenced with a youth oriented health project focusing on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention. The project goal is to strengthen the youth NGO sector to raise awareness and spread information through youth centre structures in more than 20 municipalities as part of the implementation of local youth policies.

There are also local non-governmental organisations such as APOHA and XY Sarajevo, UG PROI Sarajevo, Margina Zenica, Međunarodni forum solidarnosti [International Solidarity Forum] Tuzla, Nove nade [New Hopes] Bihać, Akcija protiv SIDA-e [Action against AIDS] Banja Luka, Viktorija Banja Luka, etc. These organisations have invested enormous efforts into prevention, work with vulnerable groups, as well as providing counselling and HIV/AIDS testing and testing for other STDs. In line with their capacities and regions, they have organised education sessions, counselling, campaigns and other activities about HIV/AIDS and STDs.

One of the most important aspects of activities is the organisation of Voluntary Centres for Counselling and Testing for HIV/AIDS and other STDs (VCCT). Initially, the organisations had set up these Centres for counselling and testing within their offices. However, due to their specific nature, during implementation, testing activities and post-testing counselling were organised mostly within clinics for infectious diseases. In line with the principles of voluntary counselling and testing in BiH, they were organised as partnerships between non-governmental associations and healthcare institutions, where the associations would organise the fieldwork and counselling with target groups, while mobile healthcare teams provided the services of testing and post-testing counselling. However most of the provisions are made in selected urban settlements.

The APOHA organisation works with persons suffering from HIV/AIDS. This association brings together and provides support to persons infected with HIV and suffering from AIDS, and also undertakes advocacy activities to improve the status and medical treatment of persons suffering from AIDS.

GTZ is starting up a project to raise awareness about the health issues of youth. The project will be implemented at the local level. This project will focus on strengthening of the local youth centers' role as providers of information and of „peer“ education. GTZ will apply the interactive method „Join in circuit“ which has been implemented in 16 different countries to date.

Combating Addiction

The issue of addiction and its causes is a complex issue of social psychology. Experts believe that addiction is often the result of a range of factors from within the family and society that make a young person vulnerable to the negative effects of the environment, and especially the peer group. This issue, therefore, requires adequate and professional responses in the form of professional counselling, education and prevention activities.

Currently, there are no official data about the number of drug users however, there are certain estimates according to which BiH currently has 120,000 drug users, of which 15% are recreational drug users.¹³⁵ An alarming fact is that the average age of initial experience with drugs is cited by some studies as 16, while almost half the respondents said their first experience with drugs took place before they were 15 years old.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Drugs – a lucrative business in BiH. CIN. (2008). http://www.cin.ba/Stories/P16_SME/?cid=816,2,1

¹³⁶ UNICEF. *Biological and Behavioral Survey among Injecting Drug Users, Bosnia and Herzegovina*. (2007). http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2008/bosnia_and_herzegovina_2008_country_progress_report_en.pdf

Addiction problems are increasingly visible in BiH, and the constant increase in young addicts was the motivation behind many activities related to prevention and treatment of addiction, as well as reintegration into society.

FBiH has a Federal Programme for the Prevention of Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Other Addictions that focuses on reducing the damages caused by the use and abuse of alcohol, drugs and other hazardous substances, on continuous prevention of addiction, and on providing adequate conditions for early detection, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts in the community.¹³⁷

Prevention is organised through various forms of education, workshops, seminars, campaigns to raise awareness, debates aimed at young people, etc. These activities are organised by various social stakeholders ranging from non-governmental organisations, educational institutions to the police and other government institutions. These projects are often implemented in the form of cooperation between various stakeholders, which can be a precondition for their success. The problem with prevention activities is that the information they provide to young people is often partial, inadequately communicated, and in some cases contradictory in terms of the messages it sends to young people at risk of becoming addicts. Projects are often *ad hoc* and lead by non-professionals or persons with limited professional knowledge, which can often turn out to be counterproductive.

Treating addiction is an area that must be approached very seriously and with a detailed analysis and plan for all steps necessary to make treatment successful and to successfully reintegrate former addicts into society.

There are a number of institutions in BiH that treat addicts – although far too few than would be required. These are Institutes for Addiction Treatment working within state healthcare institutions. There are also non-governmental organisations working with persons suffering from various addictions that have rehabilitation communes, as well as prior counselling programmes and later reintegration activities. A good example of an organisation implementing such activities is the Viktorija association from Banja Luka that has implemented projects and worked with addicts in communes for a number of years. The PROI Association of Former Addicts from Sarajevo also focuses its activities on addicts and their families, as well as on activities within rehabilitation communes.

Additionally, harm reduction activities are also implemented in BiH. These programmes provide addicts with sterile needles and syringes in exchange for used ones. Although there are a number of ethical dilemmas concerning such programmes, the harm reduction programmes can mitigate some of the negative effects of addiction such as the potential risk of spreading diseases. Some of the organisations that have implemented such programmes as part of their activities are Poenta from Banja Luka and Margina from Zenica.

In addition, some religious communities also organise work on treating addictions in BiH and outside the country. These religious communes provide addicts with various activities through working in the communes, as well as religious instruction as an alternative to hazardous behaviour.

However, staying in communes and working with addicts is often not entirely successful, because upon returning to their original environments, many addicts often lapse back to their old habits and old friends, which increases the risk and most often results in returning to the world of drugs.

As stated before, the issue of youth health requires a multidimensional and multi-sector approach, and in order to avoid a relapse, former addicts require support in terms of education, employment and/or social policies which are unfortunately all inadequate.

¹³⁷ Ministry of Health of the Federation of BiH and Health Insurance Department. *Federation's program for prevention of alcoholism and drug addiction* (2002). http://www.narkomanija.ba/fileadmin/zakonodavstvo/BiH_Federalni_program_prevenicije_alkoholizma_narkomanije_i_drugih_ovisnosti.pdf



Youth social assistance

→ Summary

In every society, there are certain population groups that are much closer to the poverty threshold and social exclusion because of their specific characteristics.

One of the main conclusions of the situation analysis that we performed is that the existing administrative and legal structure in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not capable of recognising the real needs of young people on the whole and of specific population groups, e.g. persons with special needs or persons that leave orphanages, young Roma etc.

The usual attitude in the field of social policies must be abandoned and a new approach, one more sensitive to specific and contemporary needs and interests of young people must be adopted urgently. No responsible government fights against juvenile delinquency by merely opening jails for minors, and against violence and chauvinistic movements through police pressure or by ignoring the problem. Hence, it has to be secured that the whole state structure, i.e. competent institutions, develop coordinated policies in various fields that are of importance for the position of young people in society.

In a conceptual sense, one can distinguish two types of social policies: those of essential importance for the alleviation of poverty and social exclusion; and those that contribute to the betterment of the overall social and economic position of young people. On the one hand, governments should develop a mechanism for recognising those households, social groups and individuals that are in real need of social assistance, i.e. those households whose incomes are below the defined poverty threshold.

On the other hand, governments should develop policies and measures that will be directed at young people as specific population categories whose social status is different than that of adults.

In every society, there are certain population groups that are much closer to the poverty threshold and social exclusion because of their specific characteristics. In our context, these population groups encompass persons with special needs, the Roma people, returnees, and single parents. Moreover, the overall population of young people is by itself also a very sensitive group and much closer to the poverty threshold than adults.

Finally, young people have to be prepared for assuming new roles in the community. In that sense, finding a solution to problems related to financial independence, starting families, housing, etc. should be placed among priority issues of policy-makers. All these problems are related to transition from youth to adulthood and in view of the overall social and economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, that transition is significantly lengthened.

In view of the latest findings on young people,¹³⁸ we are justified in saying that a large portion of young people belongs to a socially excluded group. The Analysis of the Position of Young People

found that many young people do not participate in their communities, they do not enjoy their basic rights, their future is uncertain and their voices are not being heard through the existing institutional mechanisms.

The European Union is clearly committed to resolving these problems, both in member states and in potential candidate countries, in order to achieve adequate youth participation in the community and increased contribution of young people to all aspects of public life. It is quite certain that in the near future, BiH will receive the Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) and subsequently the National Action Plan as a basis for realising common goals in countering social exclusion. At present, decision makers must set the basic paths of action for social policies affecting young people by relying on accurate and reliable information on their position.

The strategic priorities in social policy can be summarised as follows:

- **Harmonising the standards, regulations and policies between various administrative units in order to introduce the fundamental principle of needs-based resource allocation.**
- **Establishing an institutional framework to facilitate inclusion policies. This framework includes sustainable integration programmes for specific groups of the population such as persons with disabilities, single mothers, Roma, returnees, persons with criminal records, addicts, etc.**
- **Improving the effectiveness of social assistance and protection services through organisational reforms and by simplifying procedures at centres for social work in line with international standards.**
- **Creating a long-term housing policy, including favourable loans based on the labour and pro-birth rate model.**

→ Legal framework

Social assistance is one of the fundamental human rights that Bosnia and Herzegovina has to provide to its citizens on the basis of international conventions it has signed. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a signatory of the 1961 European Social Charter¹³⁹, which was amended in 1996. The legal framework that currently regulates the social sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina includes this international convention. The Charter states that social assistance, if it is to be efficient, has to be legally defined and based on objective criteria, envisaged for successful implementation and conditioned only by the needs of beneficiaries. Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Charter on 11 May 2004, but it has still not been ratified in the Parliament. The European Social Charter, which refers to the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights prescribes that Bosnia and Herzegovina has to provide:

¹³⁸ Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina and GTZ, *Analysis of the Position of Youth and the Youth Sector in BiH*. (Sarajevo, 2008).
<http://www.mladi.gov.ba/images/stories/aktuelnosti/Analisa%20polozaja%20mladih%20i%20omladinskog%20sektora%20u%20BiH%5B1%5D.pdf>

¹³⁹ Council of Europe. *European Social Charter*. (Strasbourg, 1996).
http://www.coe.ba/pdf/NewRevESC_A6%20Bosnian_21.01.03.pdf

„effective exercise of the right to social and medical assistance“, and, at the same time „to ensure that any person who is without adequate resources and who is unable to secure such resources either by his own efforts or from other sources, in particular by benefits under a social security scheme, be granted adequate assistance...“.¹⁴⁰

The Dayton Peace Accords¹⁴¹, Section VII, state that signatory parties have to ensure:

“for all persons, in their territories, the highest level of internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms, which includes the right to social assistance.”

In the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁴² the right to social assistance is guaranteed by its Annex I, which contains the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina emphasises that the general principles of international law are an integral part of the law of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Entities, and the right to social assistance given by the aforementioned agreement is guaranteed by the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) also prescribes:

“The Federation will ensure the application of the highest level of internationally recognised rights and freedoms provided in the documents listed in the Annex”.¹⁴³

The European Social Charter also forms an integral part of the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which prescribes that all courts, administrative bodies and other state authorities are obliged to comply with the Charter.

Responsibilities in the field of social policy can be exercised jointly or separately in individual cantons, with the obligation of constant coordination by the FBiH Government. According to the FBiH Constitution, cantons are responsible for all issues that do not fall within the competences of the FBiH Government, which includes the responsibility for the implementation of social policy¹⁴⁴.

Such a mechanism of delegation of responsibilities in the area of social protection is one of the reasons why the rights to social protection are not being equally and consistently provided to all FBiH citizens. The FBiH Constitution is not completely clear when it comes to the delegation of responsibilities among the cantons and FBiH Government, which results in misinterpretations in terms of monitoring of the provision of social assistance, as well as incomplete application of the entity law in cantons and municipalities.

The RS Constitution prescribes that RS constitutional organisation is based upon

„guarantee and protection of human rights and freedoms, social justice, equality of national communities and national minorities, in accordance with international standards.“¹⁴⁵

The RS constitution also prescribes:

„provision of assistance and social security to the disabled citizens who are unable to work and have no funds to support themselves“.¹⁴⁶

The RS Constitution also defines the obligations of municipal authorities and states that they:

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, article 13(1).

¹⁴¹ *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (The Dayton Peace Agreement)*; Article VII.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, Annex 4.

¹⁴³ *FBiH Constitution*. Federation BiH Official Gazette number 9/94.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapter III.

¹⁴⁵ *RS Constitution*. RS Official Gazette number 28/94.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

„through its bodies and in accordance with the law, shall provide for the specific needs of citizens in the area of social welfare“.

Compared to the Constitution of FBiH, the RS Constitution gives a much clearer framework for provision of social welfare in accordance to internationally assumed responsibilities.

Both entities have laws that regulate the right to social welfare. In FBiH, the relevant law is the Law on the basics of social welfare, protection of civilian victims of war and families with children.¹⁴⁷ In RS, the relevant law is the Law on social protection¹⁴⁸.

The right to social protection is also prescribed by the Statute of the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁴⁹ but is regulated in more detail by the Law on Social Protection in the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁵⁰.

In FBiH, cantons have to adopt cantonal laws no later than three months after the adoption of the Federal Law and harmonise them with entity regulations, which is a process that has not been yet completed.

In RS, the rights to social protection that stem from the Law and municipality regulations are exercised following decisions of municipalities. These rights very often come down to financial one-time assistance in cases of illness etc.

Lack of harmony within the legal framework and insufficient legal regulations, which condition the right to social welfare and protection, create inequalities among different areas within Bosnia and Herzegovina. These inequalities relate to the impossibility of exercising the rights to social protection and differences in the degree of that assistance.

→ Institutional framework

At the state-level, the Ministry of Civil Affairs is responsible for determining the basic principles for the coordination of activities, harmonisation of steps taken by entity institutions, and devising of strategies.

The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina is responsible for the implementation of international conventions and other documents in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and promotion and protection of individual and universal rights.

The Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina is also responsible to ensure that legislative regulations at all levels correspond to internationally assumed obligations.

In FBiH, social policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Government of FBiH.

In RS, this sector is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.

In the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the social policy is within the responsibility of the Department of Health and Other Services.

At the cantonal and municipality levels in both entities and in the Brcko District of BiH, there are centres for social work or social protection.

When speaking about policies of improving the overall social and economic position of young people, and even about population policies, it is important to mention the areas of housing policy.

¹⁴⁷ *Law on basic principles of social protection, protection of the civilian victims of war and protection of families with children*. FBiH Official Gazette numbers. 36/99, 59/04.

¹⁴⁸ *Law on social protection*. RS Official Gazette numbers 5/93, 15/96, 11/03.

¹⁴⁹ *Statute of the Brčko-District of BiH*. Brčko-District of BiH's Official Gazette numbers 1/00, 4/00, 7/04, 20/05, 24/05, 3/07.

¹⁵⁰ *Law on social protection*. Brčko-District of BiH's Official Gazette numbers 1/03, 4/04.

The fields of housing policy, urban and spatial planning are defined at the entity level and in the Brcko District of BiH. Both entities have Ministries of Spatial Planning, albeit with very different scopes and terms of reference and responsibilities.

In contrast to RS, responsibilities related to housing issues and spatial planning in FBiH lie with the cantons, while the Government of the Brcko District of BiH is directly responsible for these matters. Responsibilities are further delegated among entities, municipalities and cantons.¹⁵¹

It is important to emphasise that the social position of young people entails a multi-sector approach, that cooperation has to exist among competent authorities in the fields of education, work and employment, health, sports and culture, to name but a few. There are no clear guidelines within the existing legal framework for their cooperation, be it on a legal basis or on the basis of certain strategies. Here we can cite an example of the German Framework Law on Children and Young People¹⁵², which forms part of the Body of Social-Welfare Laws that make such cooperation indispensable.

→ Existing systems of social assistance and protection

All previous analyses of the system of social protection suggest that there exist fragmented and expensive administrative and legal structures that result in inefficient and ineffective expenditure of public funds available to governments at various levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is necessary to take into account the fact that these structures function in the context of many displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, destroyed infrastructure, high unemployment rate in formal sector, and slow creation of new jobs and insufficient scope of investments. However, when it comes to social policy, there is lots of room for reforms that would lead to more efficient spending of public funds and reduction of poverty, social exclusion and improvement of the overall welfare of young people.

The basis for defining sustainable and efficient social policy lies in reviewing the real social situation among the population. Due to a developed informal economy and great scope of unregistered incomes, it is very difficult to get a clear social picture. Hence, it is necessary to establish mechanisms for selection of beneficiaries of social assistance based on an evaluation of the overall economic situation. Such an approach would be much more efficient in solving the problem of poverty when compared to the existing system based on various needy population categories. Experiences from other countries in transition give excellent examples of how it could be done in practice.

In the long run, labour market and employment represent one of the most efficient mechanisms for reducing poverty and social exclusion, which depends, above all, on the overall economic development. Information of Directorate for economic planning of BiH is that in the last several years, Bosnia and Herzegovina's GDP has grown by 5.5% every year. However, because of the aftermath of war, the high unemployment rate, consequences of the privatisation process and slow economic development, this growth does not result in significant decreases of unemployment. The relatively high growth rate only alleviates the influx of labour that comes to the labour market every year, but not the overall unemployment. Hence, the social protection sector is conditioned by the efficiency of the employment sector, active and specific employment policies, and the development of small and medium enterprises.

Also, the increase in total social income does not guarantee that the living standard of poor people shall improve and stabilise. With the aim of achieving overall progress, it is necessary to have mechanisms that will enable allocation of a part of new income to the poor. In a situation

¹⁵¹ BiH Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees. *Housing and urban profile of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Sarajevo, 2006). <http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/PDF/Stambeni%20i%20urbani%20profil%20BiH.pdf>

¹⁵² www.ijab.de

in which the labour market is not an adequately efficient mechanism, i.e. when there are not many poor people among the employed population, the governments responsible have to develop policies that will increase poor persons' presence on the labour market, taking into account equal participation of persons of different ages.

Designers of the revised document titled BiH Mid-term Development Strategy (2004-2007) are aware of that fact and they emphasise that apart from the unemployed, people who are employed in the informal market are also one of the vulnerable groups.

The mechanism of selection of beneficiaries of social protection is also a very important part of social policies. The document titled BiH Mid-term Development Strategy emphasises that the existing mechanism of selection of beneficiaries is inadequate and that it has to be reformed so as to include into programmes of social protection those persons who really are in need of help. Similar conclusions were presented in other documents as well (IBHI 2005¹⁵³, UNHCR/OSCE 2005¹⁵⁴), while emphasising the need for ratification of the European Social Charter with the aim of implementing and exercising the rights that relate to social protection.

It is widely accepted that the existing system of social protection in BiH, which is based on allocation of funds to various traditionally defined categories of persons in need, should be reformed. On the one hand, experience shows that public spending for programmes of social protection has had a very negative impact. This impact mostly came down to stimulating unemployment and reducing the supply at the labour market.

On the other hand, the analyses performed (World Bank 2003¹⁵⁵, CEPOS 2005¹⁵⁶) confirm complete inefficiency in the process of selection of beneficiaries of social protection. Governments at all levels in BiH should not allow for the existing insufficient funds to be ineffectively allocated.

Empirical research (Commission for Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH and GTZ, 2008) shows that one fourth of young people live in households whose total average income is below 60% of the average income of the overall population. The research shows that only 7% of these households receive some form of social assistance. Earlier surveys show that only 4% of poor households are included in some programmes of social protection¹⁵⁷. This data, together with the fact that 75% of programme beneficiaries are not poor, suggest that there exists a totally inefficient system of social welfare. Another analysis confirms that only 4.7% of poor people receive some form of social assistance, while 77.2% of the beneficiaries are not poor¹⁵⁸.

In the context of analyzing the youth sector and in relation to social policies, it is important to emphasise that young people who live in households that are below the poverty line are an extremely vulnerable population whose future is completely uncertain. Young people from these households frequently drop out of school, find employment in the informal sector that provides no security, and have a very poor basis for independent life, solution of housing problems and starting a family.

Social measures in the fight against poverty must take into account the consequences of living in such households for young people. This has not been the case and it has to be changed.

Theoreticians in the field of social policy would find it very difficult to understand how a much more sophisticated system of social protection that exists in FBiH has poorer results when compared to the system in RS.¹⁵⁹ One of the main reasons for such a situation lies in the fragmentation and lack of

¹⁵³ World Bank. *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Poverty assessment*.

¹⁵⁴ CEPOS. *Transfers targeting*. (Sarajevo, 2005).

¹⁵⁵ World Bank (2003). *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Poverty assessment*.

¹⁵⁶ *Transfers targeting*. CEPOS, Sarajevo 2005.

¹⁵⁷ *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Poverty assessment*.

¹⁵⁸ *Transfers targeting*. CEPOS, Sarajevo 2005

¹⁵⁹ CEPOS. *The link between economy demand and education supply in Bosnia and Herzegovina – The role of referral institutions*. (Sarajevo, 2005).

harmony within the system of social protection in FBiH. Since the system is more decentralised than the one in RS, it might be assumed that it is closer to beneficiaries and that the process of selecting beneficiaries is much more efficient. However, practice has shown that the basic setup of such a fragmented system does not allow an effective allocation of social transfers. The basic setup stems from the system based on the approach that takes into account different population categories.

Another deficiency of the existing system of social protection is the lack of adequate mechanism for fiscal equalisation that would enable the transfer of funds among different administrative units.

After the introduction of VAT, a system of equalisation was developed that enables transfers of funds collected through indirect taxation from rich to poor municipalities, i.e. to those municipalities with lower overall incomes. However, no one can guarantee that the funds distributed to these municipalities will be used for solving the most pressing problems of persons in need.

The general conclusion that we can make is: the existing system of social protection is completely irrational. **The majority of beneficiaries who receive social welfare do not fall within the category of poor people, while the majority of those who are in need of such welfare receive no assistance.** As we have already said, the latter group includes many young people.

Moreover, there is a territorial inequality conditioned by different income capacities of individual administrative units. This situation affects local communities with a long-term interest of keeping young people because they are the ones that should enable long-term sustainable development. In other words, the existing system results in unequal regional development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Housing Policy

In order to resolve the housing issues of young people, individual governments have adopted special policies. Good practice examples can be found in the Sarajevo Canton and in RS.

In RS, there is a Housing Fund and special resources that the RS Government has allocated for young people, with a focus on young married couples (up to 35). The Fund was regulated by a contract between the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports and the Commercial Bank in June 2007. This introduced loans of up to 50,000 BAM, with a favourable interest rate of 3.75% and a payment period of 25 years. The bank's interest rate is 4.75%, but the Ministry subsidises 1%. The loans do not require guarantors or a deposit, but are conditioned upon a mortgage and at least one of the spouses being employed". For loans up to 20,000 BAM, the mortgage is not obligatory. Approximately 3,000,000 BAM has been secured initially for these loans.

In the Sarajevo Canton, this form of support is reserved for a specific population of young people. In order to implement the Decision on the Conditions and Modalities of Resolving Youth Housing Needs¹⁶⁰ in 2003, 2004 and 2005, the Ministry of Housing Affairs deposited a total of 4,445,992.85 BAM in a number of banks for approving housing loans for scientific, expert, cultural and sports professionals up to 35 years of age. The funds have been deposited for a period of 20 years, with the banks taking on the risk of recovery and participating with their own funds at a ration of 1:2. The Government of the Sarajevo Canton sees this as an important project, because it enabled 400 young people to resolve their housing issue.

Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully because of their poverty, lack of basic competencies and life-long learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income

¹⁶⁰ Decision on the Conditions and Modalities of Resolving Youth Housing Needs, Sarajevo Canton Official Gazette, No. 19/03, 10/05.

and education opportunities as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless and unable to exercise any influence on the decisions that affect their daily lives.¹⁶¹

National Action Plans on Social Inclusion (NAPs/incl) are the main channels through which EU member states realise the jointly agreed objectives. They analyze the nature and extent of poverty and social exclusion, identify major trends and challenges, and subsequently outline detailed policy measures planned. NAPs/incl follow an agreed structure and cover a two-year period. The Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) precedes the NAPs/incl process for acceding or candidate countries prior to their EU membership. JIMs analyze the situation of social exclusion, identify key challenges, review the effectiveness of existing policies and identify key priorities for the future. For this purpose has been established specific priorities, such as:

- **The promotion of active labour market policies and the development of coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies in order to increase labour market integration, especially of the long-term unemployed and groups at high risk of poverty and social exclusion;**
- **Ensuring that social protection systems have sufficient coverage and levels of payment to guarantee an adequate minimum income for all to live with dignity, while at the same time removing employment disincentives;**
- **Increasing access of the most vulnerable groups and those at the highest risk of social exclusion to decent housing, quality health services and long-term protection services, special and regular opportunities for education and life-long learning, including the transition from school to work, with particular reference to those young people who leave school with poor or no qualifications;**
- **Focusing on poverty elimination and social exclusion among children as the key step towards combating the inter-generational inheritance of poverty, plus initiatives in early education so that children and poor families are identified and supported;**
- **Decreasing the levels of poverty and social exclusion and increasing the participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the labour market to match the level of the majority of the population.** ¹⁶²

Within its analysis of the social exclusion in B&H UNDP has emphasized that the excluded groups in BiH are foremost the elderly, youth, children, Roma, people with disabilities, and minority returnees. The report states that children and youth may find themselves in the socially excluded category, or may represent a group of socially excluded, if they originate from low income families.¹⁶³

The survey indicates that children and youth may find themselves at risk of poverty:

- **if they do not continue their education after primary school (their share among the poor amounting to 57%);**
- **if they are unemployed (17% of the total number of poor);**
- **if they are returnees to some parts of the country (10% of the poor);**
- **if they belong to the category of children with developmental and/or health difficulties, or with physical and/or mental disabilities because a minimum percentage (0.7%) attend regular school; and**

¹⁶¹ European Commission. *Joint Report of the Commission and the Council for Social Inclusion*. (Brussels, 2005).

¹⁶² UNDP. *Report on the Human Development of BiH - Social Inclusion in BiH*. (2007). <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/europethecis/bosniahercegovina/name,3437,en.html>

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 62

- if they belong to other minority groups, such as the Roma.¹⁶⁴

In view of the latest findings on young people¹⁶⁵, we are justified in saying that a large portion of young people belongs to a socially excluded group.

→ Conclusion

Social policy towards young people must abandon the traditional approach to this population that aims only to “facilitate survival”. Employment policies must turn a new leaf in the approach to the unemployment problem and ensure support for young people from finishing school, through finding a job and provide protection in case of unemployment. Through fiscal and income policies, relevant institutions must start considering the housing and other problems of young people and base public fund allocations on an analysis of real needs.

There is a number of structural factors that determine the position of young people. According to a traditional understanding, these are social class, gender, region or type of environment. However, a more contemporary approach in social policy theory emphasises other factors, such as: physical or mental disabilities, growing up in an orphanage, a criminal record, and in the BiH context, we may also add returnee status or belonging to the Roma minority.

Coles (1995) compares the transition of young people to a snakes and ladders game and vividly describes how members of these sensitive populations slip up with additional obstacles and exclusion structures, and remain unemployed, without solving their housing issues, marginalised, in other words, isolated from the basic means of building a secure future. The development of appropriate social policies for young people must ensure that the path to the ladder is safe and appropriately labelled. Apart from that, valid policies must systematically and continuously address the problems of those who stray from the paths or drop out of the game. IN this way, those dealing with youth issues can support the transition of young people by passing timely decisions to improve their position.

If BiH wishes to have an active policy and strategy for young people, it must be clear about the goals and directions of its social policies and the modes for their implementation. It is necessary to take into account the way in which youth transition is determined – both by selecting the opportunities made available to young people and by the decisions that they and those around them make in the transition from one status into another. In that sense, it is necessary for each social policy directed towards young people to include an active understanding of their transition and not a passive understanding that treats young people as persons who need only ‘survive’ their youth in order to ‘become’ adults. Youth is an age to develop the main preconditions for an appropriate and quality transition to the next phase.

This approach does not seek to minimise the importance of socio-economic conditions affecting the prospects of young people, but clearly focuses on career development for young people, which could lead to a much needed shift in decision making by both young people and those around them.

Finally, social policies should take into account the complexity of the needs and interests of young people today. Meeting these needs means including young people in the community as equal members, ensuring that they are not exploited or abused, and that they have the necessary support to ensure long-term welfare.

¹⁶⁴ UNDP. Report on the Human Development of BiH - Social Inclusion in BiH. (2007).

¹⁶⁵ Analysis of the position of youth and the youth sector in BiH.



Active participation of young people in public life, development of civil society and volunteer work

→ Introduction

One of the key interpretations of the importance of participation of young people is contained in the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life:

“The active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional levels is essential if we are to build more democratic, inclusive and prosperous societies. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity, and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.”¹⁶⁶

This is one of the EU definitions illustrating the importance of states’ special emphasis in their public policies on the development of active participation of young people in society. It does not fall within a separate field or topic, but is a principle of defining public policies and of modern administration at all government levels.

Participation of young people is of utmost importance to the development of any society, and especially of a society like that of Bosnia and Herzegovina that is in the process of transition. When such a transition also results in young people being among the vulnerable population, disenfranchised, marginalised and socially excluded, and with their needs not seriously recognised in the given society, participation and activism of young people remain the only chance to bring about a change in youth policy, i.e. to make young people a priority and to invest more in them.

“ensuring young people are consulted and more involved in the decisions which concern them and, in general, the life of their communities”

One of the most important European documents about young people and youth policy is the European Commission White Paper from 2001, which defines participation as one of the fundamental principles, whose goal is ***“ensuring young people are consulted and more involved in the decisions which concern them and, in general, the life of their communities.”***¹⁶⁷

In the practical sense, the participation of young people means that they know about their rights and duties in society, that they exercise and defend these rights, that there are opportunities and ways for them to present their needs, and that those needs are taken into account when defining public policies. In the context of development of youth policies, participation of young people is officially among the 11 Council of Europe indicators for a youth policy, which are used when assessing the level of development of national youth policies.

¹⁶⁶ Council of Europe. European Charter on participation of youth in community's life at the regional and local level, revised version. (2003).

¹⁶⁷ European Commission. New incentive for European youth: The White Book. (Brussels, 2001).

There are different models of creating public policies and their final shape depends on the context, organisation of a state and the nature of the local community itself. The only valid rule to be followed is to provide ways to include as many young people as possible and let them participate directly in the decision-making process. Also, it is important that state and governmental institutions secure the existence of bodies for youth participation, and to provide for their activities through relevant laws, resources, infrastructure and other forms of support.

An Overview of the Pressing Challenges

Low level of participation of young people in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society and a lack of understanding of the topic

The basic conclusion is that the level of participation of young people in society is low, that their voices are not heard enough when it comes to policy-making, and that young people are rather marginalised. It is a fact that young people are quite aware of, as well as the whole of society. Still, the very principle of participation of young people is not sufficiently accepted at all governmental levels. This principle entails that there exists a youth policy, which includes legislative regulations, introduction of concrete measures, and investments into greater participation of young people. Also, there is a lack of understanding of what the principle of participation of young people represents and how it should be implemented in practice.

Various forms of participation, small number of actors, low level of influence

Participation of young people in society can take different forms. Only the last 2006 general elections saw significantly higher voter turnout among young people of 47% (Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2006), while in all other forms of activities the participation of young people is still low. For example, only 5% of young people are members of youth organisations/associations; 6% are members of a political party, and 1% are members of youth representative bodies. In the last twelve months, more than 95% of young people never made any contact with a politician nor participated in any public debates, political discussions on the Internet, discussions about municipal budgets etc.¹⁶⁸

Lack of legal regulations

Apart from the RS Law on Youth Organisation¹⁶⁹ no other law treats or defines the various forms of participation of young people or their representative bodies, as well as obligations of the state in that respect. The lack of legal framework is a great hindrance to participation of young people and their influence in the decision-making process. Such a situation is made even worse by the fact that the definition of young people is not unique in all of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is one of the major objections listed in the Council of Europe's report on the legal framework related to youth issues (Council of Europe, 2005).

Lack of a programmatic approach and transparency in the process of allocation and distribution of public funds

There is a lack of programmatic approach in the activities of public institutions and competent government ministries in relation to youth issues. Such an approach should be based on relevant indicators in connection to individual problems and it should contain concrete solutions that include realistic goals and clearly defined activities, as well as performance indicators for measuring goal

¹⁶⁸ Commission for coordination of youth issues in BiH and GTZ, *Analysis of the position of youth and the youth sector in BiH*. (Sarajevo, 2008).
<http://www.mladi.gov.ba/images/stories/aktuelnosti/Analiza%20polozaja%20mladih%20i%20omladinskog%20sektora%20u%20BiH%5B1%5D.pdf>

¹⁶⁹ Law on youth organizing. RS Official Gazette number 98/04.

achievements. Also, it is necessary to create and implement mechanisms for participation of young people in decision-making processes.

The existing allocation of funds is done through a non-transparent process that does not contain characteristics of a programmatic approach. After the allocation of funds among ministries is complete, their distribution to budget beneficiaries and NGOs is done through a non-transparent process, with inadequate or non-existent criteria. This results in partial or complete inefficiency in solving youth issues. The shortcoming should be overcome through certain legal solutions.

One of the special problems in relation to the issue of allocation of funds is that the administration does not speak the language of young people, i.e. open competitions and invitations are not written in the language adjusted to young people, and are not published in media read by young people. This results in lower responsiveness of young people to such invitations.

Lack of public spaces for young people

There is a clearly visible lack of public spaces for young people and their active participation. Such public spaces can be single-purpose or multi-purpose spaces, open or closed spaces, where youth activities are implemented. Even though before the war, almost every municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina had a building specially devoted to youth activities – such as a youth house or cultural centre – today, there is a shortage of functional public buildings where young people can organise their activities or gather, gain additional education, socialise etc.

Poor quality of youth work and youth-related activities

There is an evident lack of programmes for strengthening youth capacities. Apart from resources, active participation of young people also requires certain knowledge, information and skills. Formal education curricula do not adequately cover topics such as the skills necessary for writing and managing youth projects, for communicating with institutions etc.

Also, working with young people is not promoted enough and there is a lack of understanding of this topic for its adequate implementation in practice. Hence, an adequate and sufficient approach of young people to informal education, working with young people and youth activities is disabled.

Too little promotion of an active role of young people in society

The media do not encourage greater participation of young people in society. Youth programmes are almost non-existent on state TV and radio stations, while individual rare shows give very little space to affirming young leaders in the promotion of active participation of young people in society. Occasional talk-show programmes have young people in the audience and they are mostly mere objects in the thematic coverage, often in negative contexts (e.g. juvenile delinquency, crime pages) or in the field of entertainment (e.g. young singing talents, reality shows etc.).

→ Legal framework

Legal solutions have to entail ways of participation of young people in making decision about issues relevant for this population. Concretely speaking, young people have to be consulted in the decision-making process related to employment, education or activities of youth centres in local communities, for example. Young people should be included in the processes of planning, monitoring and evaluating individual policies, and it is necessary to find institutional solutions for their participation, as well as support through public resources.

The BiH Constitution and Election Law¹⁷⁰ give each person of age the right to vote and be elected.

Participation of young people within the educational system is defined by laws on secondary

¹⁷⁰ Bosnia and Herzegovina's Election Law. BiH Official Gazette number 23/01.

education and laws on higher education. Also, there are statutes of schools, universities and individual colleges. Moreover, there are also laws on associations and foundations, i.e. the possibility of creating individual associations of students etc.

When it comes to secondary education, the law provides for a possibility of forming student councils in individual high schools. This exhausts the definition of that form of participation of young people and leaves spaces for bylaws to regulate the activities and existence of such bodies.

Laws on higher education at the level of RS and the cantons leave space for creating associations of students. However, there are no specific bylaws that would precisely regulate their work and influence on higher education policy, i.e. relations with the university senate, rector, competent ministries.

A compromise long-awaited state-level framework law on higher education was adopted in the summer of 2007. The Framework Law envisages the following:

“At least 15% of the senate members shall be students, representatives of students from each of the cycles.” Also „the statute or another core document of the higher education institution shall envisage establishment of the student representative body. The representative body shall represent the interests of students and shall contribute to the societal, cultural, academic and physical and recreational needs of students, based on democratic principles and pursuant to the law. Student representative bodies may establish the association of student representative bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through which membership shall be realised in international organisations and student associations.”¹⁷¹.

In RS, a separate law defines youth organisations and associations as follows:

“Youth organisations represent various forms of gathering of young people (clubs, centres, leagues, associations etc.) that are organised following various principles, e.g. territorial, vocational, common principles etc.”; i.e. a youth organisation “is a voluntary and statute-regulated organisation with the legal status equal to that of an association of citizens, which acts on the basis of principles of volunteerism, democracy and compliance with legal regulations, and contributes through its activities to improving the position of young people; the inclusion of young people in society; and to solving the problems of young people.”¹⁷²

This Law, apart from defining youth organisations, also regulates other non-institutional forms of participation of young people. The following excerpts from the Law allow for specific forms of participation:

“Devising and implementation of Youth Policy is performed by the Secretariat, competent ministries, city and municipality bodies, educational, cultural, sports and other institutions, organisations and bodies in cooperation with youth councils mentioned in Articles 39 and 44 of this Law, municipal and city youth commissions and the Youth Committee of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska.” The Law also specifically defines youth organisation at the level of Republika Srpska – “At least ten youth organisations can form an association (a union, etc.) organised to perform activities in the whole of Republika Srpska.” The umbrella youth organisation in RS is defined as follows: “Youth organisations of Republika Srpska mentioned in Article 38 of this Law form the Youth Council of Republika Srpska (hereinafter: Youth Council) and participate in its work.” Networking of youth organisations and establishment of official representative youth bodies at local levels is regulated by Article 44, which states: “Youth organisations active in a city or municipality areas may form city or municipal youth councils (hereinafter: city or municipal youth councils), which play an important role in solving the problems of young people in their respective areas.”

¹⁷¹ Draft Law on higher education. BiH Official Gazette number 59/07

¹⁷² Law on youth organising. RS Official Gazette number 98/04.

Obligations on the part of entity and municipal authorities mentioned in the Law are especially important. The Law explicitly states that support from authorities is indispensable in terms of infrastructure and funds for activities of youth organisations and youth councils, as well as other bodies active in the field of youth participation.

The existence of the Law on Youth Organisations in RS enabled significantly higher investments by the authorities into the development of youth participation when compared to the situation in FBiH in the period 2004–2008.

In FBiH, an initiative for adopting a law on youth policies was discussed in the period from 2006 to 2008 but to no avail. Also, there is no similar legal regulation at the state-level in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Apart from the mentioned legal regulations, great importance rests with the laws on associations and foundations at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina and complement entity laws. Youth associations are registered on the basis of these laws.

Separate bylaws that regulate activities of legislative authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which mostly pertains to the rules of procedure of the parliament, also regulate the existence of government bodies for youth policies within legislative bodies. These bodies encompass youth commissions/committees. Such a body exists in the RS National Assembly, and also in the FBiH Parliament from 2008 and several cantons.

A separate Law on volunteerism was adopted in RS in 2008 as a result of several years of lobbying and activities of individual civil society organisations and representatives of competent institutions. The adoption of this Law is important because it will open the space for stronger impetus to development of volunteer work and its recognition. Young volunteers in FBiH are in unequal position because there is no such legal framework in that entity.

The terms volunteer and volunteer work are still mentioned in the Labour Laws in RS and FBiH within the definition “volunteer – trainee”. “Volunteers – trainees”, as defined in those legal regulations, are persons who can complete their internships, without remuneration, as a precondition for taking professional exams. The terms volunteers is here misinterpreted because volunteerism is based on an individual’s free will to provide volunteer services. On the other hand, completing and internship is a prerequisite in the process of taking a professional exam. And finally, both the internship and professional exam are required only for certain professions, which only reduces the number of persons who can thus have a possibility to complete their internships through volunteer work.

➔ Institutional framework

The highest level of participation of young people in the decision-making processes in Europe is often called “co-management”. In its documents, the Council of Europe proposes that bodies should be established, at all government levels, that would lead the process of developing youth policies and would comprise of representatives of competent government bodies and youth organisations, i.e. representative youth bodies.

The practice of implementing the principles of co-management in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still in the offing. It was introduced as a pioneer activity in RS through the Law on Youth Organisations. The Law introduces the term “managerial committee for young people” and entails its existence at the entity and municipal levels. However, such a representative body has not been established almost anywhere, and where it has, it is in quite functional for several reasons. The most important of those reasons are lack of experience, skills and guidelines for the activities of such a body and doubtful leadership. In any case, the Law opens quite enough space for advancing and developing the role of the managerial committee.

Such a practice does not exist in FBiH, but in several municipalities ad hoc working groups were formed, with youth representatives as their members, and tasked with preparing youth strategies.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Association of Youth Officers of BiH, *Analysis of youth strategies at the local level*. (AYO, GTZ, 2008).

At the state-level, the principle of co-management can be found in the Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the Council of Ministers because it has 8 government and 10 NGO equal representatives. The work of the Commission is defined through the Directive of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina (295/04) and separate rules of procedure. The most important functions of the Commission are to coordinate activities in the fields of developing youth policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and international cooperation.

The situation is somewhat better when it comes to local parliaments. Today there are special working groups in some 70-80 municipalities, which accounts for almost 60% of all municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and they are named youth commissions or committees. These special working bodies are active within municipal assemblies and they have competences, often among their other duties, for youth issues. When the municipal statutes and other bylaws that regulate the activities of local parliaments allow for the possibility that working body members come from outside of the group of municipal representatives, there are youth representatives or representatives of youth associations taking part in the work of those bodies. However, the conclusion of many expert meetings in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been that the problem in the work of these bodies within local parliaments lies in the lack of experience and knowledge on the part of municipal representatives about youth policies and that it is necessary to provide some guidelines and secure adequate training with the aim of increasing their efficiency.

Also, several cantons have a youth commission within their assemblies and recently the Commission for Youth Issues was established within the FBiH Parliament, which comprises 9 parliamentarians and 9 representatives – experts, scholars, cultural and public figures.¹⁷⁴

One example of good practice is the Committee for Youth Issues within the RS National Assembly. One half of the Committee's members come from the non-governmental sector. Up to now, the Committee has initiated the adoption of several legal regulations and it performs regular monitoring of executive authorities, mostly the activities of the RS Ministry for Family, Sports and Youth Issues.

The lower level of participation of young people is exercised through the so-called advising of decision-makers. Such a form of activity exists in almost one quarter of municipalities and cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁷⁵ and it is implemented through the establishment of advisory youth committees (AYC). AYC's are established by heads of municipalities or mayors with the aim of getting advice, views, and attitudes of young people and with a special emphasis on presenting and promoting the needs and position of young people. The goals, ways of working, appointments and activities of members are regulated by separate rules of procedure in line with municipality statutes. As in other instances, it is here also the case that when AYC members have more experience, they also have more influence on the development of local policies.

There are no such bodies at higher levels of government except for the AYC established by the Premier of the Zenica-Doboj Canton. There are special positions of advisors for youth issues within the cabinets of Premiers of the Sarajevo and Una-Sana Cantons, and of some members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These persons can often serve as liaisons to young people and youth organisations and they can also be lobbyists for young people. From the summer of 2007, there also exists the Committee for Civil Society, established pursuant to the Agreement on the Development of Civil Society with the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and comprising 30 members elected through a public competition. One of the members is directly active in the field of youth issues, which makes this Committee yet another institution with room for participation of young people in public advising.

Also, there is room for participation of young people within numerous steering boards of public

¹⁷⁴ http://www.parlamentfbih.gov.ba/bos/predstavnicki_dom/organisacija/radna_tijela/mladi.html

¹⁷⁵ Youth information agency. *Report from the 3rd Conference of local authorities and youth in BiH*. (2007).

institutions and companies. The institutions and companies of importance for youth issues should have official positions for youth representatives. They include schools, universities and colleges, but also cultural and sports centres, youth houses, media – state TV and radio stations, and even transport companies, as is the case in Norway. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, such a practice does not exist and no room is made for civil society representatives, including young people.

The most important interest groups in the field of youth participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the youth organisations themselves. The estimates say that there are no more than 250 to 300 active organisations. The most comprehensive database of youth organisations is given on the web portals www.mladi.info with more than 300 registered organisations, and slightly less number is enlisted at www.civilnodrustvo.ba, www.ngo.ba and www.omladina-bih.net.

Most of them are active on local levels, which means they only work in the area of one or maybe several neighbouring municipalities. The greatest number of these organisations is based on volunteer work, and a number of them owe their development to the activities of international organisations. Youth organisations are active in the fields of working with young people, quality organising free time for young people, providing travel opportunities etc. Only some of the organisations are self-financing.

Research on the position of young people in BiH¹⁷⁶ confirms that participation of young people in the work of youth organisations is extremely low – only 3%, with 5% in FBiH and 2% in RS. The question was directed at their volunteer activities and participation of young people in local communities. Additionally, the number of members of youth organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina comes down to 5%.

On the other hand, youth organisations created many activities that were occasionally attended by greater numbers of young people and which directly influence their participation in decision-making processes. These activities included an array of dialogue forms: public debates about laws, policies, decisions; public hearings in parliaments; dialogues; debates; round tables; conferences; workshops; consultations; focus groups; surveys; interviews, and some more creative activities – street campaigns; drawings; graffiti; written lobbying; protests; media projects (radio shows, TV show, Internet web sites, blogs, mailing lists, petitions etc.).

Generally speaking, youth associations do not have enough human resources and skills to engage in advocacy and lobbying for youth issues. Hence, the networking of youth organisations and their cooperation are extremely important when it comes to lobbying for the interests of young people and their greater inclusion in the decision-making processes. A positive example of the definition of networking of youth organisations can be found in the RS Law on Youth Organisations:

“The city or municipal Youth Council should contribute to:

- **assessment of needs and interests of young people in the field of preparing and implementing city or municipality youth policy programmes;**
- **encouraging young people to get involved in youth work and activities;**
- **participation in debates of importance for young people;**
- **planning, development and implementation of city or municipality youth policy;**
- **advocating for the interests and rights of young people;**
- **informing young people;**
- **coordination and implementation of youth programmes that are of interest to a municipality or city;**
- **regional youth cooperation etc.”**¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ *Analysis of the position of youth and youth sector in BiH*.

¹⁷⁷ *Law on youth organizing*. RS Official Gazette number 98/04.

The RS Youth Council (RSYC) was formed at the entity level of Republika Srpska and its role, as defined by the Law, is to serve as an umbrella representative body.

There is no Youth Council in FBiH and despite numerous meetings in the past 10 years, no umbrella youth organisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in line with European standards was ever formed.

At the state-level of Bosnia and Herzegovina there are some 10 youth organisations that can be said to be active in the greater part of BiH. Apart from the RSYC, there are only several representative bodies such as the Central Bosnia Youth Initiative, which is a non-formal initiative of youth organisations within the Central Bosnia Canton.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina there is the practice of joining into common projects, coalitions or networks in individual fields of activities. One such example was the Coalition for Conscientious Objection, which influenced the decision on approving civilian military service in 2004. In the late 1990s, the BiH Youth Network was formed within the associations of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly of Banja Luka and Tuzla. In the past few years, the BiH Youth Network provided information and training for youth organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is also necessary to mention another phenomenon, i.e. professional organisations of civil societies that work with young people.

Such an example is the Youth Information Agency (OIA), which has tried to be active in both entities and has provided, for 8 years already, information services for young people, their associations and the general public. The OIA has also organised symposia, created expert publications and training programmes, and participated in the organisation of meetings that promoted increased participation of young people. One of their important activities is the programme of peer-to-peer education implemented in secondary schools.

CIVITAS tried to exert its influence on changes in curricula related to the topic of participation of young people. Also, there is the Centre for Culture of Dialogue (CCD), which, during the past decade, has developed critical and logical thinking skills in high school students in a number of secondary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and provided them with the opportunity to participate in TV shows and public debates along with representatives of government institutions and other target groups.

Especially important support to strengthening high-school and university student organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the past years came from the Schüler Helfen Leben foundation and the World University Service (WUS). Various activities were implemented with the aim of promoting volunteerism: volunteer activities, volunteer service in several cities performed by the OKC in Banja Luka, web pages¹⁷⁸, etc. In recent years, the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly of Banja Luka and Perpetuum Mobile provide training for young politicians within the project titled "Political Academy".

The next important target group are young activists of political parties. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, only larger political parties have youth branches. Some of them are already integrated into European or international associations. Apart from helping their parties during election campaigns, youth organisations of political parties provide an excellent opportunity for young people to get acquainted with politics from within parties as well as for "training" young politicians. These activities serve as a springboard for most successful young activists in their attempts to appear on electoral lists of political parties.

And finally, there are international organisations. Generally speaking, they have provided the bulk of support to many non-governmental organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including those that are active in the field of youth policies.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, until very recently, many international organisations and actors were active in the field of youth policies, e.g. UN agencies, inter-governmental organisations, international non-government organisations and foundations, bilateral development agencies, and embassies.

¹⁷⁸ Web portal for promotion of volunteerism – www.volontiram.ba and www.kampovi.ba

Today, the number of these organisations is reduced and their roles were mostly assumed by so-called spin-off organisations. German organisation Schueler Helfen Leben supported establishment of the Association of high school students in BiH and the Youth Information Agency; CRS supported the establishment of the Foundation for creative development (FCD) and Association for Parent Councils; Open Society Fund BiH – Soros Foundation founded the OIA and FCD; Austrian World University Service created SUSBiH, while US Government programmes helped creation of the Centre for Civilian Initiatives (CCI), Civitas etc.

Among the international organisations, the role of the GTZ's Project of Support and Development for Youth Structures should be emphasised. In the period from 2004 to 2008, this organisation provided technical and other forms of support to the development of youth policies, especially in the field of institutional framework. This project provides working support to its partner institution – the Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina – and the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the course of formulating a coordinated strategy titled BiH Youth Policy 2008-2013.

The GTZ saw certain shortcomings that relate to a lack of knowledge about the topics and concepts in the field of creating youth policies. The success of their support at local levels is partly to be credited to the implementation of the training programme for youth officers. Fifty officers completed structured training in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Training for leaders in local communities is also provided, which results in both sides having the capacity to understand the needs and work on finding solutions in the youth sector. The results of such activities is the provision of support for formulating and adopting more than 30 local youth policies, of which 70% were budget-financed to mid-2008 following decisions of relevant local parliaments.

Youth officers established the Association of Youth Officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (USM). Moreover, thanks to GTZ's initiatives, certain activities were launched in the field of youth tourism, youth hostels and/or youth centres (i.e. Srebrenica, Bratunac), youth camps (Vlasenica) and it is important to emphasise that the principle of self-sustainability of the youth sector was observed during the implementation of all activities, and that international and European standards that relate to working with young people were applied.

An Italian consortium led by CISP continued certain GTZ activities, e.g. the training program, and they were also active in the field of providing information for young people at the local level. The OSCE Mission, through its field offices, provided important support to local youth organisations and their establishment of cooperation with local authorities, especially in the 2000-2005 period. In the same period, Care International invested into training and development of local youth structures, while the BiH Open Society Fund, through OIA, invested into an information service, training and analyses of public policies in the field of participation of young people.

The UNFPA and World Bank have had their own advisory bodies for years, e.g. the World Bank's Youth Voice group and UNFPA's Youth Advisory Panel. Apart from their research about the position of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁷⁹, UNDP and UNV had an important programme of training for youth organisations. Also, the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues, in cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, launched similar projects. The following organisations had fruitful cooperation with youth branches of political parties in the past years: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, OSCE, and American institutes NDI and IRI, as well as the Olof Palme International Centre.

All of the aforementioned activities that were launched by international organisations and actors, as well as national associations, may provide quality information for decision-makers when it comes to solving current problems of young people. Also, each of the initiatives mentioned contains examples of good practice in creating youth policies. And last, but not least, they can be equal partners in the process of implementing those policies.

¹⁷⁹ UNDP, *Youth in BiH 2003*. (2003) http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/bridges/bosnia/UNDP_Mladi.pdf

→ Activities for Young People

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, on different government levels, certain youth policies are developed and implemented. Having in mind that entities and cantons have almost complete authority over youth issues in all key fields, there is a general lack of a programmatic approach in the activities of public institutions and competent ministries in the field of youth policies, which would include mechanisms for youth participation. Also, the programmatic approach entails that governments are well-informed about relevant indicators related to certain needs and problems. Such an approach should contain concrete solutions that include realistic goals and clearly defined activities, as well as performance indicators for measuring goal achievement.

Such activities at the state level had been almost non-existent before the Commission was established, and comprised of official statements given by ministers and prime ministers. Even though a separate youth committee was active in the process of devising the Mid-Term Development Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina during 2001, the youth population was not mentioned as a target group in the document.

The Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Constitutional-Legal Commission organised eight public debates about the draft of the Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (OG BiH 59/07) with students in eight cities during 2006. A few hundred students had an opportunity to directly contribute to the final wording of the framework law.

The information service of the same Parliament, in partnership with OIA and OSCE, has been organising study visits of young people to the Parliament since 2005. During the visits, more than 3000 young people from 30-odd municipalities cooperated with BiH parliamentarians. Some of these visits were recorded by the state TV and then broadcast during the show titled "Open Parliament." Such a form of an "open day" or "Open Door Day" could be implemented in all institutions.

The RS Government and competent Ministry of Family, Sports and Youth cooperate with the RSYC in the process of devising and implementing the RS Youth policy. The RSYC might soon conduct an analysis of the success of that policy.

The youth policy advisor of the Premier of the Sarajevo Canton organised a conference titled "Young People in the Sarajevo Canton" in May 2007, which gathered 130 representatives of NGOs, young people and representatives of various ministries, and it resulted in the proposal of a 2008 Activity Programme and some sort of an operational plan with strategic guidelines of the Sarajevo Canton Government. In the spring of 2008, the Sarajevo Canton established a special working group that gathers youth organisations with the aim of devising an Action Plan for the fight against juvenile delinquency.

However, it must be said that in the first half of 2008, in this Canton, there were protests during which citizens expressed their concern about the attitude of authorities to the security of citizens and juvenile delinquency. The cantonal government neither defined nor implemented positive measures aimed at preventing juvenile delinquency through working with young people. The protests ultimately resulted in the resignation of the Premier of the Sarajevo Canton Government, Mr. Silajdzic, following the results of the local elections in October 2008.

During the development of the Youth strategy in 2007, the city of Banja Luka, together with the Banja Luka Youth Council, organised many public debates and thematic workshops. Apart from consultations, a special project youth group was established, whose task was to work on the establishment of the Youth Centre that became operative in 2008.

In many other municipalities, which are in the process of adopting their own local youth strategies, there exists the practice of cooperation with youth organisations, while in some other municipalities youth organisations were the ones that encouraged the whole process.

Public fund expenditures

The total of 300,000 BAM was approved by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina for activities of the Commission. In 2008, an open competition was announced for NGOs through the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Nearly 1,200,000 BAM were secured for these activities. A part of the funds was allocated for activities of youth associations.

Within the World Bank support, some 600,000 BAM should be allocated to Bosnia and Herzegovina for institutional support to young people and development of youth policies. It is expected that European integration and pre-accession funds shall support the institutional development in this sector.

In RS, for several years already, there has been an open competition for youth organisations with funds amounting to some 500,000 BAM. In 2008, such a competition was also open to activities of student councils. RS student unions were receiving 100,000 BAM annually for their activities.

In FBiH, there is no separate budget for youth organisations or young people even though the FBiH Ministry of Culture and Sports and the FBiH Ministry of Science and Education announce annual open competitions for financing projects related to activities of youth and student organisations and youth participation.

On the cantonal level, there are mostly no defined budgets for young people as they are integrated into the budgets of individual ministries.

Youth projects are financed in many municipalities through open competitions for NGOs or invitations for youth projects. The amount of such funds is usually in the range between 1,000 and 5,000 BAM per project in smaller municipalities. In larger municipalities, youth projects receive funds in amounts ranging from 8,000 in Celinac to 20,000 BAM in Sarajevo's Municipality Centre, or 50,000 BAM in Novo Sarajevo, 70,000 BAM in Prijedor or 200,000 BAM in Banja Luka.

On the whole, it might be said that there are budgets that support youth organisations and that progress has been made over the years in the quality of procedures and the total amount planned for youth projects. However, the basic characteristics of financing are the following:

- **Doubtful criteria for project assessments. It is necessary to analyse whether the criteria are based on some public policy and research and whether there is participation of young people in defining priorities, and then in the very selection of the projects to be financed.**
- **Lack of a programmatic approach that would have visible effects.**
- **Lack of a cost-benefit analysis and reporting.**
- **Imprecise deadlines that have a negative impact on project planning and development. Some open competitions are announced in the middle of the year or later for projects in the current year.**

In the past ten years, most funds aimed at encouraging youth participation have been invested by international organisations. Better coordination between in-country governments and international development programmes is necessary so as to provide optimal prioritising of goals, which would inevitably lead to more efficient and cost-effective spending of funds.



Mobility, information and counselling activities with young people

→ Introduction

The primary objective of youth work is to support youth in their integration and involvement in their communities' social life, and to provide opportunities for youth to be the creators of their own future.

The term 'youth work' is the direct translation from English and is totally unknown as such to the general public in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This term is understood differently depending on individual countries. Council of Europe is representing youth work as group of activities with youth or for youth in the areas of social, cultural or political activities, and more and more these activities include the sport activities, and some other topics related to youth.

When defining this field, it helps if one concludes that there are different forms of working with youth, rather than merely one form with characteristics which are subject to consensus. However, it is possible to identify some key dimensions present in this field in practice since the beginning of the last century. Youth work includes¹⁸⁰:

- **Focusing on young people;**
- **Emphasizing voluntary participation and cooperation;**
- **Becoming involved with organisations;**
- **Friendly actions, informality and acting which encompasses respect for other persons' integrity;**
- **Responsibility for education of youth, and, on a wider scale, responsibility for facilitating a better position of youth.**

The primary objective of youth work is to support youth in their integration and involvement in their communities' social life, and to provide opportunities for youth to be the creators of their own future. According to international standards, youth work is a concept of planned, purposeful and conscious support to youth through youth's voluntary participation, as well as support which is appropriate for their varying ages and other specifics.

A comprehensive definition of youth work can be found in the proposal FBiH Law on Youth¹⁸¹:

By definition, youth work is understood as planned, purposeful and conscious support to young people through their volunteer participation and it includes:

- **extracurricular education, which can complement the formal education of young people, along with their general, social, natural and technical education;**
- **creative, artistic, sports and cultural youth activities;**
- **activities and programmes related to the development of their abilities, skills and knowledge, and community work;**
- **activities related to matters like specialising, working environment, school, family;**
- **activities and programmes related to their well-being, social and health protection;**
- **youth counselling;**
- **youth tourism, recuperation of young people and their spending time in nature;**
- **programmes designed for specific youth groups;**
- **international youth work, intercultural cooperation and exchange;**
- **other models of creative and planned leisure for young people.**

In any case, its concerns different planned activities, including extra-curricula education activities, recreation, dissemination of information, sports, youth counselling, support with professional orientation, involvement in and managing of international youth projects, centers where young people can spend their leisure time, special support to marginalised young people such as members of minorities, numerical minorities, and youth with certain behavioral tendencies, all through counselling, education and other forms of support.

At its best, youth work is a separate profession based on a formal university education and specialised training programmes. Sometimes, it functions as volunteer work regulated by a law on youth work, as is the case in the Republic of Ireland¹⁸².

Youth information activities - or "youth information work"¹⁸³, to use the EU term - denotes the concept or service of provision of regular information to young people about all topics of interest to them. These activities can be performed in various ways, which may include a whole range of actions: provision of information, consulting, counselling, leadership, support, teaching and training, and also networking, referring to specialised services, role of media etc. Such activities are most frequently performed by some public institution, e.g. a Youth Information Centre having trained personnel, and

¹⁸⁰ M. K. Smith: "Youth work: an introduction", The encyclopedia of informal education, (1999, 2002). www.infed.org/youthwork/b-yw.htm

¹⁸¹ Proposed Law on youth of FBiH. Federation BiH Ministry of Culture and Sports, Youth Commission, AYO and GTZ. (2008).

¹⁸² Youth Work Act. (2001). http://www.nyci.ie/youth_work/youth_work_act_2001

¹⁸³ European Youth Information and Counseling Agency, Induction Pack for Youth Information Workers. <http://www.youthinformation.ie/ireland/downloads/training/sect01.pdf>

in some countries they are performed by NGOs in partnership with authorities. There are more than 7,000 such centres in 25 European countries with more than 12,500 youth information workers employed and 20 million young people visiting the information centres.¹⁸⁴

National youth information services are joined into the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA)¹⁸⁵. ERYICA also set the standards in this field through its European Youth Information Charter, which is recognised by both the European Union and Council of Europe. The most important reason for the existence of such a concept can be understood from the Charter's Preamble:

"In complex societies and in an integrated Europe that offers many challenges and opportunities, access to information and the ability to analyse and use information is increasingly important for young Europeans. Youth information work can help them to achieve their aspirations and can promote their participation as active members of society. Information should be provided in ways that enlarge the choices available to young people, and that promote their autonomy and empowerment."¹⁸⁶

Youth counselling is a special service which can be organised within some public institution, information centre, or NGO that has trained personnel able to provide counselling services to young people in a specific area, e.g. legal advice, advice on youth rights and participation of young people, family counselling, sexual reproductive health, advice related to social protection, professional orientation, career opportunities, and addiction problems. There are also possibilities related to European youth programmes and accommodation arrangements for young tourists, as well as to minority rights, young people with special needs, provision of support to youth organisations etc.

Youth mobility is an important concept for youth travel within and outside the country, with the aim of gaining new knowledge and skills, intercultural exchange, opening new horizons etc. Such a concept is very important for youth development and it is represented, in many European countries, in the form of special projects of support by government institutions.

At the European level, there are several programmes of support to youth mobility. The most important project among them is the EU programme titled "Young People in Action"¹⁸⁷ (2007-2013). This programme enables the financing of projects of study visits for young people, their multilateral projects, individual volunteer work in various countries etc.

→ Legal framework

Mobility, information, counselling and youth work are practically unknown in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Authorities have never adopted legal acts aimed at defining or regulating these fields of activities.

This is one of the key issues for young people and the youth sector to be solved in the future through changes of the existing laws on youth work and adoption of a new law on youth work in RS, as well as the adoption of relevant laws in FBiH and the Brcko District of BiH.

The Law on Volunteer Work¹⁸⁸ was adopted in RS in July 2008. This Law creates the legal framework for regulating the concept of volunteerism, which can have a positive impact on the field of youth work and other fields.

Only the RS Law on Youth Organisations¹⁸⁹ mentions some of these terms. However, the Law contains incomplete, vague or even wrong definitions, such as the definition of youth work:

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ European Agency for Youth Information and Counselling. *European Charter on information for youth.* (2004). http://www.eryica.org/files/166_documents_sr_charter_YU.pdf

¹⁸⁷ European Commission. *Youth in Action (2007-2013)*. http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm

¹⁸⁸ *Law on volunteerism.* RS Official Gazette number 73/08.

¹⁸⁹ *Law on youth organizing.* RS Official Gazette number 98/04.

"Youth work or activity is understood as various forms of community work in the field of youth interests in which young people participate and which contribute to the betterment of the position of young people."

Pursuant to international standards, youth work is defined differently. It is understood as planned, purposeful and conscious support to young people through their voluntary participation, as pertinent to their different age and other specific characteristics.

Still, the Law mentions terms "professional work and education" in the youth sector, but it is not viewed as a component of "youth work" nor is it clear why it is mentioned separately.

The RS Law does not recognise the term "youth mobility" and uses the term "international cooperation" instead. The problem is that this term does not encompass the mobility of individuals and informal groups but only that of representatives of youth associations. Also, youth mobility within the country is not mentioned.

Moreover, in its introductory part, the Law does not provide any definition of the term "youth information". An indirect definition can be found in Article 76, which prescribes adoption of youth information programmes.

It should be emphasised that the Law obliges the RS Government and local communities to adopt periodical youth strategies that encompass: youth work, mobility, information and counselling (Article 11).

In the report submitted by the Advisory mission of the Council of Europe's Youth and Sport Directorate, the Law is evaluated as follows:

"... serious attempt to provide a rational statutory framework for youth policy in RS. ... the text of the statute has drawn upon progressive examples of European practice in order to facilitate the introduction of European standards in youth policy. ... as an example of good practice it should therefore form the basis of a framework law that has coverage across BiH."¹⁹⁰

→ Institutional framework

The responsible Entity Ministries of Health and Education, respectively, play an important role in the creation of counselling policies for youth, given that most of the programs in this field are being implemented through institutions which are governed by these Ministries, such as schools, health care centers and social welfare centers.

However, youth counselling is not fully institutionally organised and developed. Currently there are special services like public institutions of family counselling or specialised services for young people in five cities within healthcare centres in BiH, where young people can get advice related to their sexual and reproductive health. There are also staffing positions for student counsellors and psychologists in schools, whose work is defined by relevant laws, as well as individual counselling centres for combating addictions etc.

Many NGOs also provide counselling services. However, their cooperation and coordination is not at a very high level. Also, it is very difficult to know the number, locations and fields of specialisation of counselling centres that have young people as their target group.

After becoming a member of the Council of Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina should comply with various documents adopted by that institution, one of them being the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life¹⁹¹. This Charter provides additional

¹⁹⁰ Johnatan Evans, *Report on the Advisory Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.* (Council of Europe: Directorate for Youth and Sports)

¹⁹¹ Council of Europe, OSCE, *European Charter on participation of youth in community's life at the local and regional level.* (Sarajevo, 2004). <http://www.coe.ba/pdf/79-bos.pdf>

clarifications of the terms youth information and youth counselling, as well as youth mobility, and obliges local and regional authorities to create the necessary instruments for meeting these needs.

The main institutions, which should be responsible for youth work are youth departments at all levels of governance. Unfortunately, they are non-existent. The only attempt, to date, to create conditions for youth departments at the local community level was the activity to train for and create the new professional profile – Youth Officer.¹⁹²

At the RS level, the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sports is a competent authority in this field.

In FBiH, there is a Youth Centre within the FBiH Ministry of Culture and Sports. This institution currently only deals with youth issues related to sports and culture.

The Brcko District of BiH has an official in charge of youth activities, as does a quarter of the municipalities in BiH. None of the cantons have a body responsible for youth activities.

A significant number of towns and municipalities have officers whose regular duties include youth work. Some 50 municipal officers responsible for youth issues attended training about youth policies and youth work, which was created and supported by the GTZ. In the period that follows, the newly-formed Association of Youth Officers of BiH (USM) shall assume the responsibility in the field of training.

An important role in creating youth counselling policies in both entities is played by ministries of health and education because most programmes in this field are implemented through institutions within their responsibility, e.g. schools, healthcare and social work centres.

RS and FBiH parliaments have Committees for youth issues, i.e. commissions that discuss youth-related legal provisions adopted by the parliaments.

Youth work is very often covered by NGOs, some 20 of them that manage and organise public spaces for young people's free time. Some of the personnel in these organisations are professionals trained through various short training programmes led or supported by international organisations, where the rest of their personnel comprises of volunteers. However, the Training Center for training of youth activists from the governmental and non-governmental sectors has not been formed yet. Such training would ensure standards for youth work and creating of policies based on facts.

The biggest problem and potential risk lie in the fact that there are no standards in youth work and that there are no mechanisms for ensuring quality of work, i.e. certification of the persons who implement such activities.

In addition, the number of young people who are involved in the activities of youth associations is actually very small. According to results of the research (Commission, GTZ 2008), only 3% of youth, 5% in the FBiH and 2% in the RS, took part in the organising of activities at the local level in the course of the last year. Only 5% of youth are engaged in the youth non-governmental organisations.

The non-governmental sector plays an important role in the field of youth information. A good example is the BiH Youth Information Agency (OIA). This association fulfils its mission while following European standards and is a national partner to ERYICA since 2003. In cooperation with three municipalities, the OIA opened youth information offices, which provide information to young people in ten categories, e.g. through a web page for youth information (www.mladi.info), info-points in 37 towns, and some radio and TV shows.

The key institution for participation in the EU programme Youth in Action, which deals with youth mobility, should be an agency within the BiH Council of Ministers. Such an agency does not exist at the moment. For the agency to be established, Bosnia and Herzegovina should place this programme among its priorities. Until then, young people in BiH shall be able to participate only in some activities of this programme.

¹⁹² Association of Youth Officers of BiH. *Analysis of the youth strategies in BiH*. (GTZ, 2008).

The Programme is implemented through national youth agencies of member countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina, like other Western Balkan countries, enjoys the status of "neighbouring countries", which means that it did not sign an agreement with the European Commission on the implementation of this Programme. Also, organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina can only apply for the programme sections 1, 2, and 5 out of the five programme departments within the "Youth in Action" programme. Many associations from Bosnia and Herzegovina have successfully participated in this Programme for several years through their EU partners.

The only actors that deal with youth mobility are NGOs, and schools and universities, which enable some young people to travel through their international projects. These projects are still funded mainly by international agencies.

→ Youth Activities

There are no significant programmes for young people supported by authorities in the fields of youth work and youth information, except for some smaller separate projects. This pertains to all levels of government.

When seeking employment in government institutions, youth work is not recognised as working experience, even when it concerns institutions that work with youth.

Most government programmes in the field of youth counselling are implemented by schools, healthcare centres and centres for social work. Also, activities of associations working in the field of counselling are supported through financing of smaller projects.

In 2006, RS adopted the RS Youth Policy (2006-2010). This document envisages several measures in the following fields:

- a) Establishment of the RS Youth Information Centre with 6 Regional Centres;**
- b) Adoption of the Law on Youth Work;**
- c) Opening of a Youth Counselling Centre to fight drug addiction;**
- d) Professional orientation programme in schools;**
- e) Youth Training Centre (for the training of youth workers).**

None of the aforementioned activities were implemented, even though the funds in the amount of 2.6 million BAM were allocated for their completion.

FBiH, and the cantons, have no youth policy of their own or any special measures in these fields. Youth counselling, as already mentioned, is done by schools, healthcare centres and specialised public institutions or counselling centres.

The FBiH Ministry of Culture and Sports planned certain activities¹⁹³ related to the adoption of the Law on youth issues, completion of research into the needs of young people with the aim of devising an FBiH youth policy, and creating a unified database about institutions and organisations that deal with youth issues. These activities were never implemented.

A quarter of the local authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina have adopted youth strategies¹⁹⁴ and included some of the mentioned topics, which should prove to be a step ahead towards creating the preconditions for larger investments. The funds for activities undertaken in this field are provided from the budget. Projects of youth organisations are financed through open competitions for NGOs.

Public spaces for young people are a fundamental precondition for the implementation of most of the measures in the fields of youth work, information and counselling. However, former youth and culture centres do not perform their original functions any more and there is a lack of necessary resources.

¹⁹³ Policy of action and main strategies of the FBiH Government in the mandated 2007.-2010. www.fbihvlada.gov.ba

¹⁹⁴ Analysis of local youth strategies, 2008. Source - GTZ, Youth Project

Also, there is a general lack of youth resorts and hostels as the fundamental precondition for development of youth tourism. That role was assumed by the private sector, which means that prices are determined on a commercial basis. The only reduction of costs for travelling within BiH can be obtained through discounts for bus and train tickets available from some transport agencies, but only for secondary-school and university students.

Volunteer youth work is not recognised as work experience when applying for a job in government institutions, even when it comes to institutions that deal with youth issues.

The existing visa regime is the biggest obstacle to international youth mobility, and its liberalisation should definitely be among the top priorities of competent institutions. This is the key moment for the advancement of cultural cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and EU countries. The Road Map for the liberalisation process, created by the European Commission¹⁹⁵, was delivered to BH institutions. The Road Map contains guidelines related to security of travel documents, illegal migration, public law and order, and foreign affairs. In that sense, the police reform and adoption of the state-level law are of crucial importance.

→ Public fund expenditures

Within their budgets, government institutions at all levels mostly position the fields of youth mobility, information, counselling and work as part of a wider field called “youth policy” or “grants for youth organisations”. It is almost a rule that there are no budgetary sub-items prepared in advance within these wider fields, which makes it very difficult to perform a detailed analysis. Youth projects are positioned within an even broader budgetary item planned for financing NGOs in general.

In 2007, the RS Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports allocated 1,000,000 BAM for support to youth organisations, while the Youth Centre of the FBiH Ministry of culture and sports spent 500,000 BAM for the same purpose. It is not known how much of these funds were allocated for projects in the fields of youth mobility, information, counselling and work.

It should be mentioned that a portion of funds for financing youth counselling is allocated within the budgets of ministries of education and health.

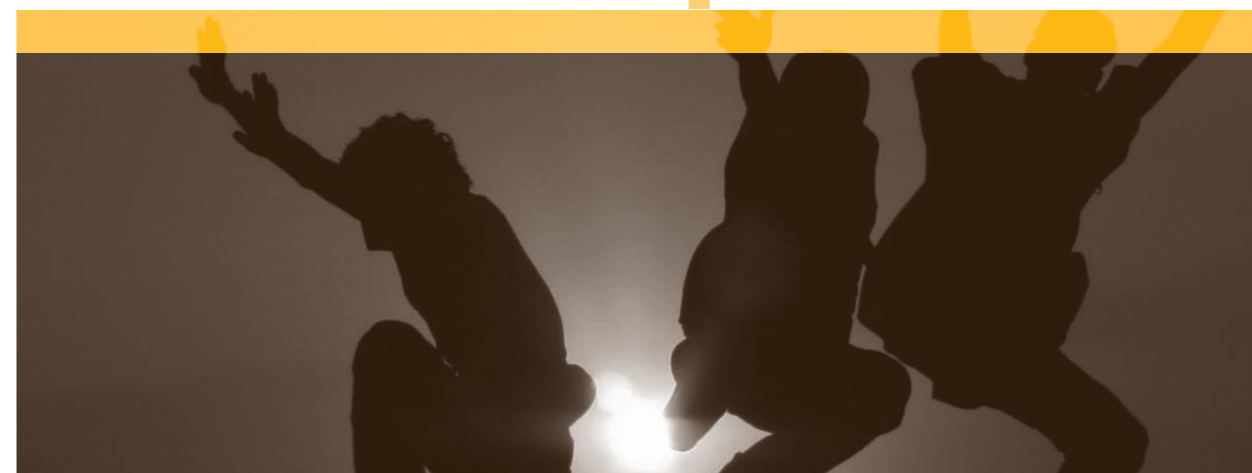
In almost all cases, projects and not programmes are financed, which results in the lack of continuity when working on a particular problem. The process of announcing competitions and making decisions about the financing of certain projects is often non-transparent. In most cases, there are no clearly defined criteria for allocation of funds, which would be accompanied by an adequate point system. When such a system exists, it is very general and susceptible to manipulations. There is no possibility, at almost all government levels, for informal groups to apply with their projects, which makes it impossible for them to contribute to advancement and development in the fields of youth mobility and work.

In almost all cases, monitoring and evaluation of project effectiveness are poorly developed and they come down to the obligation of justifying the expenses by submitting relevant invoices. Also, there is a lack of coordination between authorities and international donors when giving approvals for projects.

Some light at the end of the tunnel is seen in the existence of youth strategies in almost one third of local communities. In these communities, certain efforts were made to ensure that grants are allocated in a more transparent manner, and that such activities are program oriented, so as to achieve the goals defined in the local youth strategies¹⁹⁶. However, many more efforts must be made by the governments at all levels, to ensure that funding is transparent and based on achieving certain results.

¹⁹⁵ Delegation of the European Commission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. <http://www.delbih.ec.europa.eu/>

¹⁹⁶ *Analysis of the local youth strategies in BiH.*



Culture, sports, leisure

→ Introduction

Young people in BiH are suffering the negative consequences of the lack of appropriate government policies for culture, sports and leisure.

Primarily, there is a lack of an appropriate legal framework for these areas. Also, there is a lack of an appropriate legal framework that would stimulate the work of youth associations, which restricts their activities related to culture, sports and generally in relation to youth work.

Institutional capacities for youth culture, sports and leisure are also lacking. The information system of relevant government institutions for gathering data on young people is underdeveloped. This precludes monitoring the effectiveness of existing government measures.

Coordination and cooperation between various levels of government is generally poor both on the vertical and the horizontal plain, and does little to improve the multi-sector approach to youth issues required by the needs and problems of young people in BiH.

On top of that, this sector is characterised by insufficient communication between government institutions and young people and their representatives.

Financial problems accompany these shortcomings and are most evident in insufficient budget funds allocated to these areas, as well as the insufficient support in terms of infrastructure and ensuring basic conditions for the operation of youth associations.

There is also a lack of public facilities for young people on the municipal level, which crops up as a problem in informal education and participation of young people, as well as in general youth work.

In addition, as in other sectors, here we also have a disproportionately large lack of cultural events and generally events for young people in rural areas and smaller towns in comparison to more developed areas.

Culture is one of the indispensable factors of growing up. Youth culture consists of various ways young people distinguish themselves from the “parental culture” of their community and is categorised as youth subculture.¹⁹⁷

Since a relation to culture and aesthetics is a matter of learning and upbringing, it is key to find an institutional approach of assistance to young people. There are two different aspects of young people as related to culture: young people as receptors and consumers of culture, and young people as creators of culture.

*Local and regional
 authorities should
 support organised
 socio-cultural activities
 – run by youth
 associations and
 organisations, youth
 groups and community
 centres*

¹⁹⁷ *Youth Subculture*. Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_culture

Sports are a form of physical activity that uses organised participation or leisure activities to express or improve physical readiness and psychological wellbeing, thus creating social bonds or competition results at various levels.¹⁹⁸ Regular sports activities are important for proper physical development from the earliest age, and especially today when stress and obesity have become ubiquitous in developed countries.

Leisure is a set of activities undertaken voluntarily either for relaxation or entertainment, to increase awareness or education, to be socially active or to freely express creativity, once professional, family and social obligations have been fulfilled.¹⁹⁹ As most other social phenomena, leisure is part of a socially determined context. It is necessarily derived from this context and affects it.

In the section pertaining to sports, leisure and associative life, the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life²⁰⁰ points out that:

“Local and regional authorities should support organised socio-cultural activities – run by youth associations and organisations, youth groups and community centres – which, together with the family and school or work, are one of the pillars of social cohesion in the municipality or region; these are an ideal channel for youth participation and the implementation of youth policies in the fields of sport, culture, crafts and trades, artistic and other forms of creation and expression, as well as in the field of social action.”

→ Legal Framework

Culture and sports are subject to differing structures on the entity and cantonal levels in BiH, which makes them difficult to monitor and causes certain overlapping of competences. An especially worrisome fact is that young people are treated as a separate group in only a handful of culture and sports laws.

Since various associations provide most young people with the opportunity to act within these areas in an organised manner, it is necessary to point out some advantages and disadvantages inherent in the existing legislation. The fundamental problem is the lack of a legislative solution for youth issues that would regulate the area of youth work, including creative, artistic, sports and cultural activities.

There are some indications that a legislative solution regulating the area of youth work will soon be introduced into the adoption procedure on the FBiH level. In the Operative Action Plan for 2007 of the FBiH Government, which is part of the FBiH Government Action Plan for 2007 - 2010²⁰¹, the FBiH cites as an activity of the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports -

Initiating and participating in the drafting of the Law on Young People on the level of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This activity was planned for the period from September to December 2007. The Draft Law on Youth Issues in FBiH was completed through a series of activities in June 2008. The text of the Draft Law is the result of cooperation between experts in the field – representatives of the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Association of Youth Officers of BiH, the Youth Committee and Project of GTZ. All the participants considered the Draft Law adequate, and the Premier of the FBiH Government publicly expressed the desire to see this piece of legislation adopted in FBiH as soon as possible.

¹⁹⁸ Council of Europe. *European Charter on Sport*. (2001). http://www.coe.ba/pdf/EVR_Charter_on_sport.pdf

¹⁹⁹ Ratko Božović, *Challenges of leisure time*. (Belgrade; Mladost, 1979), 59.

²⁰⁰ Council of Europe, OSCE, *European Charter on participation of youth in community's life at the regional and local level*. (Sarajevo, 2004). <http://www.coe.ba/pdf/79-bos.pdf>

²⁰¹ *Policy of action and main strategies of the FBiH Government in the mandated period 2007-2010..* www.fbihvlada.gov.ba

The Brčko District Government also initiated activities on drafting a Law on Youth Organisation. Unfortunately, this activity is yet to produce results.

On the state level, there is only one serious attempt at creating legislative support to youth activities – the Law on Youth Organisation of RS. This Law determines:

“The general interest and programmes pertaining to young people, the establishment and association of youth organisations, the activities, property and financing, rights and obligations, professional work and development, youth events, international youth cooperation, information and bodies for the development of youth policy.”²⁰²

Even though it is a valuable document for young people, this piece of legislation does not provide an adequate framework for activities within youth work. It should be noted that in a document titled RS Youth Policy, the RS Government indicated that it would undertake activities to pass the Law on Youth Work during 2006.

Since there is no legal framework for youth work including creative, artistic, sports and cultural activities, and thus no legislative provision about authorisation for youth work, the competent institutions have no insight into the structure of the youth sector. Consequently, government institutions cannot prioritise available but modest public funds, as illustrated by a statement of an employee at the RS Ministry of Education and Culture:

“We often have applications from youth associations that have nothing to do with culture, where cultural activities are mentioned in one sentence somewhere in their statutes, but this gives these associations certain rights to seek funding for their projects from this Ministry.”

In that respect, the FBiH Government *Action Policy for 2007-2009*²⁰³ for the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports includes compiling a unique database on institutions and organisations dealing with youth issues by September 2007. This database would certainly help improve cooperation with the NGO sector on culture and sports issues in relation to young people.

The area of culture in BiH has not been regulated on the state, entity or Brčko District level in terms of a law on culture.

Certain cantons have such a law, e.g. the Tuzla and Central Bosnia Cantons. A common feature of these two laws is that young people are not emphasised as a separate group, in terms of either receiving or creating culture. Parts of the Law indirectly concerned with young people are the provision on programming guidelines for cultural education and for educating cultural workers (artical 29).²⁰⁴ In terms of independent cultural professionals and cultural associations, all the age groups are treated equally (articals 16 i 26).²⁰⁵ The only provisions differentiating those creating in the sphere of culture are: paying benefits to independent cultural professionals from the cantonal budget for mandatory retirement and disability insurance and mandatory health insurance from the lowest retirement baseline (articals 21, 23 i 24).²⁰⁶ It should also be pointed out that certain cantons, e.g. the Western Herzegovina Canton, currently preparing a draft of this law do not even have this basis for legally regulating the sphere of culture.

When it comes to young people and sports, most activities are regulated by the entity Laws on Sports. Additionally, in FBiH, each canton has its own Law on Sports. Apart from a Law on Sports, the RS also has a long-term development strategy for sports. In most cases, the current legislation contains provisions from sports legislation from the former Yugoslavia.

For a long time, the adoption of a law on sports on the level of BiH was a priority for further development of sports. The House of Representatives in the Parliament of BiH adopted the Law

²⁰² *Law on youth organizing*. RS Official Gazette number 98/04.

²⁰³ *Policy of action and main strategies of the FBiH Government in the mandated period 2007-2010..*

²⁰⁴ *Law on culture*. Tuzla Canton's Official Gazette number 01/98.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

on Sports in 2008. This Law determines the competences of the state of BiH in this sphere, without jeopardising the competences of lower levels of the administrative structure. The sphere of sports is organised in a decentralised way with determined rights and competences of BiH, RS, FBiH, the Brčko District of BiH and other administrative units. The Law foresees the formation of an Anti-Doping Control Agency, as well as a Sports Council responsible for the development and quality of sports on the BiH level. The adopted Law defines the bodies for control and certification of athletes and provides unhindered access to international sporting events for athletes and teams. The seats of sports unions are to be determined on the basis of development of individual sports, as well as tradition, mass-appeal and quality.²⁰⁷

Leisure activities for young people in BiH, realised as extracurricular activities in schools, youth clubs or associations, are developing without any significant influence of legislative provisions apart from the already mentioned Law on Youth Organisation of RS, which indirectly regulates youth activities.

→ Institutional Framework

When it comes to the institutional framework for culture and sports in BiH, there is much diversity, as is the case with the legal framework.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs is the state-level body responsible for activities in culture and sports. This Ministry is authorised to conduct activities and tasks pertaining to determining the fundamental principles of harmonising activities and plans of entity government bodies, as well as defining an international strategy for culture and sports.

The institutions with primary competences in culture, sports and leisure for young people are entity-level ministries.

In the Brčko District of BiH, this role is ascribed to the Department for Economic Development, Sports and Culture divided into areas for tourism, sports and culture. This Department covers activities related to theatres, galleries, cultural associations and events, libraries, sports, tourism and other activities as agreed through changes to the Law on Executive Authority of the Brčko District of BiH.²⁰⁸

In the RS, two ministries are competent for these sectors: the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In FBiH, the competent ministry is the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports, which conducts administrative, professional and other activities within the jurisdiction of FBiH pertaining to culture and sports, including the design of development strategies for these areas.²⁰⁹

The basic problem concerning the adoption of the Law on Youth Issues in FBiH is that according to the Law on Federal Ministries and Other Bodies of the Federal Administration²¹⁰, no single ministry has competences for coordinating youth issues.

In that respect, the public presentation of the scope of activities of the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports on the web site of the Government of FBiH²¹¹ provides misinformation to all those interested to cooperate with the government in youth issues. Namely, the web site states that this Ministry: **“determines the development strategy for culture, sports and young people, as well as other activities as determined by the Law.”** As pointed out above, this statement is contrary to the Law on

²⁰⁷ Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Draft Law on sport*. (2008). <http://www.parlament.ba/index2.php?id=344&jezik=h>

²⁰⁸ *Law on changes and addenda to the Law on executive authorities of the Brčko-District of BiH*. Brčko District of BiH's Official Gazette number 8/03.

²⁰⁹ *Law on FBiH Ministries and other bodies of the FBiH Government*. FBiH Official Gazette number 21/03.

²¹⁰ *Law on FBiH Government's Ministries*. FBiH Official Gazette number 19/03.

²¹¹ Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Government. http://www.fbihvlada.gov.ba/bosanski/ministarstva/kultura_sport.php

Federal Ministries and other Bodies of the Federal Administration.

Furthermore, in FBiH, each individual canton has its own ministry for these areas, which ultimately adds up to 11 ministries. In general, the areas of culture and sports on the cantonal level are grouped with education in a single ministry. The only exception is the Sarajevo Canton where these areas are delegated to a separate ministry.

Committees or commission for youth issues are becoming more frequent in the work of BiH governments. The Commission for the Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH is responsible for determining the basic principles and coordinating the activities of all subjects significant for promoting and protecting the role and position of young people in BiH so as to improve their living conditions and in order to internationally represent youth issues from BiH. The Commission is made up of ten youth representatives from the non-governmental sector and eight representatives of BiH government institutions, which is a unique solution for youth policy among Council of Europe Member States.²¹²

There is also an RS National Assembly Committee for Youth Issues, whose activities are determined by Article 89 of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska Rules of Procedure²¹³. The Committee for Youth Issues is composed of nine members. This Committee considers the position of young people in society, protection of children and youth, and the development of sports and physical education. The Committee monitors and implements policies in the procedure for adopting law regulating the position of young people. There is a similar body, the Committee for Youth Issues²¹⁴, within the FBiH Parliament. This Committee has 18 members.

Individual cantonal governments, and increasingly municipal councils in FBiH are constituting advisory boards or committees for youth issues, which is certainly a positive trend we can only hope will continue. One of the most frequent issues in the work of these commissions and committees is the issue of youth leisure.

50 municipalities in BiH have a specific staffing position – an officer responsible for youth issues. In the upcoming period, among its basic activities, the recently established Association of Youth Officers in BiH will provide training for new officers based on a model developed through the GTZ Youth Project.

As for youth cultural and leisure activities, the most important interest groups in BiH in that respect are associations. Due to the specific legislative regulations enabling their registration on various levels of government, it is impossible to determine the exact number of youth associations, or associations engaged in youth work. On the other hand, it is impossible to determine how many young people are actually involved in creative, artistic, sports and cultural activities.

In terms of culture, the most significant are cultural-artistic societies (*B/C/S: kulturno-umjetnička društva* – KUD), while youth leisure usually comes under associations with long-term programmes of support through activities related to a wider range of citizens or the development of a certain area.

The previously mentioned Council for Sports on the level of BiH should also devote special attention to the work of institutions geared at young people. A coordinated approach is called for with indicators from multiple sectors – primarily the area of youth healthcare. Youth health could be significantly improved through organised work with young people involved in sports activities. A noteworthy example is *Sports for a Healthy Heart*, a youth project lead by the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Health.

²¹² Commission for coordination of youth issues in BiH. http://www.mladi.gov.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=35&Itemid=35

²¹³ Commission for coordination of youth issues in BiH. http://www.mladi.gov.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=35&Itemid=35

²¹⁴ Commission for youth issues in the FBiH Parliament. http://www.parlamentfbih.gov.ba/bos/predstavnicki_dom/organizacija/radna_tijela/mladi.html

→ **Activities for Young People**

In the past few years, activities related to youth issues and geared at creating effective policies have been intensified from the highest levels of government to the municipalities.

However, on the whole, the territory of BiH lack activity programmes for young people on all levels. Special activity programmes for young people should pertain to **youth work**, including: strengthening and developing youth capabilities, youth activities and leisure activities, youth cultural activities, sports, aesthetics, ethics, ecology, spirituality and humanistic values, personal and social responsibility, etc.

The current practice is for ministries in charge of youth culture, sports and leisure to establish cooperation with young people and their associations most often by public contests for the allocation of budget funding.

According to current regulations, care for youth culture should start in primary schools. Ministries of Education in BiH have adopted pedagogical standards for primary and secondary schools that regulate cultural, sports and other extracurricular activities on the level of the school. However, there is still the problem of standardisation, because not every student is afforded equal opportunity due to the fact that schools do not have uniform financial and staff capacities to provide this type of care for their students.

Whether additional activities will be organised depends on individual schools. The challenge is to secure and standardise a minimum of measures in working with young people and youth activities within the education process, including the culture sector, in the entire territory of BiH. In that event, ministries will be forced to control the fulfilment of their responsibilities.

As for sports, or physical education in schools, it is part of curricula in primary and secondary schools, but has not been introduced in the higher education system, except for students at the Faculty for Physical Education. This is a disheartening fact, because it literally means that the care of educational institutions for this issue ends with secondary school.

It should be noted that a valuable basis for quality professional activities in sports can be provided by professors and teachers of physical education teaching the subject of Physical and Health Education in primary and secondary schools, as well as extracurricular sports activities. Unfortunately, it must be said that teachers of this subject in primary and secondary schools often lack the appropriate formal qualifications and skills to adequately execute their responsibilities. In some cases, schools lack qualified teachers for this subject, i.e. there is a deficit of teaching staff. It is also necessary to point out the negative practice of reducing the number of teaching hours for this subject in order to make more time for other school subjects.

As for extracurricular sports activities for young people, the most important role is played by sports clubs that join to form sports unions on the cantonal level in FBiH and on the entity level in RS. If we take into account that almost all sports disciplines have unions on the entity and BiH level, this means that some sports have unions on four levels: municipality-canton-entity-state.

The problem with this type of organisation is neglect of the principle of unification based on a contract that entails taking on the responsibility of participating in the financing or securing funds for the work of the union.

Another shortcoming of this union structure is that their work is often uncoordinated, and in some sports, although there are unions at all levels, there is still no unique system of competition on the BiH level.

Despite their shortcomings, sports unions play an important role in the development of sports in the country, because sports clubs organise various types of competitions for schoolchildren and youth. Sports competitions for primary and secondary school students held with the support of certain ministries, such as the *Small Olympics* held in the Zenica-Doboj Canton, are noteworthy.

Sports clubs often face the problem of inadequate professional qualifications of club coaches, because there are very few who have formal qualifications, while the majority have undergone trainings organised by the respective sports union.

The manner of registration of clubs and the monitoring of their activities and membership does not allow for monitoring the number of young people participating in these extracurricular sports activities.

In RS, there is a distinction whereby the competent ministry recognises youth associations as a separate group of users of the sports budget.

There is also the matter of sports facilities as related to the activities of sports clubs. The current situation is such that a large number of these facilities is most often found within commercial centres, and is treated as such, which means that they are ultimately expensive for sports organisations. The reason is a market approach to managing and using sports facilities, which puts sports and cultural activities important for young people and society in general on the same level with commercial activities.

Competent ministries should regulate and ensure support for the necessary activities and their access to young people. Unfortunately, many competent ministries are understaffed, which has a negative effect on the state of culture and sports in their administrative areas.

→ **Public Funding**

As in other areas, the lack of a programmatic approach is the basic characteristic of budget planning for youth culture, sports and leisure. Evidently, there is no difference between budget users.

As stated before, one of the main problems in this area is the underdeveloped information system and data gathering on young people within competent government institutions, which has a direct effect on information guiding public funding.

Competent ministries most often do not identify young people as a separate group and lack information about the number or percentage of young people who are budget beneficiaries.

Civil servants at various ministries generally provide similar explanations – most of the budget is allocated to funding the needs of young people, young people receive significant funding through public contests. However, there is no record about the exact amounts allocated or the number of young beneficiaries.

RS and the Unsko-sanski Canton are evident exceptions. In RS, youth organisations are clearly separated and categorised as either urban or rural, with a total of approved public funding in the amount of 1,300,000 BAM. Within its budget capacities, the USC has opted for allocating a sum of 20,000.00 BAM for funding the needs of young people directly.

The lack of clearly defined indicators and transparent information, including precise statistical indicators, disables monitoring and analysing the expediency and appropriateness of individual policies implemented by government bodies in BiH. A valid question is how can the appropriateness of policies geared at young people in BiH be assessed if there are no indicators about this population.



Detailed Empirical Research Results

→ Methodology

Empirical research presented in this report brought together quantitative and qualitative research methods. On one hand, a complex set of data was collected through individual anonymous interviews with 1500 randomly selected young persons, aged between 16 and 30. This random selection of 1500 interviewees provided a sample representative of the general population of this age group. A random selection means that any person of this age anywhere in BiH had the same probability of being selected.

To what extent are the results representative of the entire young population? Statistically, representativeness of a sample is determined by two factors: the size of the sample and the method of selection. A random selection of 53 municipalities (using random numbers), 1500 households in 228 sample points (random canvas), and as many persons in those households, selected randomly (DoB calculation) provided an optimally representative sample.

On the other hand, the size of the sample, 1500 interviewees, includes a *sample error* of $\pm 2.5\%$. In light of the maximum response span (50:50, $P=0.5$). This sample size provides a representative sample in terms of *reliability level* of 95%. A sample of 1500 respondents is the optimum for the given statistical conditions. For detailed elaboration on justification of this sample size, see Israel 2003²¹⁵ (particularly p. 3) or any serious textbook on statistics.

It is also of great importance to note in this brief overview of methodology the meaning of *sample error* of $\pm 2.5\%$. Namely, unlike a census, which includes the entire population, any research that covers a sample of a particular population is, in fact, an estimate of a real value in such population. For example, our research showed that 42% of all persons aged between 15 and 29 contribute regularly to their household budgets. This results allows us to make an estimate of the youth who contribute to their household budgets in the entire youth population in BiH. The *sample error* of $\pm 2.5\%$ means that we are 95% certain that this ratio is between 39.5% and 44.5% ($42\% \pm 2.5\%$). This should be borne in mind when interpreting all the research results presented here.

The research period was from 9 January to 29 January 2008, with a refusal rate of 30% and average interview duration of 1 hour and 5 minutes.

The database was analysed using SPSS – a statistical application adapted to social studies. In addition to research-collected data, analyses included data on youth in EU countries, provided by EUROSTAT over the past few years. The main purpose of this multiple set of data was to perform a comparative analysis and compare the position of youth in BiH and that of youth in the EU. The overall research conducted in BiH, the data collection method and the questionnaire used for that purpose were devised in such a way so as to allow comparison with the above-mentioned data.

The second part of the research was the qualitative part. This was done using the focus-group method, i.e. group discussions, which provided specific proposals for decision-makers. 21 focus groups were organised to include representatives of the youth, the NGO and the public sectors, as well as representatives of persons with disabilities, Roma, and returnees.

This chapter presents the results from both research exercises. Quantitative research results are presented in tables and in graphs, with simplified explanations. The analyses used multiple regressions and T-tests for determining statistical significance of differences in the answers provided. Qualitative research results are presented as quotes from focus group participants, with no identification.

²¹⁵ <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/PD/PD00600.pdf>

Sample features

SAMPLE RESPONDENT PROFILE

		ENTIRE SAMPLE	F BIH	RS	Brcko District
Broj ispitanika		1.507	990	487	30
SEX	Male	48%	46%	52%	63%
	Female	52%	54%	48%	37%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Employed	30%	30%	29%	7%
	Unemployed	18%	19%	16%	33%
	Student	33%	31%	35%	27%
	Other (inactive)	20%	20%	19%	33%
MARITAL STATUS	Single	81%	80%	79%	87%
	Married	18%	17%	19%	7%
	Other	2%	3%	2%	7%
AGE	16 - 19	30%	31%	30%	30%
	20 - 24	36%	37%	34%	40%
	25 - 30	34%	32%	36%	30%
TOTAL		100%	100%	100%	100%

SAMPLE HOUSEHOLD PROFILE

		ENTIRE SAMPLE	F BIH	RS	Brcko District
Number of respondents		1507	990	487	30
RESIDENCE TYPE	Urban	50%	50%	50%	73%
	Rural	50%	50%	50%	27%
REGION	Una-Sana Canton	5%	8%		
	Posavina Canton	4%	6%		
	Tuzla Canton	9%	14%		
	Zenica-Doboj Canton	6%	9%		
	Podrinje Canton	1%	2%		
	Central Bosnia Canton	11%	17%		
	Herzegovina-Neretva Canton	11%	17%		
	Western Herzegovina Canton	7%	11%		
	Sarajevo Canton	6%	9%		
	Herzeg-Bosnia Canton	5%	8%		
	Banja Luka - Northwest	13%		41%	
	Doboj - North	6%		17%	
	Bijeljina - Northeast	4%		13%	
	Pale - East	6%		20%	
	Trebinje - Southeast	3%		8%	
	Brcko District	2%			100%
HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS	1	3%	3%	3%	
	2	11%	12%	9%	10%
	3	30%	31%	28%	33%
	4	35%	34%	38%	30%
	5	15%	13%	17%	20%
	6+	7%	8%	6%	7%
TOTAL		100%	100%	100%	100%

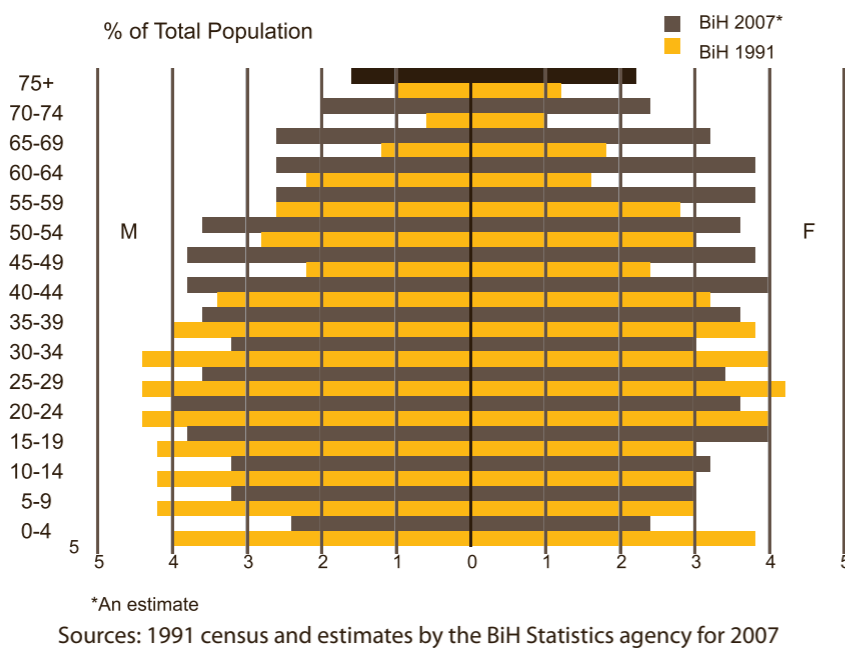
→ **Aging of the population – the main demographic trend****The aging trend in BiH twice as fast as in the EU.**

The demographic trend in the EU over the past few years has been described as 'aging of the population', to indicate a decreased share of younger population groups in comparison with the older ones. In 1990, the share of persons under 15 in the entire population was 19%, and in 2005 it was as low as 16%. In 1990, the share of persons older than 65 was 14%, and in 2005 it was 17%. The ratio of active working population in the EU maintained a level of 67% during this period, with the same ratio of men and women.

If we compare the 1991 census data for BiH with estimates from 2007, we will see that the trend is similar to that in the EU, i.e. the population is aging. However, during the period from 1991 to 2007, the share of active working population remained the same (69%), but the share of persons under 15 decreased by 7% and the share of persons older than 65 increased by the same percentage. This change was twice as low in the EU, amounting to 3%.

If we express this trend in real numbers, we see that there are 607,000 persons under 15 years of age living in BiH, lower than 1991 by 420,000. Also, the number of person aged between 15 and 29 dropped by 315,000 (777,000 compared with 1,091,775). On the other hand, the number of persons older than is 490,300, higher than in 1991 by some 277,000. And finally, the size of active working population today is lower than in 1991 by more than 500,000.

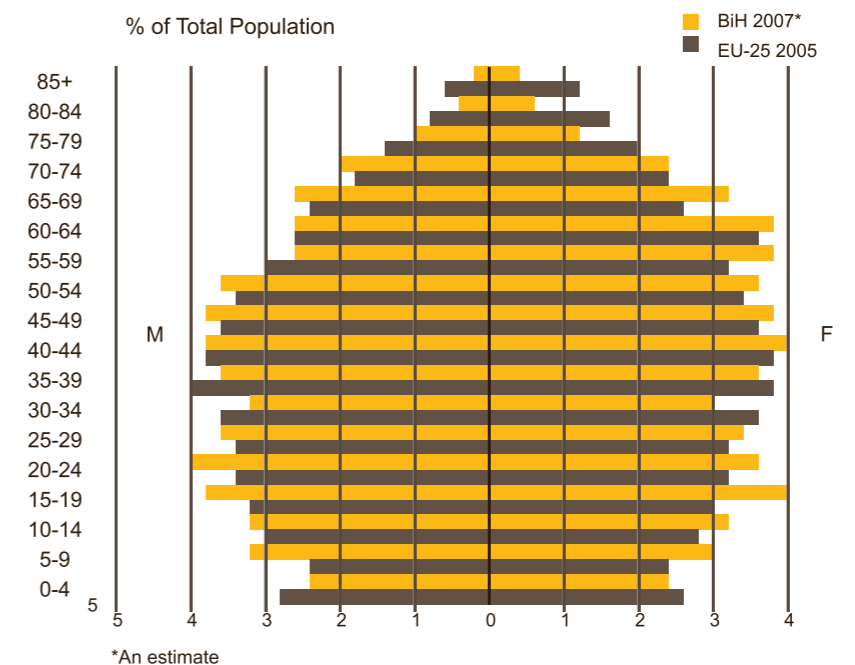
Graph 1 *BiH age pyramid, comparison between 1991 census results and 2007 population estimates.*

**The ratio of younger population in BiH is higher than in EU countries.**

Analyses of data on BiH population by age groups and sex (BiH Statistics Agency, 2007) leads to several general conclusions. First, the male population is more numerous than the female population up to the age of 54. As for persons older than 54, there is a relatively higher number of women. This means that the age pyramid is relatively tilted towards men in younger age groups, and towards women in older age groups. Second, similar conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the same data for EU-25 (2005).

However, when comparing data from BiH and that from the EU, several demographic differences appear, the most important being that the ratio of young population in BiH, aged 15 to 29, is higher than the ration of the same population in the EU. On the other hand, the ratio of persons between the ages of 30 and 39, i.e. the most active part of the population, is much higher in the EU than the same age group in BiH.

Graph 2 *Age pyramid, comparison between BiH and EU-25.*



Sources: EUROSTAT (2005) and estimates by the BiH Statistics Agency (2007)

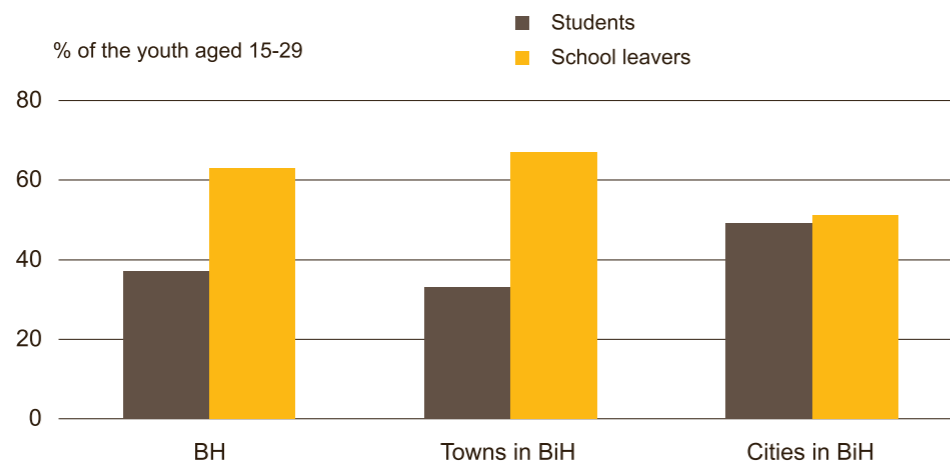
→ Education

Education level

According to data supplied by state statistics agencies in BiH, 88,281 persons were registered in 2005 as university students. The total university enrolment rate is 26%, but the ratio of those who actually graduate within the prescribed time is just 10%. (2005 REF)

In 2005, 160,600 students attended some form of secondary education – of that number, 38,571 (24%) attended general secondary schools, and 118,671 (74%) attended vocational secondary schools. In the same year, 451 students (0.3%) were enrolled in secondary schools for persons with disabilities. The total secondary school enrolment rate was 76%, but 54% graduated within the prescribed time. (2005 REF).

Of the total number of persons aged between 15 and 29, 62% completed or interrupted their education, and 48% enrolled in an education institution. In major BiH cities, participation in the formal education system is at the level of 49%, and in smaller towns it is at the level of 33%. (Commission and GTZ, 2008)

Graph 3 Participation in the formal education system

Source: Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Almost every second young person who leaves the formal education system remains at the level of three-year secondary education or lower.

Results presented in the table below indicate the level of education of persons aged 15 to 29, who either completed or interrupted their education. The principal result is that most of them remained at the level of secondary school. In major cities, the more numerous are the ones who complete four-year secondary schools rather than three-year ones, and in smaller towns the number of the two types of graduates is the same.

If we add up the number of young persons who completed three-year secondary education, just primary education, or none at all, we realise that almost every second young person leaving the education system finds themselves in a very difficult situation in the labour market. The ratio of persons with university degrees is relatively the same in cities and in smaller towns.

Tab. 1 Education level of young persons who completed or interrupted their education.

% of young persons aged 15 to 29 who either completed or interrupted their education

	BiH	Towns in BiH	Cities in BiH
Did not complete primary school	2%	2%	0%
Completed primary school	7%	7%	3%
Vocational secondary school – three years	40%	40%	38%
Secondary school – four years	40%	39%	50%
Post-secondary non-university degree	4%	4%	1%
University – social sciences and humanities	5%	6%	5%
University – natural and technical sciences	1%	1%	2%
Master's or doctoral degree	1%	0%	1%

Source: Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Most university students opt for social sciences or humanities.

Results presented in the table below indicate the distribution of students aged 15 to 29 within the education system, of whom 46% attend secondary education, and 54% attend higher education programmes. In smaller communities, 49% of all students are in secondary school, and this percentage is lower in the cities (35%). 46% of all students attend university programmes of four or more years. Within this last group, most of them attend social science programmes or humanities.

Tab. 2 Level of education currently attended by registered students

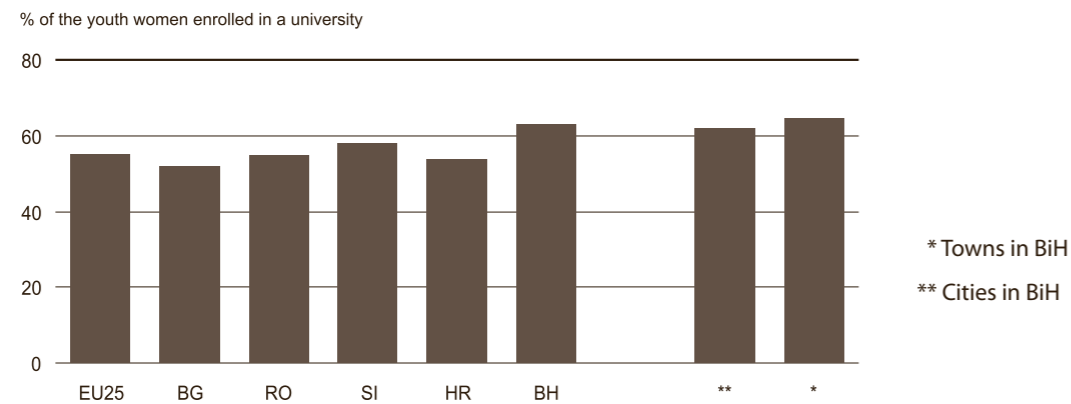
% of young persons aged 15 to 29 enrolled in some level of education

	BiH	Towns in BiH	Cities in BiH
Vocational secondary school – three years	8%	9%	3%
Secondary school – four years	38%	40%	32%
Post-secondary non-university degree	7%	7%	9%
University – social sciences and humanities	32%	32%	32%
University – natural and technical sciences	9%	8%	13%
University - medicine	4%	3%	10%
Master's or doctoral degree	1%	1%	1%

Source: Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Women are far more numerous in higher education than men.

If we look at the sex breakdown of students currently enrolled in higher education institutions in BiH, it becomes evident that the share of women is slightly higher than the EU average. There are far more women (43% of the total number of women) than men (30% of the total number of men) aged 19 to 24 enrolled in some form of higher education. Research has shown that the share of women among higher education students (62% of all students) is higher than the share of men (38% of all students).

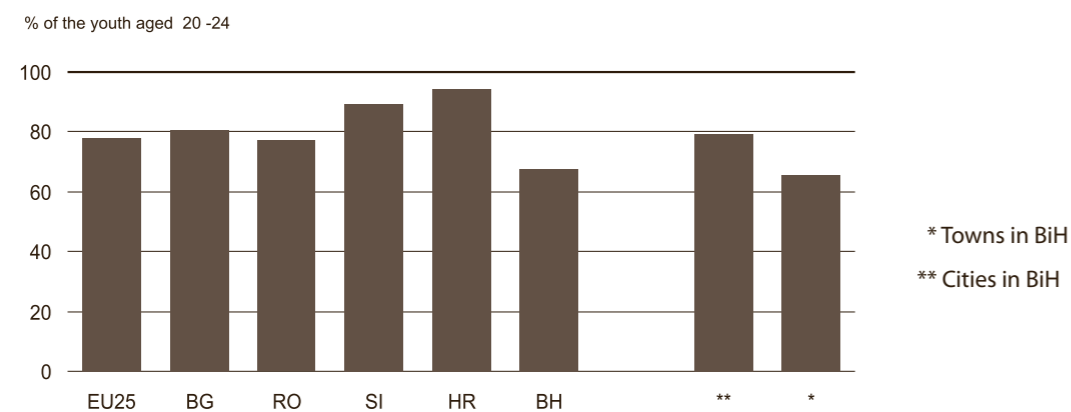
Graph 4 Percentage of women enrolled in higher education, expressed as percentage of all students

Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

BiH is far below EU countries, including new member states, in the share of persons aged 20 to 24 with completed four-year secondary education or higher.

Education system analysts in BiH indicate that a high share of young persons who remain at the level of three-year secondary education is one of the main reasons for their unemployment, as well as many other societal problems. 'The education level' is one of the principal indicators used to measure youth participation in the formal education process. With 68% of persons aged 20 to 24 who have completed at least four-year secondary education, BiH is far below the EU average (78%), for both old and new member states.

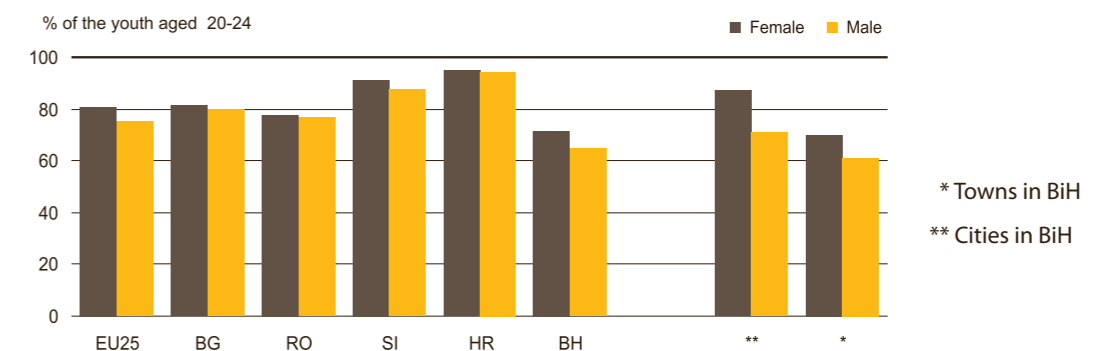
The percentage of persons of this age group with higher education is slightly higher in BiH cities. This only goes to show that the economy of smaller communities fails to keep the persons who hold a higher education degree, thus confirming the hypotheses about an ever-present migration from towns to cities.

Graph 5 Total share of persons aged 20 to 24 who have completed four-year secondary education or higher.

Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

The difference between men and women in BiH corresponds to the EU average in terms of share of persons aged 20 to 24 who completed at least four-year secondary education.

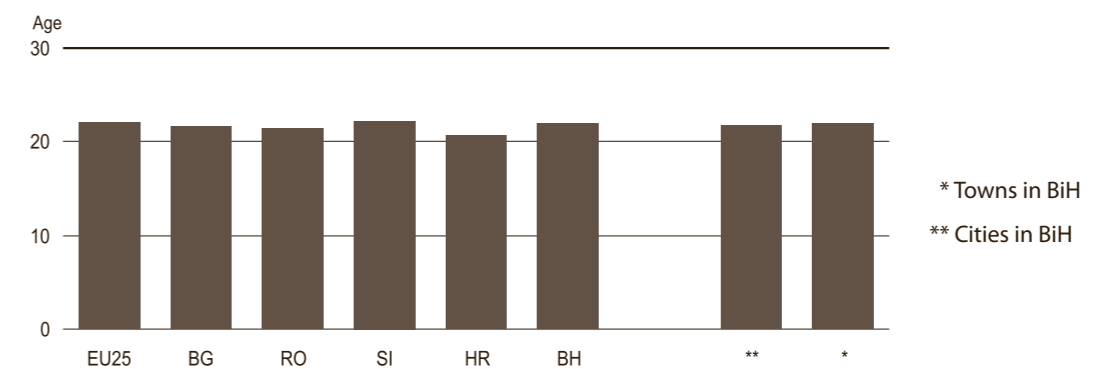
In all the EU countries with no exceptions, there are more women than men aged 20 to 24 who have completed at least four-year secondary education. The average difference in all the EU countries is 7%. This difference in BiH corresponds to the EU average, though the difference is greater in cities than in towns.

Graph 6 Percentage of women and men aged 20 to 24 who have completed at least four-year secondary education

Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Average student age

As for the average age of university students, BiH keeps up with EU countries with the average age of 21.8 years. In this case, the difference between men and women is insignificant.

Graph 7 Average age of higher education students

Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Dropout rates

Every fourth person in BiH drops out of the education process – far above the average of most European countries.

One of the key indicators for monitoring the education process is the dropout rate. This is measured as the percentage of persons aged 18 to 24 who have completed no more than three-year secondary education and failed to continue or to attend other form of formal or informal training in the past 12 months. In BiH cities, 17% of persons of this age group remained at the level of three-year secondary education, with no participation in any other form of training. This percentage corresponds to the EU-25 average, which is far better than the situation in towns in BiH, where this percentage reaches almost 30%. Examples of Slovenia and Croatia indicate insignificant percentage of this category.

Graph 8 Percentage of persons aged 18 to 24 who have completed no more than three-year secondary education and failed to continue

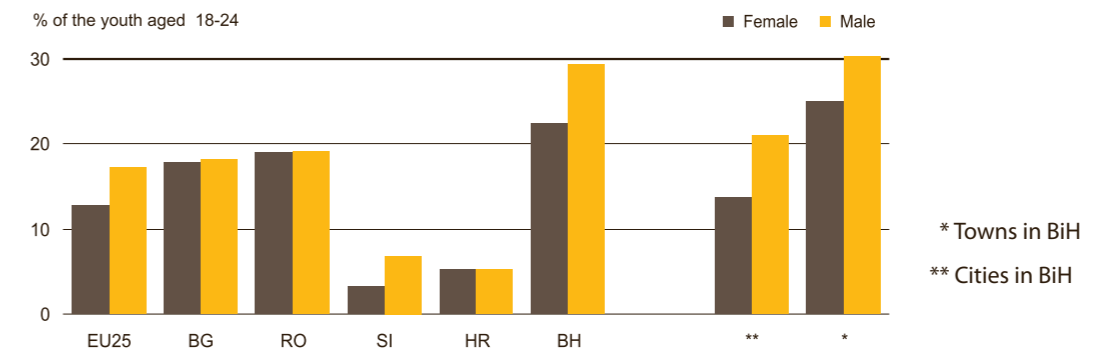


Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Male students are more likely than female students to remain at a no-qualification level of education.

In most EU countries, it is usually men who drop out of formal education. The average difference between men and women is approximately 5%, whereas the difference in BiH is 7%. This difference is almost non-existent in Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Graph 9 Percentage of women and men aged 18 to 24 who have completed no more than three-year secondary education and failed to continue



Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Most young persons list financial problems as the key reason for interrupting their education.

Most young persons who stayed at a fairly low level of education indicate 'financial reasons' as the key reason for doing so. Moreover, many of them 'saw no purpose' in continuing.

Very few of them indicate permanent employment as the reason to interrupt their education, particularly in small towns.

Tab. 3 What are the reasons for your failure to continue your education?

% of persons aged 15 to 29 who interrupted or completed their education

Number of respondents	BiH	Towns in BiH	Cities in BiH
Due to financial reasons	43%	42%	32%
I saw no purpose in continuing	26%	29%	25%
I found permanent employment	14%	13%	24%
Due to farming work at home	14%	15%	19%
Due to household duties	4%	4%	7%
Started a family	3%	3%	2%
Other	5%	5%	3%

Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Satisfaction with quality of education

Few young persons who have completed vocational secondary education as well as those who still attend it believe that such education will allow them to find employment in their profession.

One quarter of all youth in BiH do not believe that the education they have acquired would allow them to find employment in their profession. This negative opinion on the inability of education to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary to find employment is evident mainly among students of vocational secondary schools.

Tab. 4 Opinion on how much can education secure employment for young persons

% of young persons aged 15 to 29

	BiH	Towns in BiH	Cities in BiH
Not at all	10%	11%	7%
Slightly	14%	15%	10%
To some extent	37%	37%	44%
To a large extent	27%	14%	26%
Do not know	12%	13%	14%

Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

BiH youth are dissatisfied with technical facilities at schools and universities and the level of practical learning.

As for the level of satisfaction among the respondents in relation to different elements of education, most of them are dissatisfied with the technical facilities available at schools and universities (38%), and with the level of practical learning available (37%).

As for practical learning, only one third of them have had any experiences with it. In the RS, the percentage of persons with practical learning experiences (41%) is much higher than that in FBiH (33%).

30% of all youth have a negative opinion of the performance of administration, 25% of the quality of education, and 23% question the competence of their teachers.

Tab. 5 Student dissatisfaction by element

% of all students aged 15 to 29; 'very satisfied' and 'dissatisfied' answers only

	BiH	Towns in BiH	Cities in BiH
Quality of education	25%	27%	20%
Competence of teachers	23%	25%	21%
Administration performance	30%	30%	25%
Technical facilities	38%	39%	37%
Practical learning	37%	38%	33%

Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Experiences of young persons indicate the need to reform the organisation and content of practical learning.

The quality of practical learning is one of the issues discussed by focus groups. Participants emphasized its importance for their future education, experiences, and thus employment possibilities, as well as successful performance in a given profession. However, most of them had bad experiences with practical learning, while some of them stated that their schools and universities provided no practical learning at all. Those who did have practical learning experiences said that the number of such classes was insufficient, inadequately organised, and often reduced to marginal activities (cleaning, maintenance, making coffee, secretarial work). Very few participants indicated that due to absence of practical learning at school they organised their own, either through different organisations or through private employers.

'Just my luck – they always omit [in secondary school] just those areas you need for the university course you want to take.' (Sarajevo, male)

'If I've had practical classes, it would have been easier to find work.' (Sarajevo, female)

'Practical learning is of poor quality. The problem is that many students spend their practical classes as cleaners. That has nothing to do with their education. A friend of mine was attending a secondary vocational school for tourism catering. She cleaned windows and she was supposed to practice hotel reception work.' (Bihac, female)

'I wasn't satisfied with the quality of practical learning. The bosses never explained much and I couldn't learn much about the job.' (Vitez, male)

'As for practical teaching at our university, there was some, but nothing applicable to an actual job. It was just to meet the formal requirements.' (Tuzla, male)

'I organised my own practical learning with an international student organisation out the university.' (Mostar, female)

'Well, most of us at school just fixed hair rollers, we weren't allowed to pick up scissors and cut hair, we can't even mix dyes or dye hair.' (Mostar, returnee group, female)

'No practical learning, and we're physiotherapists. We had to do most of the stuff ourselves, they get annoyed if you ask them anything.' (Mostar, returnee group, female)

'People are just not educated, either in terms of method or in terms of quality, and we should wonder how they got their diplomas – it's all about money. It's not about whether we're smarter than other kids, it's about who teaches us and what such education gives us.' (Mostar, returnee group, female)

The Roma discussion group indicated that very few young Roma persons manage to find any kind of income-generating employment. Few of them stated that they worked or had worked, or that the job had anything to do with their education. A student commented on survey findings indicating that one half of all students fear future unemployment, stating that this was not surprising, particularly in relation to young Roma persons, who are certainly discriminated against in the labour market. That is why this participant underscored the importance of practical learning for young Roma attending school, because in addition to job-related competences, it would help them build confidence and thus give them a better chance of finding adequate employment.

‘Few have any employment.’(Tuzla, male)

‘I did work, but it had nothing to do with my education. I worked as a waiter, I just had to work.’ (Tuzla, male)

‘Any normal person is scared. If I’m not a good technician and I had no practical education, of course I fear the challenge of being a technician anywhere. Therefore, we need more practical learning to be confident about our competencies.’ (Tuzla, male)

Key problems in formal education – perceptions and priorities

Excessive curricula, lack of practical learning and lack of scholarship programmes are at the top of the list of priorities for education reform.

Out of a list of options for formal education reform, most of the respondents believed that ‘excessive curricula’ (34%) are the first thing to be changed, followed by ‘lack of practical learning/teaching’ (19%), ‘lack of scholarship/student loan programmes’ (14%) as the possible formal education reform areas.

Tab. 6 What needs to be changed in formal education?

% of persons aged 15 t 29

Number of respondents	BiH	Towns in BiH	Cities in BiH
Excessive curricula	34%	34%	29%
Lack of practical learning/teaching	19%	21%	19%
Lack of scholarships/student loans, particularly in higher education	14%	11%	15%
Teacher-student relationship	6%	7%	5%
Inadequate technical facilities	5%	3%	5%
Scientific research not based on real needs	5%	5%	5%
Incompetent teachers and professors	4%	3%	5%
Lack of classroom dialogue	3%	2%	4%
Lack of information on reproductive health for youth	1%	2%	2%

Source: Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Other problems are related to the teachers’ attitude towards students, poor quality of teaching, poor teaching methodology, incompetence and corruption and bribery in the education system.

All the focus group participants agreed that excessive curricula and lack of practical teaching were the key problems in education. Curricula are often excessively burden with outdated and irrelevant content, and they fail to provide instruction in areas of key importance.

Moreover, some of the participants underscored the problem of the teachers’ and professors’ attitude towards their students, poor teaching methods, their incompetence, and corruption in the education system.

‘Teachers just can’t get rid of the old system and catch up with the times. Their approach is obsolete. And they behave like little gods.’ (Banja Luka, female)

‘At the School of Economics here in Brcko, there was a professor who took money from students... it went on for a long time, for 10 years.’ (Brcko, female)

A certificate or another written confirmation of attendance of practical classes would help youth in their job applications, accompanied by adequate promotion of such certificates to employers.

Some of the Roma who completed their secondary education had no practical teaching at all, and those who did underscored that it was inadequate and failed to provide them with any practical knowledge. They indicated that their practical learning was nothing more than observing those who were doing something related to practical application of theoretical knowledge (taught at school or employers with whom they attended practical lessons), with no possibility for them to try and perform a particular task. Moreover, it was said that it would be important for young persons who complete their practical training to receive a document certifying that fact, as that would be of help in future employment.

‘No, I had no practical classes.’ (Tuzla, Roma group, male)

‘It’s too elaborate, too much theory. And nothing but theory. When I graduated from a vocational school dealing with all the complex materials, research projects, innovations, and when I received my diploma, I didn’t know how to fix a screw on a drawer.’(Tuzla, Roma group, male)

‘I graduated from secondary vocational school for dressmakers. We had just 15 sewing machines. Those of us who didn’t know ho to sew weren’t allowed to use them. The teacher didn’t even teach us the basics, like what the small and the big scissors are for. So, she taught us nothing and I found myself totally embarrassed later.’ (Tuzla, Roma group, female)

‘The practice is missing. A handyman cannot spend time with us, he needs to work. He has no time and no possibility to give us any explanations. Moreover, the problem is that we receive no written certificate of attendance of any practice. Wherever I apply for a job they say I have no experience, although I do, but I can’t prove it. I don’t have a piece of paper.’ (Tuzla, Roma group, male)

The key is to change the Roma parents’ attitude towards the education of their children.

A significant problem emphasized by young Roma persons is the overall non-attendance of school by the Roma. Some participants emphasized the need to include into primary education as many Roma children as possible, and they provided information on projects related specifically to Roma education, which they were involved in as educators. They also underscored that there was a need to change the Roma parents’ attitude towards the education of their children so that they would register their children with primary schools rather than sending them off to beg.

It was also said that the socio-economic position of the Roma population should be improved first, as they often lack basic shelter, let alone decent living conditions, in order to be able to even discuss their inclusion into the education system.

'In order to include those children into the education system, their parents need to understand the importance of their children's education. If they are not motivated by their parents, children won't do it on their own. No child begging by the junction came there on their own, their parents brought them.' (Tuzla, Roma group, female)

'We had a project in Gradacac last year. It's a Roma settlement and no Roma children attended school, and there were some 30 of them. We worked with them in an improvised school in order to prepare them for school. The best results are achieved through work in the community. This means that we don't drag children away to school, the school is in their community.' (Tuzla, Roma group, female)

'It's important that 99% of the Roma live in disastrous conditions. In 2008, most of them lived in houses with no electricity or running water... How can they complete their education if they have no conditions whatsoever.' (Tuzla, Roma group, male)

A focus group of NGO representatives met in Sarajevo and noted that it was important to provide schools and universities with adequate facilities for practical teaching (workrooms, laboratories, etc.). Furthermore, student agencies and organisations should include employers in providing possibilities for students to attend practical learning and thus gain valuable experience. An NGO representative working with persons with disabilities emphasized the need to introduce new content into the school system, aimed at persons with developmental problems, in order to facilitate job placement for this segment of the population.

The current curriculum definitely does not correspond to the requirements of the labour market, so we are learning something at the university today that no one may need tomorrow. I think there should be an amendment to the curricula, not to mention the lack of practical learning. I think that through different student organisations employers could benefit from organising practical learning.' (Sarajevo, youth NGO representatives, male)

'More budget funds should be directed towards laboratories and other forms of practical learning during formal education. If learning is to be just theory on how something should be done, we have a major problem.' (Sarajevo, youth NGO representatives, male)

I would certainly list modernisation as a challenge.' (Sarajevo, youth NGO representatives, female)

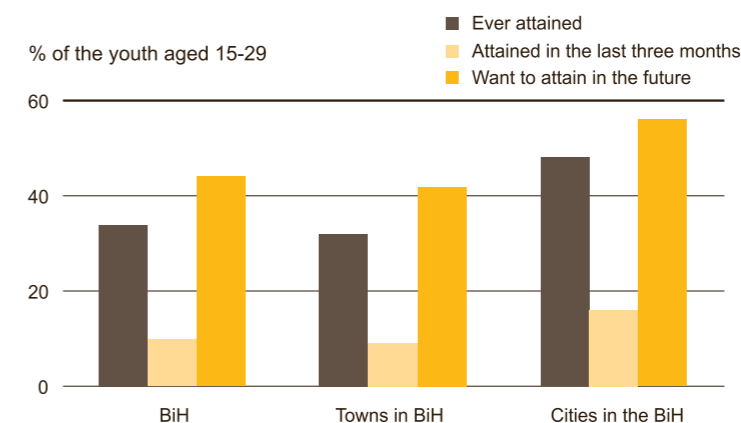
Informal education

Most youth are not involved in informal education, questioning the quality of such education on offer and challenging lifelong education policies.

As for informal education, i.e. participation in courses and trainings sessions outside the formal education curricula, research results indicate that this segment of the education process is clearly underdeveloped. As many as two thirds of the respondents never attended any course outside their formal education, and only 11% had not attended any such training in the past three months.

Participation in informal education programmes is determined by the type or residence of the youth and the type of their formal education. Namely, youth living in rural areas and those attending secondary vocational schools are far less likely to attend courses outside school.

Graph 10 Participation rates at training courses outside formal education



Sources: Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

When asked about possibilities of retraining or working in a profession different from their qualifications, very few focus group participants were able to say who provided this form of training (usually within schools). Also, very few of them had attended any training unrelated to their actual profession.

Most youth believe that retraining would not increase their employment possibilities. This opinion is substantiated by the fact that the greatest labour market demand is for university degree holders. Moreover, most of them are sceptical about the quality of retraining they can receive in BiH. They explain that there are frequent instances of 'diplomas for sale' with no training and no exams.

Informal education and retraining are too expensive for most youth, which is the key reason for their low attendance.

Participants are not certain if the certificate they receive is even recognised by their future employers. Those who have had experiences with this form of training indicate that retraining is often very expensive, up to several thousand convertible marks, which they believe is the key reason why very few young persons opt for it. Very few participants think that such retraining could be useful or that they would be ready to invest in such training, unless it would guarantee future employment.

'I'm just attending school part-time and it costs a lot. You need to have a lot of money to be able to afford it.' (Vitez, male)

'This is private and it costs. You get a certificate, but I don't know if it's recognised.' (Doboj, female)

'I wanted to attend it in the secondary school for nurses. But it costs at least two or two and a half thousand marks, and no one guarantees a job after that.' (Tuzla, female)

'You can't even get retraining without several thousand marks.' (Trebinje, male)

Governments should accept as partners all the different NGOs providing different forms of informal education, in order to develop the field. The first step is to map out the existing services and accredit them.

As for the possibilities of retraining, NGO representatives identified the problem of absence of a legislative framework regulating the area. In Trebinje, it was said that there were organisations providing retraining, but such training should be recognised. That could be secured provided the employment bureaus started to offer such programmes, but the bureaus do not have the financial means to do that. In relation to this, it is important for governments to accept as partners the different non-governmental organisations providing differently types of informal education.

'There is still no legislative framework. The private sector or associations should start issuing recognised certificates so that workers can receive different types of training. Employment bureaus still don't have the capacity to provide such services on their own... You can acquire certain skills through the informal sector, but it won't be recognised.' (Trebinje, NGO representatives group, male)

'A youth strategy could make the government support NGOs to work on informal education, be it something related to career development or PR skills, something that is neglected in formal education.' (Sarajevo, NGO representatives group, male)

The Roma are inadequately informed about the possibilities of retraining offered to them. They are exempted from paying for retraining organised by secondary vocational schools in the Tuzla Canton, i.e. the costs are borne by the Cantonal Ministry of Education. That is why the NGOs and active Roma youth involvement are of key importance, as that would improve the level of information and provide opportunities for active involvement in the education system as well as in other public activities.

'All the schools offer such retraining but it's all about the money, since many people don't have the money to pay for it.' (Tuzla, male)

'I personally believe that it's about information. I believe that the NGO sector can do a lot and we can effect our own interests. For example, very few people know that we're exempted from paying the fee of 60 marks, currently paid for by the Ministry. It's important to know which door to knock on, we need to be persistent, we need to know how to lobby, and nothing will be done if we stay at home and don't take up books.' (Tuzla, male)

'But we don't know if the Ministry will approve it. It will for you, but not for me. I know about cases which they refused.' (Tuzla, female)

'I think that information is very important. I had an opportunity to learn how an NGO works and now it helps me. Before that, I used to think that people in power were untouchable. I now know that I am the stat and I am the community. So, I am the one who can effect change.' (Tuzla, male)

Mobility in higher education

Student mobility and exchange between universities may improve the quality of education, provided that policies in this area are conditioned by solutions to key problems. Until such time, youth will continue to think about universities abroad.

Some of the focus groups believe that the quality of education would be improved by the possibility to attend parts of the programme at different universities (with no administrative hindrances) during one's studies. They emphasize that it would be useful provided the faculty at other universities were competent and professional and accessible to students during lectures and outside them.

However, most of them are quite reserved when it comes to this form of attendance. Namely, the participants generally have a negative attitude towards professors in BiH, whom they claim to be poor lecturers, and they think that student mobility would change nothing. An important obstacle for students interested in this form of attendance is, in the opinion of the participants, the lack of funds required for travel costs and accommodation, in light of the overall economic situation. Finally, some of the participants think that this form of attendance would be difficult to implement at BiH universities, already burdened by inadequate conditions.

'I think it would be better to go abroad, to Novi Sad or something. Not just within BiH, but abroad too, I think it would be better.' (Brcko, female)

'It's all the same thing in Bosnia. If possible, one should go to Germany or Austria.' (Bihac, male)

'It wouldn't be bad. But if we look at the students' living standards, it's impossible.' (Bihac, female)

'It would cause confusion in the system. There would be great demand for some universities, and some could just close down.' (Sarajevo, female)

Student exchange programmes and volunteer practice in other communities are excellent methods for youth career development, and it would be important to establish a fund to support participation in such programmes and activities.

NGO representatives from Sarajevo said that youth should be more mobile in their education, not just in order to acquire quality education, but also for personal development. Youth should therefore be able to attend exchange programmes. Volunteer work in other communities could also contribute to their professional development. In that, it would be important to establish a fund that would allow young persons to attend other universities.

'I think that it is important for one's personal development to get out of your own community. I thin that whoever is at university should also attend a different one, in order to become fully independent.' (Sarajevo, NGO representatives group, female)

'Internship and volunteer work possibilities should be created. They give young persons an opportunity to go to a different city or a different country.' (Sarajevo, NGO representatives group, female)

Types of student organisations aimed at improving education

Key reasons for establishing student organisations are to influence teaching content and teachers' attitudes towards students, as well as to improve material conditions at schools and universities. Such initiatives are rare.

Students attending the focus groups had very little experience with organising different student initiatives in order to improve their education. Those who had such experiences stated that those were different petitions for introducing practical learning, for additional classes, fewer classes in specific subjects, better conditions at their schools, etc. They also filed complaints against teachers who received bribes or were unfair to their students.

Participants also reported on positive and negative outcomes of such initiatives, depending on the gravity of their demands. Thus, requests to replace teachers usually failed, but there were some positive results – additional classes, better teacher-student relations (using teacher evaluation forms).

'We effected change only with one subject. We got better practical lessons. But it was a start.' (Sarajevo, female)

'We signed a petition to replace our PE teacher because his demands were unreasonable. Four classes signed but no change happened.' (Bihac, female)

The NGO focus group stated that there was no willingness among students to work in an organised manner and no interest in changes that would lead to improvements in the teaching process, as well as no adequate information about how students could launch initiatives.

'There are teachers, particularly younger ones, who work in student councils and help us. But there are also older professors who wander why we appear at school council meetings, although the statute allows us the right to attend. We have problems with such professors, they can't do anything to us but we come to their classes and then we have problems.' (Trebinje, NGO representatives group, male)

'I think that young persons are disorganised and disinterested. Few of them want to get involved. They can organise themselves, they can grow in numbers in order to be taken seriously, because of the entire school was on board, they would have to do something, they couldn't say no. I'm not against schools in general, but it's not just about secondary schools, it's about youth initiatives in general.' (Trebinje, NGO representatives group, male)

'I think they don't know enough about their own rights. They don't know about their own possibilities.' (Trebinje, NGO representatives group, male)

Legislation on student organisations would introduce order at universities and define the role of student organisations and councils, thus improving their position significantly.

NGO representatives from Sarajevo reported on student associations acting as intermediaries between students and universities, representing youth interests. Such organisations should become active in all the schools and at all the universities, to elect adequate representatives to mobilise youth to become more involved, to thus win public support and lead to positive changes. In order for this to happen, legislation on student organisations is required. A participant reported on the newly established student parliament as the umbrella body for all the student organisations.

'There is a dysfunctional student organisation. We have a problem with apathy among they youth, they are not interested, they reject the idea of an association having any significance.' (Sarajevo, NGO representatives group, male)

'All those student associations are registered as civic associations and any three individuals may set up such an association. Legislation on student organisations would allow students to elect their own representatives.' (Sarajevo, NGO representatives group, female)

'Why is it important to have student organisations? People who work in such associations develop leadership skills. They learn how to chair a meeting, how to manage a group of one or two hundred persons. They will eventually end up in government and they can thus acquire the skills necessary for them to assume leadership roles.' (Sarajevo, NGO representatives group, male)

Scholarships

No more than 7% of all students receive some form of scholarship, which rarely exceeds 200 KM.

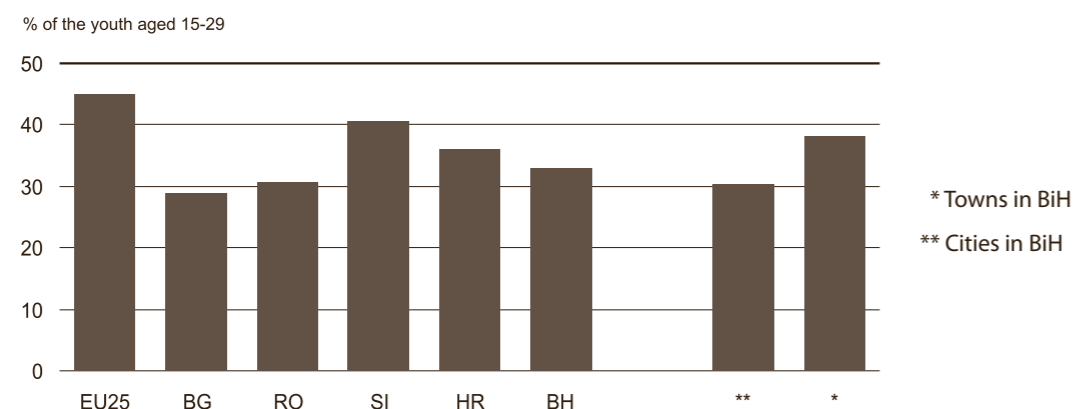
Just 7% of all students, 9% in the Federation BiH and 5% in the RS, receive some form of scholarship. Most of them are municipal scholarships. Most of them amount 100 to 200 KM (54%), though often less than 100 KM (25%).

→ Position in the labour market

Labour force participation rate

Participation of youth in the labour force is somewhat lower than in new EU member states and lower by as much as 10% than in some old member states

Except for Italy, Greece, Belgium and Luxembourg all other 'old' EU member states exceed the BiH youth participation in the labour force by some 10%. (Youth labour force, i.e. both employed and unemployed, expressed as percentage of the entire youth population.) Furthermore, in terms of labour force participation, with a rate of 33%, BiH is below the average of new EU member states by some 3%.

Graph11 Youth labour force participation rate

Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008), BiH Statistics Agency

With a difference in labour force participation of some 14% in favour of men, which is twice as high as the rate in 12 new EU member states, women in BiH are in a better position only in comparison with women in Turkey and in Latvia.

If we compare the labour force participation rate for men and women, we will see that the difference between the sexes in BiH runs far above the average in other European countries. Namely, with a difference of 14% in favour of men, BiH only runs ahead of Latvia and Turkey. This difference is insignificant in the Nordic countries, in Holland and in Island, and in some it runs in favour of women. As for the 12 new EU member states, the difference is at less than 8%, which is almost twice as low as the difference in BiH.

Graph12 Labour market participation rate for young men and women

Sources: Eurostat (2006), Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008), BiH Statistics Agency

Opinions on labour market opportunities

Labour market opportunities for young persons are highly unfavourable, with obstacles such as corruption and nepotism, open discrimination, and experience requirements by employers for first-time jobseekers.

Young focus group participants believe that employment opportunities in BiH are quite unfavourable, as illustrated by their bad experiences when looking for work. Unemployed participants state that they are still looking for work, but information comes through different channels – through ads and on-line vacancy notices, from newspapers, through the unemployment bureau, and through informal contacts with friends.

'Opportunities are fewer day after day, particularly for young persons.' (Brcko, female)

'I tried to find a job, but no one ever gave me a concrete response.' (Doboj, female)

'I respond to ads and vacancies in newspapers, I listen to the radio, I attend interviews...' (Mostar, male)

'I get job information through friends and acquaintances.' (Brcko, female)

Young persons note that most vacancy notices are published just formally, i.e. most of them are already reserved for individuals with 'connections' who were able to secure their employment through informal channels. They substantiate this with the fact that employers usually provide no justification for their refusals. Employed focus group participants were themselves usually employed through personal contacts, stating that it is still the safest way to find work.

'I've been looking for work for two and a half years. Before that, I worked for a year and a half. I always check the ads and I buy all the papers, I'm applying for everything. The response is always negative, because I guess that as soon as there is a vacancy notice, there is an incumbent already on the job.' (Vitez, female)

'Very often, even if the vacancy notice is published, someone has already been employed.' (Brcko, male)

'They just say here are your documents, such and such applied and we recruited such and such and that's it. We are returning your documents. I don't file complaints, I don't have the strength any more. I don't think it would be of any consequence...' (Vitez, female)

'I was employed through a connection.' (Vitez, male)

'I think it's all because of corruption and nepotism. Everyone is judged by who their parents are. Vacancies are published to meet the formal requirements. Vacancies are open but an employee is already identified.' (Trebinje, male)

'When I finished school I applied to all the vacancy notices related to my profession, but I think that corruption and family connections set the rules, just like most other things around here.' (Doboj, male)

In addition to corruption, a problem encountered by young applicants is the lack of experience which is often the requirement and which they never had any opportunity to gain. Jobs that do not require previous experience usually include poorly paid manual labour, and thus fail to meet the needs of young persons who obtained particular qualifications, particularly if they hold higher education degrees.

'I'm part of the wartime generation and very little studying was done. I do have the degree but I have no experience.' (Doboj, male)

'If you don't have the experience, they won't hire you.' (Sarajevo, male)

'I've just graduated from the university. Everyone is asking for two or three years of experience, and I don't have a single day. It'll be hard to find work.' (Brcko, female)

'I have a degree in economics and I've never had a job. Whenever I applied to a public institution, they asked for at least one year of experience. That's the main thing in a vacancy notice.' (Mostar, female)

Survey findings indicate that quite a number of young persons who are of employment age and are unemployed are actually not looking for work. Young persons explain that with the fact that employment opportunities are getting worse, so that most of them have had negative experiences and have no will to continue. Moreover, part of the problem is in the young persons who have an inadequate attitude towards work, they are simply not looking for work, opting to be 'a burden to their parents'.

'If someone just won't work, it's hard to make them.' (Bihac, male)

'I'm already losing hope, I'm quite pessimistic about my employment. I have a lot of friends who also have university degrees. They work in boutiques, they shelve the merchandise.' (Vitez, female)

'There are some who are still living off their parents. I find it ridiculous to see someone in such an awkward situation and does nothing to change it. It means nothing to them, they don't know anything else.' (Brcko, male)

'Generally, people seem to be living one day at the time.' (Banja Luka, male)

As for labour market opportunities for young Roma, an important obstacle in their view is the social prejudice against Roma, leading people to think that they do not want to work or are not capable of performing certain jobs. One participant presented his negative experiences when applying for the job of a police officer. Despite the fact that he met all the requirements of the position – relevant education, good test results and a positive attitude, he was rejected with an explanation that he could not do the job because he was a Roma.

'I completed secondary vocational school in 1996 and I was a reasonably well educated young man. I applied for a competition published by the Cantonal Ministry of the Interior. I passed all the tests but I did not get the job. I was told openly that 'I could not be a policeman in this town because I was from the Roma pack'.' (Tuzla, Roma group, male)

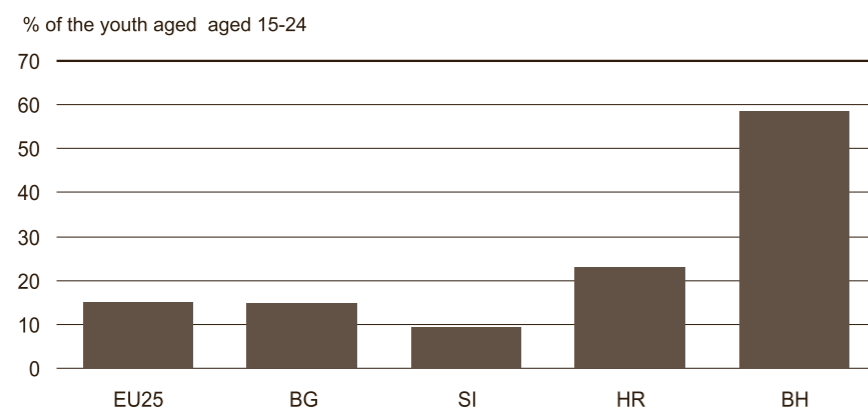
Roma participants who are NGO activists emphasized the role of NGOs dealing with Roma issues, claiming that only if young Roma organise themselves and launch employment initiatives through NGOs, there can be progress in terms of greater employment of this socially vulnerable category.

Unemployment rate

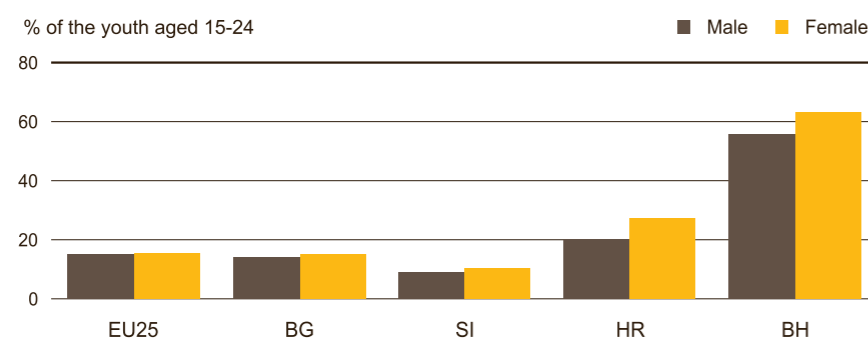
A very high unemployment rate among youth in BiH (58.5%, almost 4 times more than in the EU), and particularly the unemployment rate for women (63%), are the best indicator of the actual position of BiH youth in comparison with their peers in other countries. As it affects all other aspects of the position of youth, unemployment is one of the greatest challenges for the decision-makers.

The unemployment rate for persons between the ages of 15 and 25, which amounted to 59% in 2007, indicates the critical position of BiH youth in comparison with their peers in other European countries. The unemployment rate in the EU-25 is approximately 15%, which is 5 times less than in BiH. This is particularly so for women in this age group, since their unemployment rate is 7.5% higher than that of men. The difference between men and women does not reach this level in other European countries, except for Croatia, Portugal and Spain.

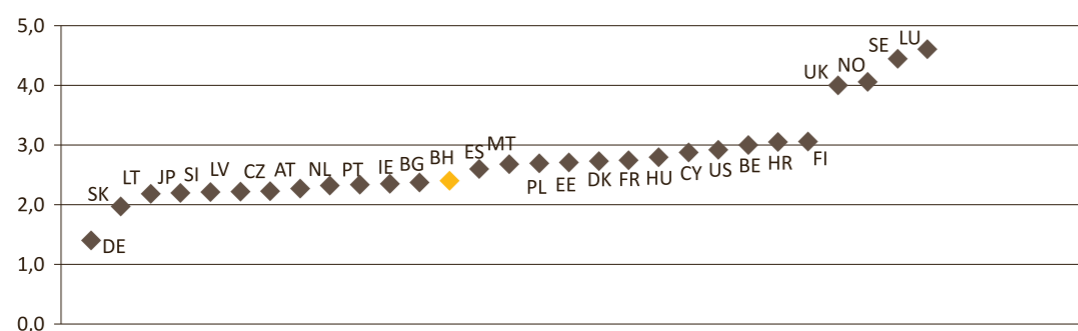
The unemployment rate for the entire population (15+) in the EU-25 is approximately 7%, and in BiH it is almost 30%. Graph 15 presents the youth unemployment ratio (15-24) in relation to unemployment among the population older than 24. For example, for each unemployed person aged 25 or more in Germany, there is 1.4 unemployed persons aged 15 to 24. In BiH this ratio is 1 : 2.4, which is at the level of the EU-25. Countries like the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway and Luxemburg stand out in this respect, since their ratio is four or more unemployed 15 to 24 year olds per one unemployed person older than 25.

Graph13 Youth unemployment rate

Sources: Eurostat (2007), BiH Statistics Agency (2007)

Graph14 Unemployment rates for young men and women

Sources: Eurostat (2007), BiH Statistics Agency (2007)

Graph15 Unemployment rate among youth (15 - 24) vs. unemployment rate among adults (25+)

Sources: Eurostat (2007), BiH Statistics Agency (2007)

Unemployment is the key cause for social anomalies, an obstacle to starting a family and planning reproduction, and the key reason for leaving the country.

Young persons believe that unemployment brings negative consequences for everyday life of youth, particularly if it is a matter of long-term unemployment. This reflects negatively on their life and their mental health, because dissatisfaction and poor financial conditions lead to general apathy and depression, alcohol and drug abuse, and many other mental difficulties. Unemployment contributes to the rise of crime rates among youth in order to generate income.

Moreover, quite a number of young persons state that due to long-term unemployment they are contemplating leaving the country, and some of the focus group participants stated that they were willing to leave BiH if given an opportunity to go abroad and try to find employment. Several of them stated that they did go to the neighbouring countries to find seasonal work. Some of them indicated that youth unemployment was also the cause of their inability to start their own families.

'Unemployment does not let you start a family. Women find it hard to have children. Some opt for crime.' (Tuzla, female)

'Depression.' (Bihac, female)

'Leaving the country. Crime.' (Bihac, male)

'Drug abuse, alcoholism, crime.' (Brcko, male)

'No possibility to start one's own family.' (Brcko, female)

'I think the future will be even harder. BiH is just not trying to move forward, it keeps going backwards.' (Mostar, female)

'I'm a university student and as soon as I graduate I intend to move abroad.' (Mostar, female)

'Well, it's hard. There's bickering and dissatisfaction.' (Tuzla, male)

Youth employment sectors**In most cases, young persons find employment as waiters, sales persons, teachers or labourers. They rarely find employment in the public sector.**

In most cases, young persons work in retail trade or catering. Every third young person is employed in one of the two sectors, followed by education, culture and health (14%), crafts (10%), construction and public utility services (8%). Typically, very few of them find employment in state administration (2%).

The public sector is very attractive to young persons as it offers security and reasonable conditions, usually not to be expected in the private sector.

Most young persons believe that sectors such as education, culture, health and social protection offer the best conditions for youth, as such jobs are linked with insurance, adequate working hours and regular pay.

On the other hand, employment in these sectors usually requires higher education qualifications, thus remaining inaccessible to most of them. Although a sector with the best offer (as well as catering), construction was identified by the participants as the least favourable employment

option for young persons, due to the physical conditions of work, frequent illegal employment situations and low pay. Working conditions in retail trade and catering are also considered bad, as unregistered employment happens frequently in these areas as well. Very few participants stated that there was no difference between working conditions in these areas, i.e. that they are all equally bad.

'I am employed illegally. In catering.' (Vitez, male)

'I think that the public sector is the best. Working hours are an advantage, for example. Unlike the first group, this one always knows what their shifts are and what their pay is (e.g. education, culture, health and social protection).' (Bihac, male)

'It's what they call *baustelle* (construction and public utility services). You work for 20 KM, all day, for as long as there is daylight, with a plain salami sandwich.' (Bihac, male)

'The greatest demand is in catering and construction.' (Vitez, female)

'I think that the conditions are generally bad in most of those private sectors.' (Vitez, male)

'When someone finds employment in a state-owned company, they gave better working conditions.' (Vitez, female)

'It's all good there, the working hours and the salaries.' (education, culture, health and social protection) (Brcko, male)

'You have insurance and it's all there. No unregistered employment.' (education, culture, health and social protection) (Brcko, female)

'it's great in public institutions, and there are no rules in private companies. Bad pay, no insurance, and if you complain, you get fired.' (Mostar, returnee group, male)

'I work for the Ministry of the Interior and I got the job through personal connections. I agree, the best working conditions are in state-owned companies.' (Mostar, returnee group, female)

Informal labour market

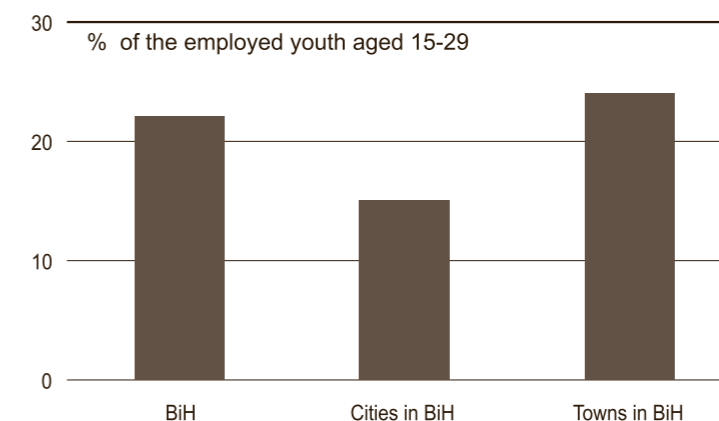
Every fifth young person with employment has no employment contract signed with the employer. In this way, the informal labour market reveals a considerably higher ratio of 'unregistered employment' in FBiH (23%) than in the RS (16%).

22% of all young persons with employment, 19% of all men and 24% of all women, have no employment contract. Most of the employees have indefinite contracts (54%) or limited duration ones (18%). The informal labour market for young persons is considerably larger in FBiH than in the RS. In FBiH, 24% of employed youth have no employment contracts, and in the RS the rate is 17%.

On average, young persons spend two thirds of their employment as registered employees, and one third as unregistered.

On average, young persons under the age of 30 and with some working experience have spent two thirds of their employment as registered employees, and one third as unregistered. On average, persons from urban areas have more years of employment than those from rural areas, men more than women, university degree holders more than high school graduates, youth in the RS more than those in FBiH.

Graph 16 Size of the informal labour market – share of those who have no employment contract signed for their principal job



Source: Commission and GTZ, BiH Youth Survey (2008)

Poor employment opportunities force young people into 'informal' working arrangements, although in some cases even an employment contract is no guarantee of basic labour rights.

The participants found the statistical data that indicates that some 20% of fully employed young people do not have an employment contract, that is, that they are 'informally' employed to be unrealistic. They believe this percentage to be much higher. The participants explained how in view of the poor employment opportunities, young people have no choice but to accept work without a contract, which was confirmed by participant who were employed but not registered as such.

Apart from that, some participants estimate that with the present conditions in the labour market, an employment contract is of decreasing importance because most employers abuse workers whether they are registered or not through unpaid overtime, withholding vacation days, low wages, etc. Still, most participants agreed that the repercussions of informal employment are detrimental because one loses years of employment that go towards earning the right to a pension and to health insurance.

Young people from all the focus groups pointed out the poor social and labour market policies, poor labour laws and their lack of implementation, as well as the unfavourable attitude of employers towards their employees.

"When you get a job, employers are hard to handle. They use you as much as they can" (Banja Luka, male)

"You work for a trial period of two or three months, and they you don't get paid, you just get replaced." (Bihać, male)

"I've only just started working. I didn't even ask about a contract and insurance. I didn't ask for any promises. What can I do, I need the job, I need the money." (Vitez, male)

"It's important, because what are you going to do when you get old. I mean, we're young now, but we have to plan ahead." (Vitez, female)

"Employers don't register their workers for insurance right away. This is an additional burden they don't want. The market policy is bad, the entire labour legislation policy is inadequate, that's the problem. This inspections that are sent to companies are easily bribed. An they use it to their advantage. I don't know many companies that operate legally." (Vitez, male)

"I'm still irregularly employed. I've been irregularly employed my whole life. There's no other way. You just bite your tongue, because you need to earn your wages, and you want to be kept on for the next month." (Brčko, male)

"You don't have the right to be sick, you have no rights. You don't have the right to a day off, nothing. Your voice doesn't count. Even if you had insurance, that wouldn't change anything, because you'd still have no rights." (Trebinje, male)

"People have to do this. If you made demands of your employer, you'd get fired, because there are other people prepared to work illegally. So everyone just looks out for themselves, especially people with children, everyone's prepared to do what they have to in order to feed their families." (Mostar, female)

Compatibility of Education and Employment

Less than half of the employed young people have jobs they were educated to do, which points to serious shortcomings in terms of the knowledge and skills needed in employment. The percentage of such persons is much lesser in RS than in FBiH.

28% of young people have stated that their jobs are unrelated to their education, while 41% have jobs they were educated to do. 29% of young people have jobs partially related to their education. The percentage of those working outside their qualifications is higher in RS (42%) than in FBiH (18%), which indicates a pronounced incompatibility between the education system and the demands of the labour market in the former entity.

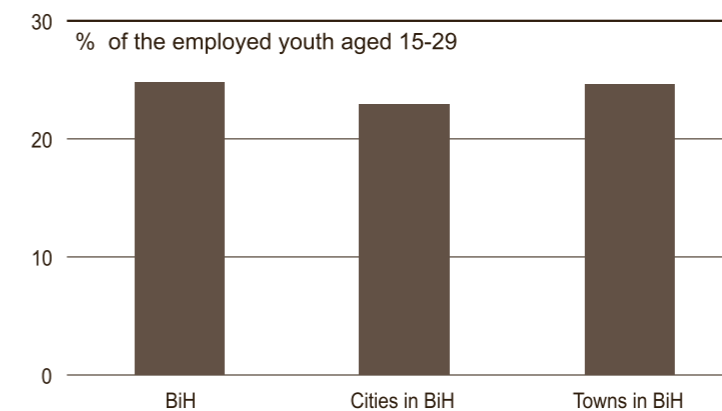
Persons completing secondary vocational education mostly do not manage to find employment within their area of qualifications.

The level of education conditions working within one's profession so that persons with higher levels of education are more likely to find jobs in their profession. Persons completing secondary vocational education mostly do not manage to find employment within their area of qualifications.

Apart from the problem of a lack of knowledge and skills on the job, employment unrelated to education also increases the probability of irregular employment and has negative effects on the amount of monthly income.

Working in jobs they were not trained for has multiple effects on young people. In that respect, persons working in jobs unrelated to their education are more frequently left unregistered and have lower wages.

Graph 17 Ratio of employed young people who believe they were not educated for their jobs



Source: Commission and GTZ, Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

A majority of the focus group participants do not expect to find jobs within their profession, although they point out this depends on their qualifications. Thus, secondary school graduates considering enrolling in higher education increasingly consider the prospect of 'professions in demand'. In that respect, a number of them pointed out the need for a systematic survey of the labour market to show which professions are in demand. At the same time, it is necessary to provide support in the form of career counselling in primary and secondary schools.

"I'll have a tough time finding a job in my profession." (Brčko, female)

"It all depend on your area, if you ask me. You can always find work in electrical engineering, because there aren't a lot of people with those qualifications. However, many more people graduate in social sciences and economics, and it's logical that not everyone can find a job in that field. (Sarajevo, male)

"I am the only one from my generation who got a job related to economics, meaning a job in my profession." (Doboj, male)

"I know I'll have to enrol in a faculty that is in demand. The sad thing is that I wanted to study law. That's what I've always wanted." (Bihać, female)

"I transferred to the Teachers College, because teachers are in demand" (Doboj, male)

"I think it's important to have career counselling from primary and secondary school up to university. It's also necessary to do labour market research. If a profession is in demand, then we should know how to respond." (Tuzla, male)

When it comes to the necessity of education reforms in order to respond to labour market demands, focus groups of NGO representatives in Sarajevo and Trebinje pointed out a lack of compatibility and coordination between educational institutions and employment bureaus and statistics institutes.

They believe it is necessary to introduce mechanisms to ascertain the real demands on the labour market and organise the education system accordingly so that each faculty would enrol a precise number of students in line with labour market opportunities and demands, which is the common practice in other European countries.

Seeking Employment

Young people spend an average of one year between finishing school and finding employment.

Research results indicate that employed persons spend an average of 11 months between finishing school and finding employment. This average is true for both men and women, in urban and in rural areas. The time it will take to find employment after finishing school depends on the level of education. Persons with higher education degrees spend an average of 5 months seeking employment, while persons with secondary school certificates spend an average of 12 months seeking employment.

Minimum Monthly Salary

The average minimum monthly salary unemployed young people would accept amounts to 469 KM.

50% of young people would accept a monthly salary between 200 and 450 KM, 43% would accept 500 to 750 KM, and only 7% of young people would ask for more than 800 KM per month.

The minimum acceptable salary significantly varies depending on the level of education. Thus, persons with secondary school qualifications would accept an average salary of 459 KM, while persons with higher education degrees find 577 KM acceptable on average.

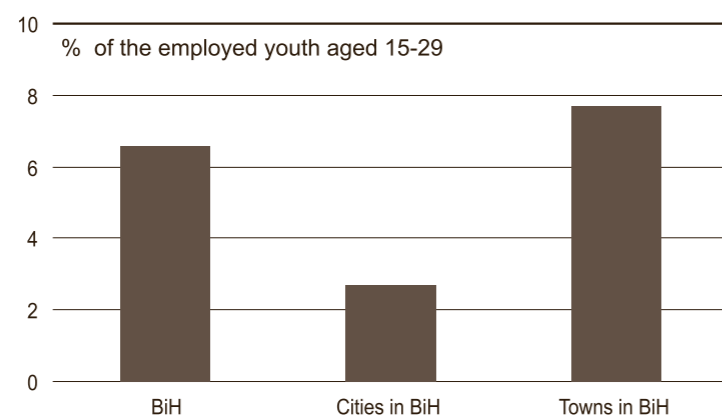
Labour Market Mobility

Only one in ten people aged 16 to 30 has work experience in other areas of BiH, outside their municipality of residence. This type of mobility is greatly dependent on the availability and quality of jobs, and much less on other factors.

Only 6% of young people aged 16 to 30 have worked outside their municipality for any period of time. Only 3% have spend more than a year on such jobs. Students and pupils have practically no experience of working in other municipalities, while 11% of those currently employed have worked in other municipalities, and only 7% of those currently unemployed. It is interesting that there is no difference between men and women when it comes to this type of mobility, and the same is true of citizens from RS and those from FBiH.

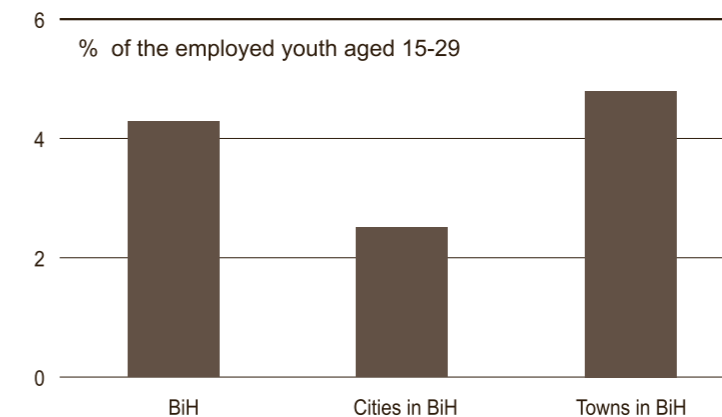
Young people from Towns in BiH leave for larger cities more frequently than those from the larger cities. 4% of young people have experience working abroad.

Graph18 Young people who have worked outside their municipalities



Source: Commission and GTZ, Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph19 Young people who have worked outside BiH



Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Most young people from the focus groups stated they would be willing to work in another municipality, pointing out that young people would generally be more mobile in seeking employment. However, they see the main obstacle to mobility in the lack of financial opportunities for young people, and conclude that young people would find employment outside their municipalities more readily if such jobs could secure adequate income to cover their travel and living expenses, which is usually not the case.

"It all depends on the pay. I can't move to Krupa on a minimum salary. How would I pay for an apartment." (Bihać, female)

"It wouldn't be a problem for a good salary, but not for a minimum salary." (Vitez, male)

"I have a few colleagues from the university who have graduated and still have no work, they would be prepared to go anywhere for a job." (Doboj, female)

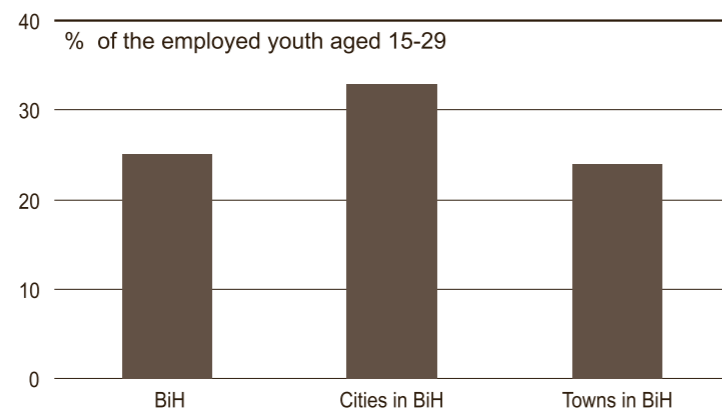
"Why not. Just as long as I'm properly registered and have a normal sort of job." (Banja Luka, male)

'Abuse' at Work

Every fourth young person has witnessed abuse at work with mental and physical consequences to them or their colleagues.

Men and women testify equally to such experiences, while more unemployed persons relate such experiences (36%) in comparison to employed persons (22%) and other inactive persons (26%).

Such experiences are considerably more frequent in larger cities.

Graph 20 Young people who have witnessed a form of abuse at work with mental and physical consequences to them or their colleagues.

Source: Commission and GTZ, Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

The discriminatory labour market practices against young women have a negative effect on reproduction and starting families. Apart from that, employment based on political suitability has been found in all the areas we visited as part of our research.

We asked focus group participants which particular category of young people is highly discriminated against in seeking employment and during employment. At all the focus groups, the answer was young women planning to marry and start a family or those just married but without children yet. Young people state that at job interviews they are routinely asked whether they plan to get married and have children.

Apart from that, most participants pointed out the importance of physical attractiveness in young women, and believe that there is discrimination in that aspect as well, because employers favour attractive and made-up young women over those with the necessary qualifications and work experience (especially in the catering industry).

Apart from that, the participants also pointed out the problem of employment on the basis of political suitability, i.e. that those who do not belong to the ruling political option are discriminated against in the labour market.

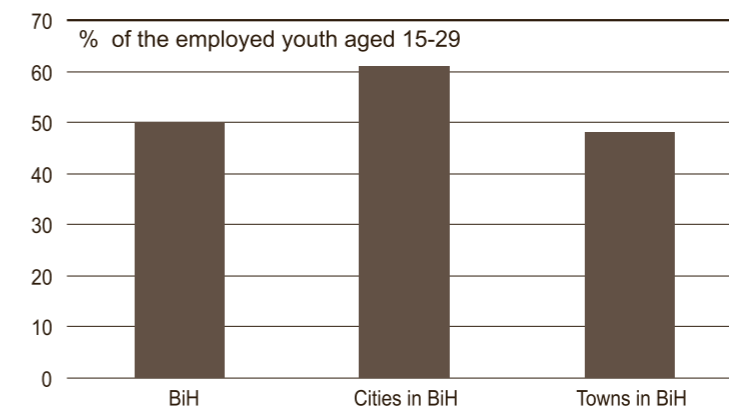
Corruption and Discrimination in Employment Practices

Every second young person has direct or indirect experience of bribery or 'buying' employment

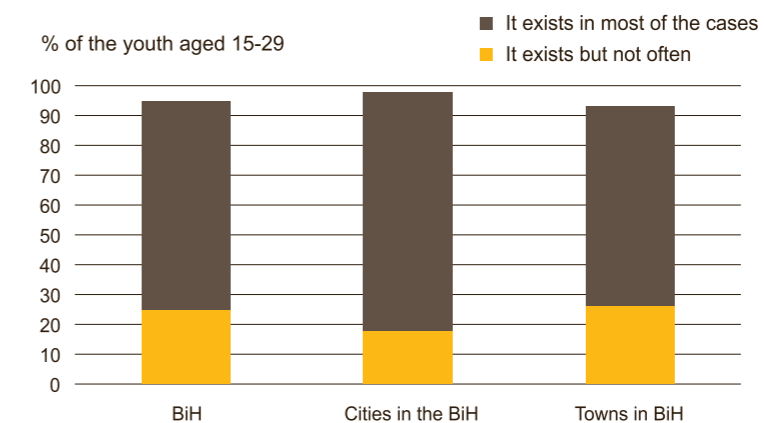
The fact that every second young person has heard about or directly witnessed 'buying' employment, i.e. paying money for a position or job, has long-term negative consequences on the character of employment. Namely, such experience creates a public opinion that deems labour market positions dependent on financial and other bribery capacities, and not skills and abilities.

Almost all young people believe there is a practice of bribery for employment in their environments.

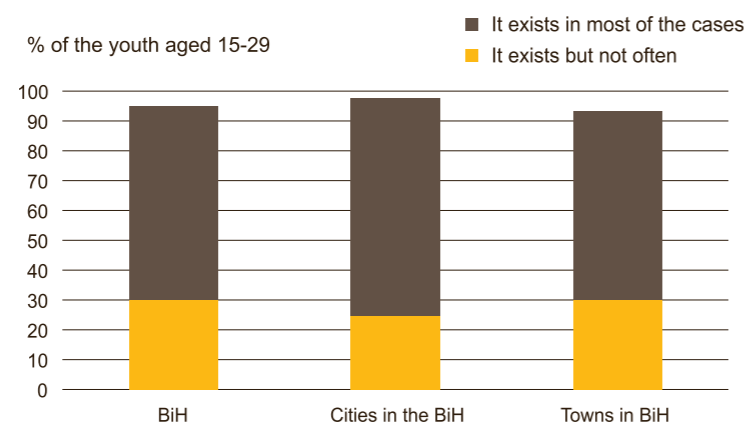
This opinion is clear from their response to the question of frequency of bribery for employment in public administration, the civil service and private firms. Almost all young people believe this is an existing practice.

Graph 21 Young people with direct or indirect experience of bribery or 'buying' employment

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph 22 Perception of bribery for employment in public administration

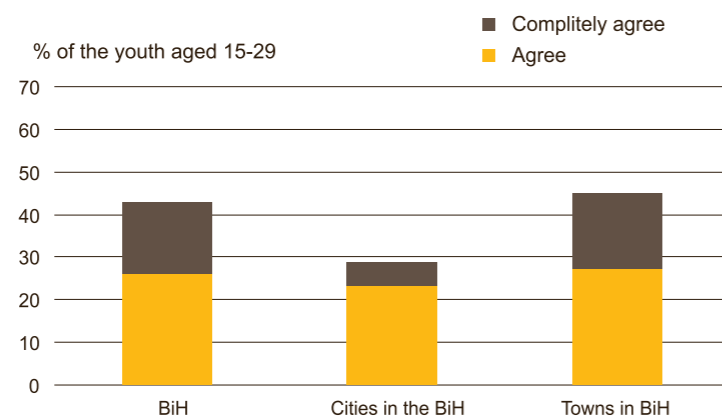
Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph23 Perception of bribery for employment in private firms

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Almost every second woman believes that women and girls are discriminated against in the labour market

Every third young person believes that women and girls are discriminated against in the labour market in some way (e.g. employers preferring men over women, women being paid less than men, etc.) This opinion is more frequent in women (46%) than in men (23%), and in FBiH (36%) than in RS (32%).

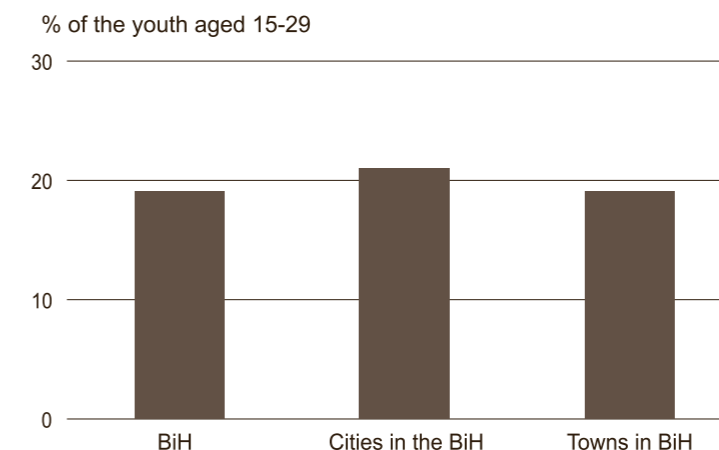
Graph24 Perceived discrimination against women and girls in the labour market

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Government Employment Programmes

Although they are the population category with the highest unemployment rate, young people have not been able to rely on government programmes to find work: Only 1% of young people aged 16 to 30 have participated in a government employment programme.

19% of young people have heard of a government employment programme. Familiarity with these programmes is equal in RS and in FBiH. When it comes to participation in government employment programmes, research results show an even more discouraging situation. Namely, only 1% of young people aged 16 to 30 have participated in a government employment programme. This result shows that although they are the population category with the highest unemployment rate, young people have not been able to rely on government programmes to find work.

Graph25 Familiarity with government employment programmes

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

A smaller number of focus group participants are informed on the existence of government programmes for employment, and this is primarily related to employment bureau programmes. This is an employment programme for young people with university degrees where the government, via the bureau, subsidises their placement as interns in various companies for a year.

Some participants pointed out that this programme can help the employment of young people with university degrees, primarily by enabling them to gain the necessary work experience. Those who are employed through this programme are generally not kept on after their internship is over, but can gain important experience.

"There's a project for employing young people with university degrees where the employment bureau cofinances a year-long internship by paying the employer 600 KM." (Tuzla, female)

"So, every private business that employs someone who's registered with the bureau would receive a certain sum of money for employing someone from the bureau." (Doboj, male)

"I heard the employment bureau gives a sum of money for employment. It's a lump sum or investment of basic resources to expand the firm's capacities so that it can employ young people." (Banja Luka, male)

"I know of a programme for internships for young people with university degrees. Only university degrees are seen as important. What about the rest of us? I didn't hear of anyone staying on with the firm after the internship is over." (Brčko, male)

Entrepreneurship

One of three young people would be prepared to launch their own business.

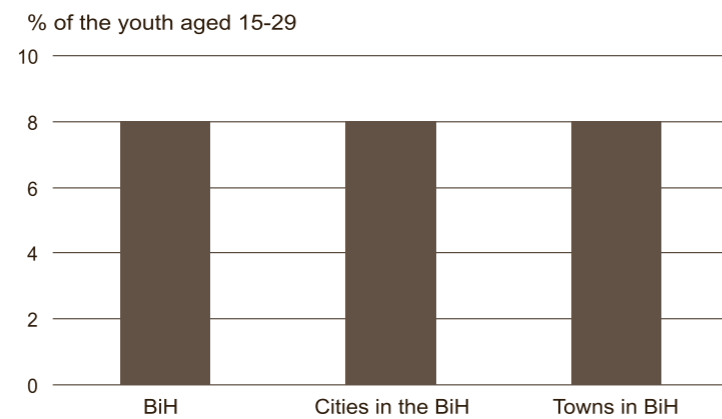
8% of young people have tried launching their own businesses to date. This was a solution for a number of those currently employed. Those currently employed are significantly more prepared to launch a business venture (13%) in comparison to the unemployed (7%) or inactive (8%).

A considerable number of young people would be prepared to launch their own businesses (41%), but most require support from the very start (38%). Residents of larger cities are considerably more predisposed towards private entrepreneurship than those from smaller cities (50% vs. 38%), as well as men compared to women (45% vs. 35%).

Two out of three unemployed persons believe some business training would be of use to them

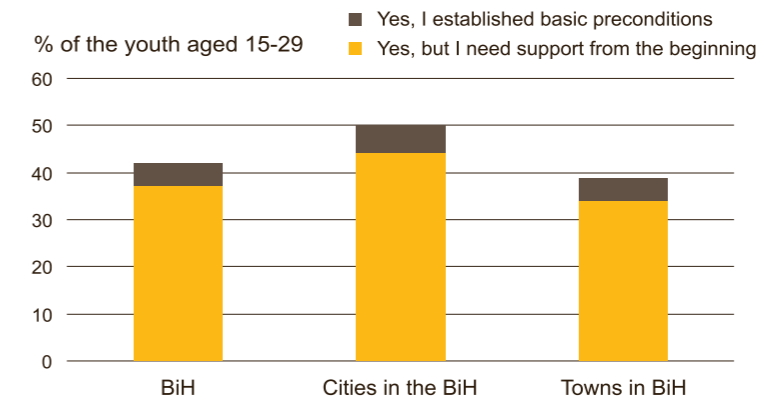
8% of young people have attended a business seminar for young people in the past. For most of them (79%), the seminar was somewhat useful. Apart from that, 62% of young people believe that a business seminar would be of use to them. This opinion is most frequent with unemployed people.

Graph 26 Young people who have tried launching their own business



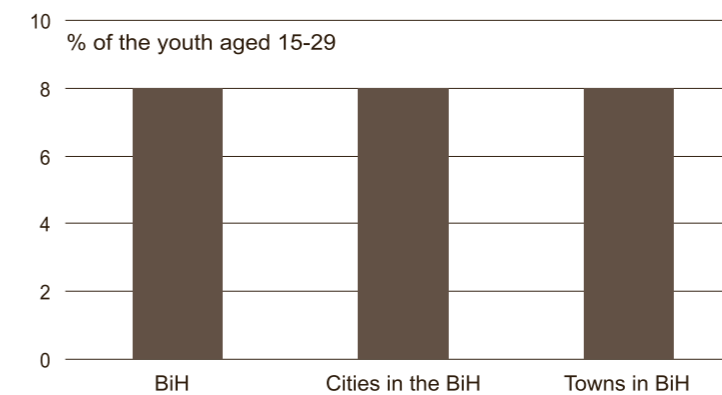
Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph 27 Young people who are prepared to launch their own business



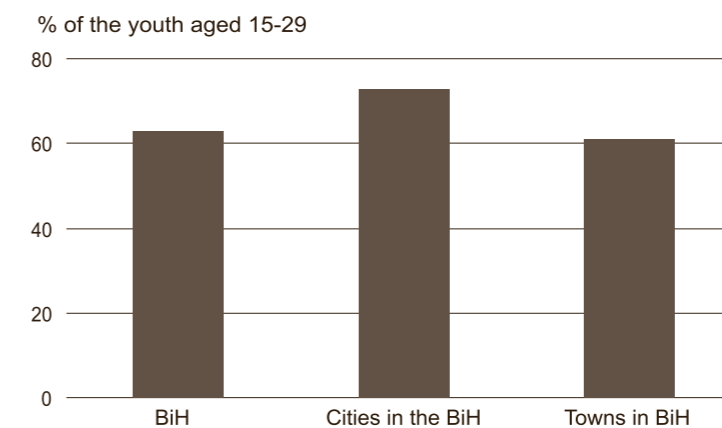
Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph 28 Young people who have attended a business seminar



Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph 29 Young people who believe that some business training would be of use to them



Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Agriculture and tourism are areas where young people see more significant potential for entrepreneurship and youth employment

When asked about their suggestions for support to entrepreneurship, the young people from the focus groups listed various sectors in need of development investment. These were primarily agriculture and tourism, which are seen as having great developmental potential in BiH. Apart from that, some pointed out the importance of investing in sports and athletes who are generally insufficiently supported.

"Investment should be in agriculture and village development. I think agriculture is the thing right now, because everything is going to the cities, and there's no agriculture." (Doboj, male)

"To plant strawberries and sell them on the local market." (Tuzla, Roma group, female)

"The other thing would be tourism. We need to develop village tourism, and I think Bihać and our region would develop that way. We need to develop various excursions. There's a lot of potential in Bihać. We have all these cultural and tourism capacities and we need to push them and expand them further." (Bihać, female)

"We need to invest more in sports, and most in youth teams." (Banja Luka, male)

→ Social Position**Income**

A quarter of young people aged 16 to 24 live in household with total average monthly income of 430 KM, i.e. 60% of the average income for the overall population (713 KM).

Young people in low income households have twice as little financial means than the overall household average.

Monthly income is considerably greater in urban than in rural areas, and in FBiH than in RS.

Every second young man and every third young woman contribute to the household budget to some degree.

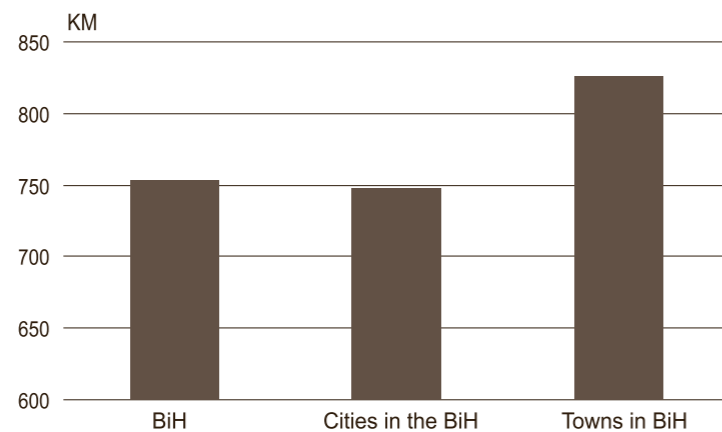
A quarter of young people aged 16 to 24 live in households whose total average monthly income is below 60% of the overall population average income. Based on the research findings, we have determined that the average monthly income for all households is 753 KM, and we can conclude that 25% of young people live in household with monthly incomes below 450 KM.

The average monthly income is considerably higher in urban than in rural households. Also, households in FBiH have somewhat higher income than households in RS.

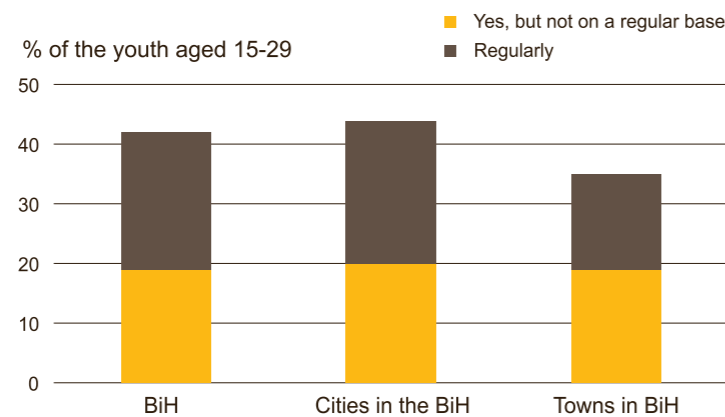
Young people in low-income households have twice as little financial means than the overall household average. Apart from that, young people in smaller cities and rural areas have considerably lower income than young people in larger cities and urban areas. Also, on average men have a higher income than women.

42% of young people aged 16 to 30 contribute to the household budget. 23% regularly and 19% occasionally. It is important to note that men contribute to the household budget more frequently than women (50% vs. 32%).

Salaries (89%), agricultural activities (24%) and retirement pensions (20%) are the three primary sources of income for most households. Apart from that, in 11% of households, the income is made up of money or material assistance from relatives and friends in the country or from abroad.

Graph 30 Average monthly household income

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph 31 Young household members contributing to the household budget

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Social Assistance**Only 7% of young people from low-income households receive any social assistance.**

Young people living in particularly difficult conditions are primarily those who are no longer in school, but still unemployed, with unemployed parents, then young people without one or both parents, young people whose parents have low levels of education, young Roma and persons with disabilities.

“They are the ones who don’t work and aren’t in school. The drop out straight after primary or secondary school.” (Bihać, male)

“Young people without parents.” (Brčko, male)

“National minorities, especially the Roma. These people also find it difficult to get a job.” (Banja Luka, female)

“Uneducated people, without secondary school or university degrees” (Mostar, female)

“Persons with disabilities, because it’s harder for them to get a job.” (Trebinje, male)

Participants listed various strategies and methods they believe can be useful to vulnerable categories of the youth population in their struggle against poverty – trying to find any kind of work, most often seasonal or part-time jobs, the more fortunate are helped by relatives from abroad, etc.

The participants believe that many young people seek a way out of the terrible conditions they live in by begging, ‘rummaging through the rubbish bins’ or criminal activities. They add that due to the difficult socio-economic situation, young people are increasingly desperate and turn to alcohol, drugs, etc.

Savings**13% of young people, 16% in FBiH and 11% in RS, manage to save up a certain sum of money continuously every month.****Starting a family and experience with housing****20% of young people aged 16 to 29 are married.**

Most young people are not married. As most of them are still in school, starting a family is probably of secondary importance. Those who have left the education system see unresolved housing issues as their main obstacle to starting a family.

Tab. 7 Marital status

% of young people aged 15 to 29

	BiH	Smaller BiH cities	Larger BiH Cities
Single	80	79	82
Married	18	19	15
Other	2	2	3

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

The slow resolving of housing issues has negative effects on starting a family, but also on many other aspects of life.

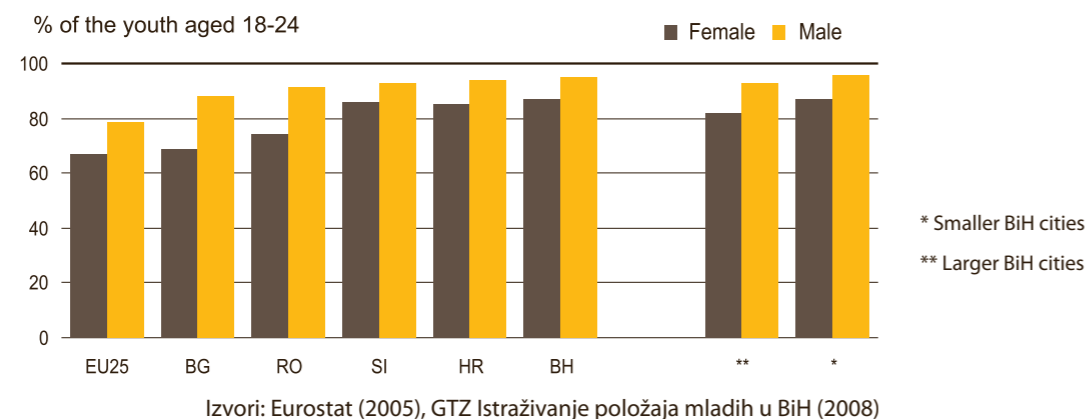
Twice as many young people aged 25 to 30 have managed to live independently in comparison to young people aged 16 to 24, or more precisely 22% from the former group. However, this percentage is still far below the average of other European countries, it is by 15-20% less than in Croatia and Slovenia, and by about 40% less than the EU25 average.

An indicator of the quality of life for young people is the percentage of them living independently, i.e. those not living in the same household with their parents. This indicator measures the proportion of young people who have become independent within two age groups: 18 to 24 and 25 to 29.

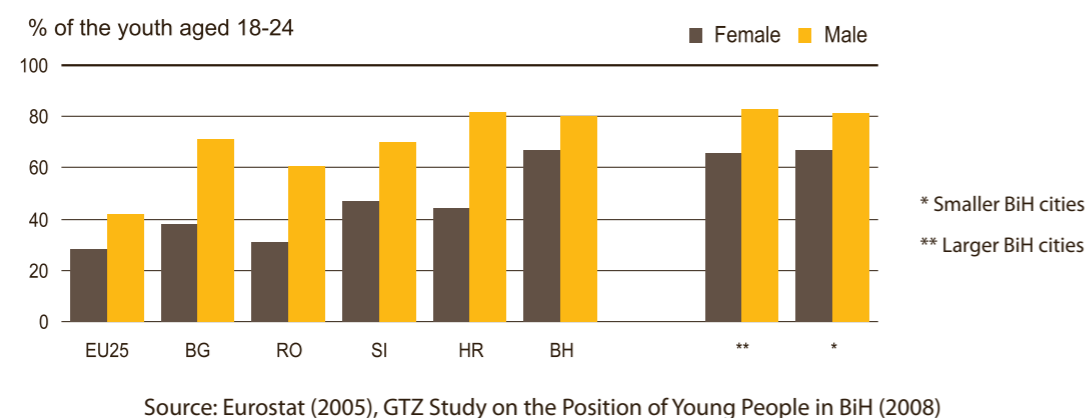
In the first age group, 11% of young people have independent housing. This percentage is at the same level as in Croatia and Slovenia, but considerably lower than the EU25 average of 27%.

In the 25 to 29 age group, the percentage of young people living on their own is twice as high, that is, 27%. However, this percentage is by 10-25% less than in Croatia and Slovenia, and by about 35% less than the EU25 average.

Graph32 Percentage of men and women aged 18 to 24 living with their parents



Graph33 Postotak muškaraca i žena u dobi između 25 i 29 godine koji žive zajedno s roditeljima



Most single young people from the focus groups are still not considering marriage, because they think they are too young, and currently have other priorities – finishing school and finding a job. A smaller number of participants stated they would marry their partners if they had a place of their own. Those who are married generally have their own place to live – they have either bought an apartment by taking out a loan or have inherited it.

All the participants agree that young people in general show less and less readiness to get married and start a family, and the main reason for this they see in unresolved housing issues closely linked to difficulties in finding employment. After finishing school, most young people find it difficult to get a job that would allow them to take out a loan. Those who are eligible for loans, although employed often cannot support the loan because of high interest rates, low salaries, or because they are irregularly employed and ineligible for loans.

When thinking about the most important incentives for starting a family, young people always point out favourable purpose-specific loans that would enable young people to buy their own apartment. It is also necessary to increase employment opportunities for young people.

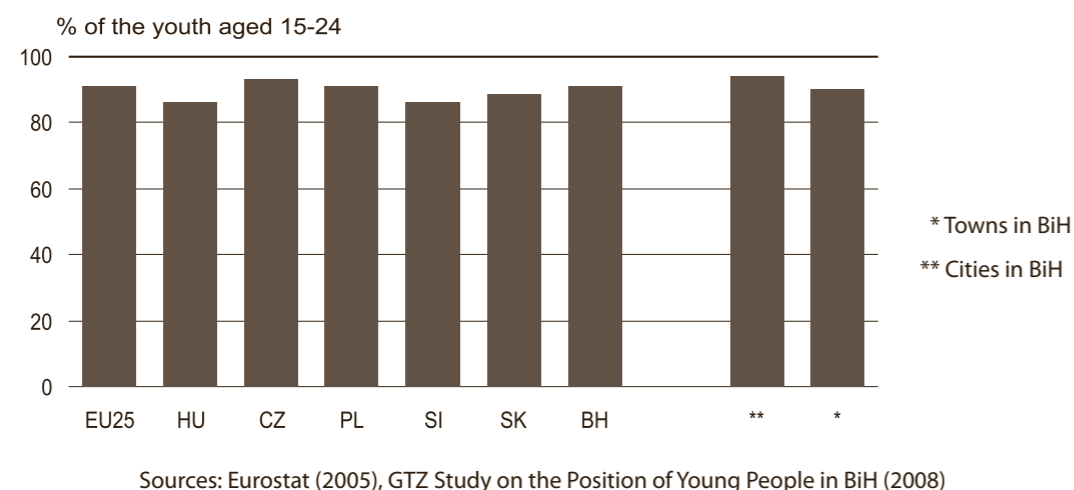
→ Health

Health Self-Assessment

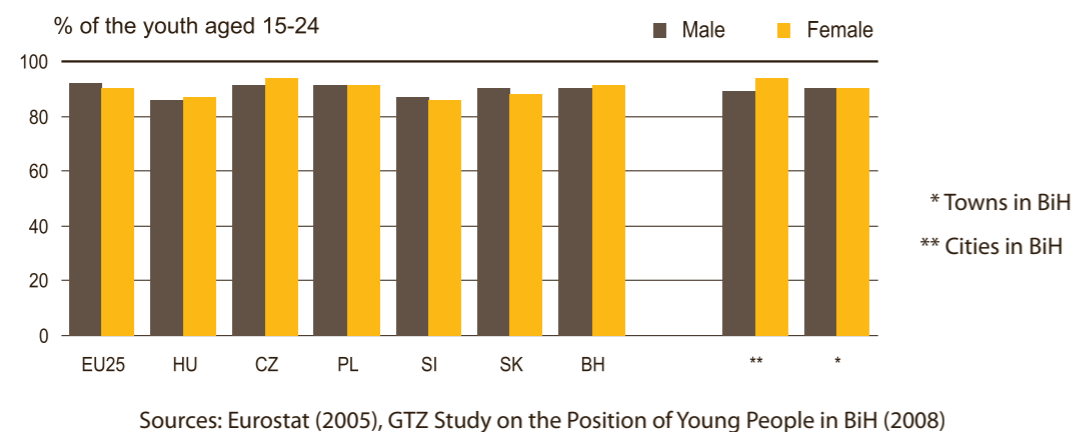
With 91% of the people assessing their own health as good or very good, BiH is at the level of the EU average.

Health self-assessment is one of the main indicators for monitoring the health of young people. With 91% of the people assessing their own health as good or very good, BiH is at the level of the EU average. Also, the difference in assessment between men and women is not significant in most EU countries, and the same is true of BiH.

Graph34 Youth health as reported through self-assessment (qualified as 'good' and 'very good')



Graph35 Health of young men and women as reported through self-assessment (qualified as 'good' and 'very good')



When asked what circumstances in the family and in society have negative effects on youth health, the focus group participants cited various factors. Most participants believe that young people generally lead healthier lifestyles – they have healthy nutrition habits, they smoke, consume alcohol, spend a lot of time in unventilated cafes, and they do not get enough sleep.

The mental health of young people is under the particularly negative influence of the poor socio-economic situation most young people and their families experience, the lack of finances, and unemployment. Apart from that, there are also the consequences of war that have left their mark on young people – posttraumatic stress syndrome, malnutrition and poor housing conditions.

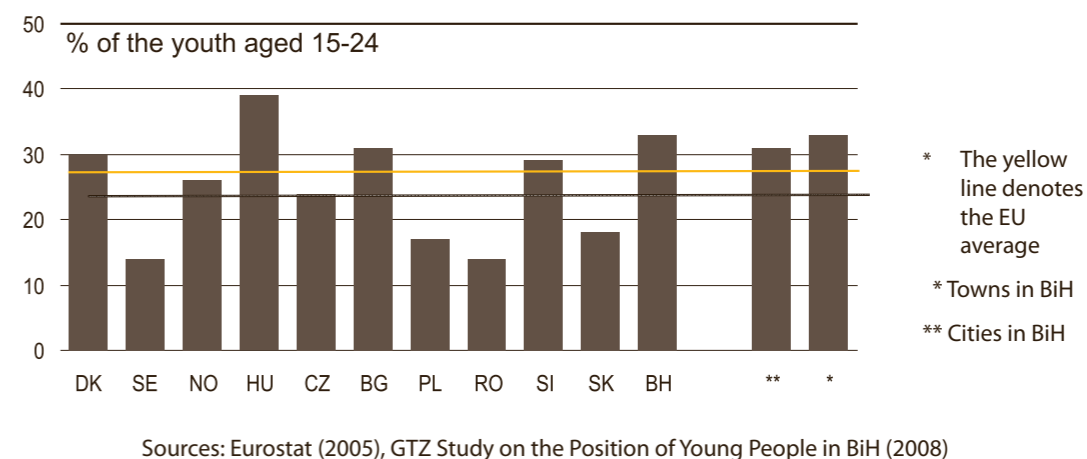
Smoking

A third of young people in BiH between 15 and 24 smoke cigarettes, which is about 6% more than the EU average.

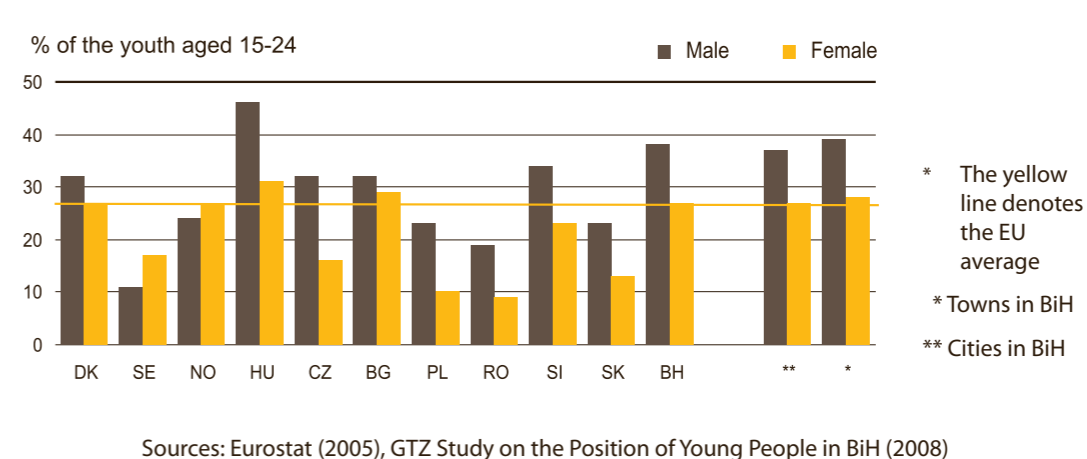
Apart from a few countries, there are more young men smokers than young women smokers in most EU countries. The same is true of BiH with 6% more men smokers than women smokers.

Every third person between 15 and 24 in BiH is a smoker. Furthermore, in all EU countries, apart from Sweden Norway and Great Britain, the number of male smokers is considerably greater than the number of female smokers. In the BiH population between 15 and 24, the number of male smokers is 6% greater than the number of female smokers, while in Tuzla this difference is negligible.

Graph36 Young smokers



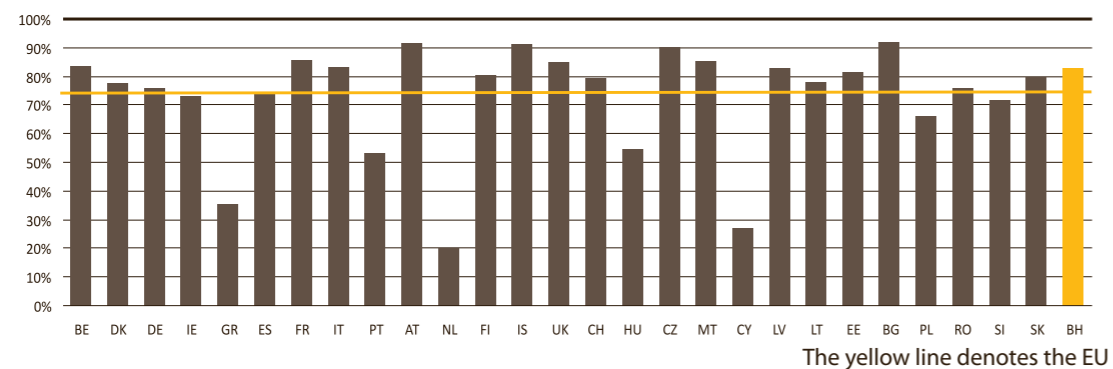
Graph37 Young smokers divided according to sex



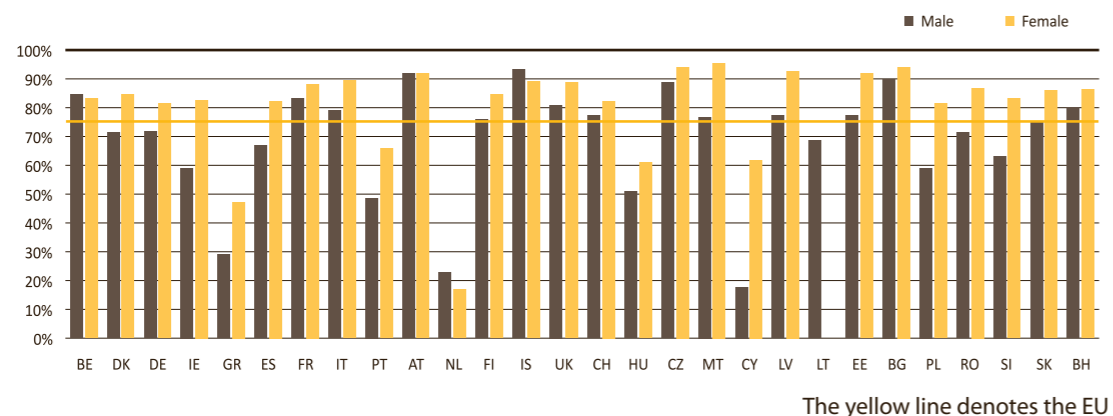
83% of young smokers smoke less than 20 cigarettes a day. This is about 9% more than the EU average.

It should be noted that the higher value of this indicator means a better overall picture when it comes to cigarette consumption. Namely, if in BiH 83% of young smokers consume up to 20 cigarettes a day, 17% of them are 'heavy smokers', i.e. those who smoke more than 20 cigarettes a day. Thus, for example, in Greece, Portugal, the Netherlands, Hungary and Cyprus, the proportion of heavy smokers is greater than in other countries.

In all EU countries apart from Belgium and Iceland, the proportion of male heavy smokers is considerably greater than the proportion of female heavy smokers. In most countries, the women are the more frequent consumers of up to 20 cigarettes, which means a greater proportion of male heavy smokers. This difference is 6% for BiH.

Graph38 Young smokers between 15 and 24 who consume up to 20 cigarettes a day

Sources: Eurostat (2005), GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph39 Young male and female smokers between 15 and 24 who consume up to 20 cigarettes a day

Sources: Eurostat (2005), GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

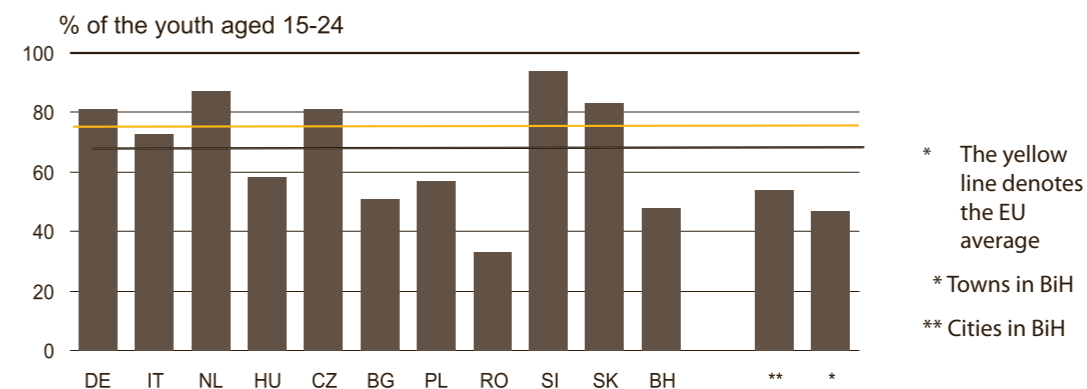
Alcohol Consumption

The proportion of young people in BiH who consume alcoholic drinks is far below the EU average.

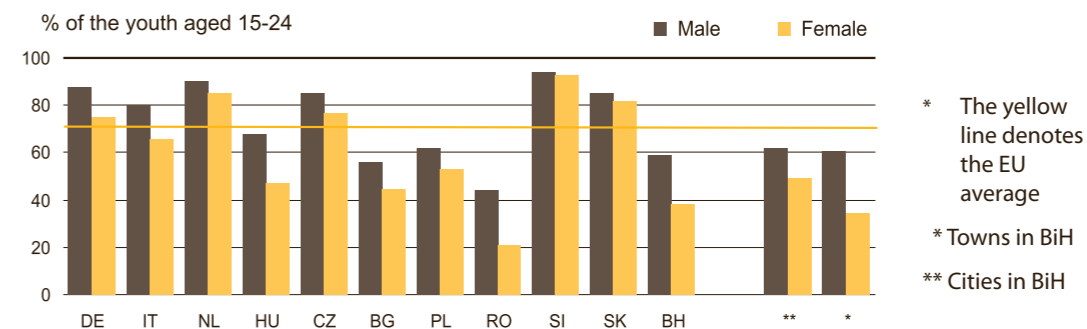
The difference between men and women when it comes to alcohol consumption is much greater than in the EU.

With 49% of young people between 15 and 24 consuming alcoholic drinks, BiH is far below the EU average (73%).

If we examine the findings presented in graph 42, it is characteristic that with the increase in alcohol consumption within the whole population, the difference in the ration between men and women decreases. Thus, in BiH, as in other countries with smaller portions of young people consuming alcoholic drinks, the difference between men and women is much greater than in other countries (21%).

Graph40 Young people who consume alcoholic drinks

Sources: Eurostat (2005), GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph41 Young men and women who consume alcoholic drinks

Sources: Eurostat (2005), GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

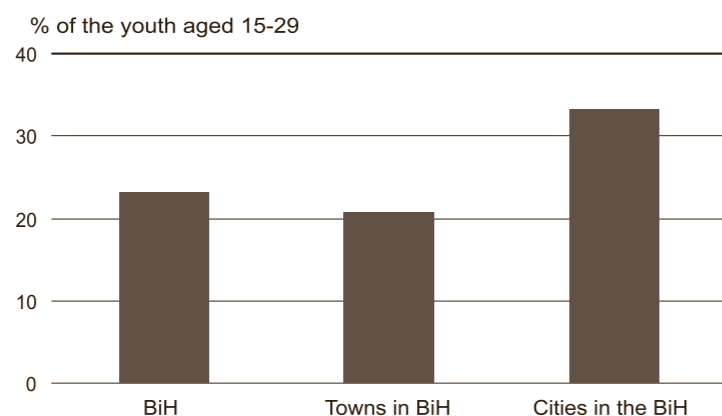
General Check-Ups

Every fourth person between 16 and 30 has gone for a general check-up in the past 12 months. However, for only 8% of them this was a regular check-up.

A fourth of young people between 16 and 30 has undergone a general check-up in the past year. There are no considerable differences in this matter between entities, sexes and types of places of residence.

The most frequent reasons for getting a general check-up are 'for employment or for the driver's licence' (40%) and as part of 'regular check-ups'. If we calculate the proportion of young people undergoing a general check-up as part of their regular check-ups, we get a ratio of 8%. This means 8% of young people have had a general check-up as part of their regular check-ups.

Graph42 Young people who went for a general check-up in the past 12 months



Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Gynaecological Exams

On average, women have their first gynaecological exam only at age 19.

Ever fourth girl/woman aged 16 to 30 does not go for the minimum annual gynaecological exam.

Those who do have had an average of 2 exams in the past 12 months.

An important factor determining the frequency of visits to the gynaecologist is the level of education, while total household income does not have notable effect.

Health Insurance

10% of young people has no health insurance.

10% of young people from 16 to 30 have no health insurance. Young people are most often insured through their parents (43%), through the employment bureau (23%), and through their employers (23%). It is important to note that rural residents are more frequently without insurance (13%) than urban residents (7%), and the same is true of men (12%) compared to women (8%).

Some focus group participants state that they are not ensured or that they lost their health insurance rights. These are most often young people who had been registered with employment bureaus and had insurance on that basis and then started working (most often as waiters/waitresses). Although their employers had taken their employment documentation to register them with all the necessary insurance services, it was only after they were dismissed that they found out they had never been properly registered. After this, they forfeit the right to health insurance because they are legally guilty of an offence.

Participants from the Roma group claim that the percentage of those without insurance is much higher for young Roma. As a reason for this, they cite this group's lack of information about healthcare protection and their right to health insurance. Apart from that, these participants point out that it is necessary to work on healthcare protection programmes for the Roma, primarily on educating and informing this population about the importance of registering births, and their rights and obligations in healthcare protection.

Healthcare services specifically intended for young people

Only 8% of young people know that their municipality/city provides healthcare services specifically intended for young people, and only 5% of them have used these services.

92% of the young people we have interviewed claim that there are no healthcare services organised for young people specifically in their municipality/city. Two thirds of the respondents aware of such services have also used them (or 5% of the total youth population).

Although unaccustomed to using healthcare services outside the standard institutions, young people see this as a way to avoid the difficulties they usually encounter: long procedures, lack of discretion and sensitivity for specific needs of young people, impolite staff behaviour, etc.

If a youth centre or NGO were to provide youth counselling services, the focus group participants would be prepared to use them. And not only counselling services, but also other healthcare services for young people, from general medicine to various specialists. They also add that such a centre should offer the possibility for HIV and drug testing.

Young people set certain conditions that the centre would have to meet in order for them to be willing to seek help there rather than at a state of private healthcare institution. First of all, the centre would have to be well organised in order to avoid complicated and long administrative procedures. It should employ professional healthcare staff, services should be free (or at least more affordable), and discretion should be guaranteed.

Young people point out that the staff at such a centre would have to be polite and approachable, because they believe this was the biggest problem with healthcare staff at public institutions who were most often impolite and had little patience for their patients.

Intimate relations

Men are more likely to have sex with multiple partners than women, which puts them at greater risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Every fourth man who has sexual relations with more partners does not use contraception.

56% of young people have confided to us that they are sexually active. With a higher proportion of sexually active men (67%) than women (46%), and a higher proportion of those sexually active in RS (68%) than in FBiH (47%). In most cases (83%) sexually active young people have only one partner.

Men have sex with multiple partners more often (27%) than women (4%), which puts them at higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. One fourth of the men who have sex with multiple partners do not use contraception.

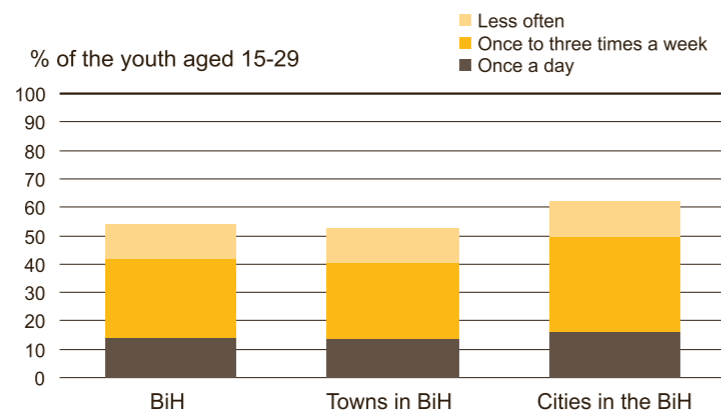
Recreational activities

Every second girl/woman and every third boy/man does not engage in recreational activities.

45% of young people do not engage in recreational activities to maintain physical fitness and health, and the same percentage engages in such activities at least once a week. Others pursue such activities once a day (13%), one to three times a week (28%) or less frequently (13%).

The percentage of inactivity is considerably higher for women (56%) than for men (33%).

Graph43 Pursuing recreational activities



Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

The effect of media campaigns on prevention in health

The effect of media campaigns on prevention in health is positive, because every campaign has been noticed by every second young person.

59% of young people have seen or heard an ad promoting prevention in health in the past three months. The effect of these media campaigns is considerably greater for women (64%) than for men (55%). The noticed ads have mostly dealt with HIV protection (57%) and breast cancer prevention (54%). A somewhat lesser number of cases pertained to anti-smoking (48%) and anti-drugs (47%) campaigns.

→ Youth Participation

Interest in politics

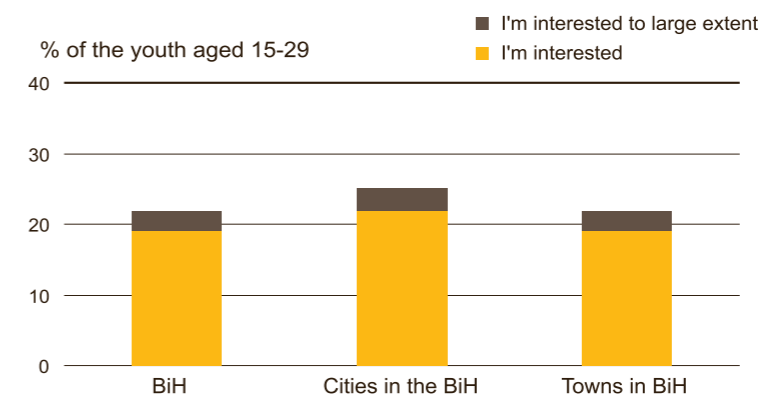
Three out of four young persons aged 16 to 30 claim to be uninterested in politics.

The most interest in politics is found at the local level.

78% of young people claim to be uninterested in politics. There is a considerably higher percentage of uninterested women (82%) than men (72%). Young people are most interested in politics on the local level (27%), and least interested in entity-level politics (21%).

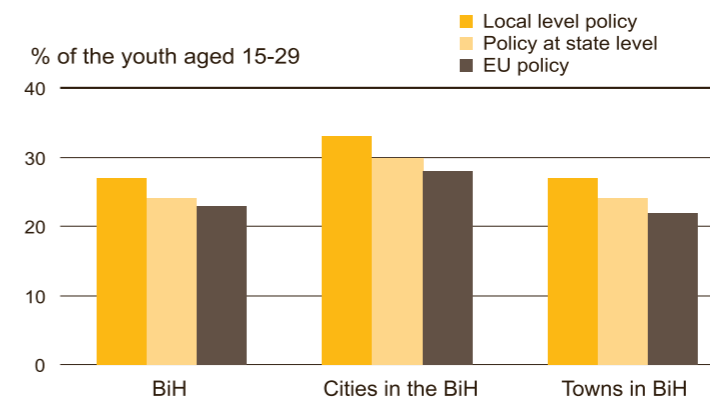
Young people from urban and rural areas are equally (un)interested in politics at all levels. The same can be said of young people in the different entities, although there is slightly more interest for the situation in one's own entity than in the other entity.

Graph44 General interest in politics



Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph45 Interest for local politics, BiH-level politics, and EU politics



Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Young people express a high degree of distrust for politicians. They believe that all the ruling parties and politicians leading them are incompetent, corrupt and look out only for their own interest, and not the interest of the citizens they represent.

Young people from the focus groups were not surprised by the results of the study indicating a high percentage of young people uninterested in politics. The participants themselves state that they are uninterested in politics and political goings-on in BiH, that most of them did not vote at the elections in October 2006. Only a few participants state that they follow political goings-on, while members of political parties, that is, their youth sections, are extremely rare, with some that left political parties disappointed in their work.

A lesser number of participants see social activism as productive and effective, but the point out the lack of greater involvement and better organisation of young people in politics, as well as shortcomings in their perseverance necessary to achieve more concrete results. However, most young people believe the opposite and express great distrust towards politicians. They believe that all the ruling parties and politicians leading them are incompetent, corrupt and look out only for their own interest, and not the interest of the citizens they represent.

"You simply have no one to vote for. On TV, they promise you one thing; you go and vote for them, and after the elections they have a whole new story." (Sarajevo, female)

"Because they're only looking out for themselves, not for the people, not for things to get better for everyone. All they want is to get into a position, and they don't do anything concrete." (Vitez, male)

"We need solidarity and cooperation between young people. We don't really have that." (Bihać, female)

"I was a member of a political party. I was disappointed and never again." (Tuzla, female)

"I don't care about politics. As for politics: everyone looks out only for himself." (Mostar, male)

"The problem is that most people are passive, they're disappointed. I was a kid when the war ended, but nothing has changed. Politics is still the same. Mostar hasn't changed. It just keeps getting worse every day." (Mostar, female)

"Young people don't have a representative to vote for." (Trebinje, male)

"Today, young people ask themselves: why should we vote in the elections, who should we vote for, when there's no one to take this country to a better future. It just keeps going around in circles, they just keep handing the baton to one another." (Trebinje, male)

Using direct and indirect participation mechanisms

According to the data of the Central Elections Committee 47% of young people voted in the 2006 election, which is twice as many as in 2002 and 2004.

'I don't think anything will change,' is the response of every second young person who did not vote in the elections.

Signing petitions is one of the most frequent forms of youth participation in public activities (16%) concerned with social problems, followed by participation at public gatherings to discuss political and social issues (11%). All other forms of engagement account for no more than 5% of participation.

Tab. 8 Participation in public activities in the past 12 months

% young people between 15 and 29

	BiH	Smaller BiH cities	Larger BiH Cities
Contacted a politician	3	4	3
Attended a public gathering to discuss political and social issues	11	12	9
Signed a petition	16	13	30
Participated in public protests	3	3	5
Wrote an article, e.g. for the student paper, the newsletter of an organisation, or published on the internet	2	2	4
Participated at local community meetings	5	6	3

Sources: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

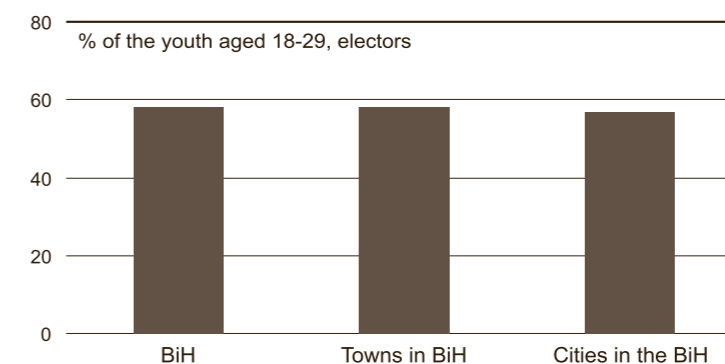
Every second young person of age, or 62% of young people will vote at the local elections in 2008.

According to the data of the Central Elections Commission, twice as many young people (below 30) voted in the 2006 elections than in the 2002 and 2004 elections. (47% compared to the earlier 25%). The second study (Commission and GTZ, 2008) indicates a greater elections turn-out rate: 57% of young people from 16 to 30. This can be explained by the fact that the data of the Central Elections Commission does not include young people aged 30, but also by the fact that two different methods of data gathering were used.

Namely, the method used for the purposes of the GTZ study on the position of young people includes two types of error: 1) respondents declining to answer (5% declined to answer whether they voted in the elections), and 2) providing false information in the presence of the interviewer in order to influence his/her perception. The data from the Central Elections Commission does not account for any of these error, except that a number of young people are not found on voter's lists due to technical errors (according to our research, 2% of young people did not vote for this reason).

Every second young person who did not vote, both in RS and in FBiH, both male and female, both rural and urban residents, cites as the main reason for not voting the 'lack of belief that anything would change'. Next, in 29% of the cases young people did not vote because they could not decide which party to trust.

Graph46 Turn-out rate of young people for the 2006 elections



Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Influence on decision making

There are twice as many young people who do not believe it is possible to influence decision making through an indirect participation mechanism (voting in the elections). On average, there are three times as many who do not consider direct mechanisms such as petitions, protests and contacts with decision makers to be effective.

Young people in RS have a significantly higher rate of trust that working in a political party or directly contacting politicians can be an effective mechanism to influence decision making.

When it comes to the different forms of influence on decision making in society, there is a tendency among young people to disbelieve these are effective decision making participation methods. Signing petitions, personal contacts with decision makers and participation in public protests, as forms of direct participation, are mainly assessed as ineffective mechanisms. When it comes to signing petitions, and since this is one of the most frequent mechanisms for young people to express their views, we can conclude that it is performed without trust in its potential impact.

Using mechanisms within the political parties system, i.e. working in a party and voting in the elections are seen as much more effective. It is important to note that working in non-governmental organisations is seen as equally effective.

Young people in RS are far more likely to have a positive opinion on the various mechanisms for influencing decision making than young people in FBiH. This primarily pertains to working in a political party and personal contacts with decision makers as mechanisms to influence decision making.

→ Active young people

Only 2% of young people are members of local youth councils, and not more than 1% of them are members of youth commissions at local administrative bodies, which is how many of them participated in the creation and development of youth strategies.

3% of young people, 5% in FBiH and 2% in RS, have participated in organising youth activities on the local level in the past year.

The membership of young people in political parties or their youth sections is proportional to youth membership in non-governmental organisations (8%).

Non-governmental organisations provide increasing opportunities for volunteering and other forms of youth engagement in comparison to political parties and their youth sections.

Most young people have a positive view of the work and projects of youth organisations.

Only 1 to 2% of young people from 16 to 30 is institutionally active in representing the interests and solving the problems of young people. The relevant institutions include local councils or youth forums (2%) and youth commissions at local administrative bodies (1%). Apart from that, only 1% of young people have participated in the creation and development of youth strategies at local levels.

3% of young people, 5% in FBiH and 2% in RS, have participated in organising youth activities on the local level in the past year.

Youth membership in political parties or their youth sections (8%) is somewhat greater than youth engagement in youth non-governmental organisations (5%).

Most young people (79%) have a positive view of the work and projects of youth organisations in their municipality or city. Trust in youth organisations is somewhat weaker in rural areas in comparison to urban areas.

Tab. 9 Membership in organisations

% young people between 15 and 29

	BiH	Smaller BiH cities	Larger BiH Cities
Youth organisations or associations	5	4	6
Youth organisations of political parties	3	3	3
Religious organisations	2	2	2
Political party	5	5	5
Environmental organisations	1	1	1
Human rights or humanitarian organisations	1	1	3
Professional organisations	1	1	3

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Tab. 10 Participation in activities organised by various organisations in the past 12 months

% young people between 15 and 29

	BiH	Smaller BiH cities	Larger BiH Cities
Youth organisations or associations	6	5	9
Youth organisations of political parties	3	4	2
Religious organisations	3	4	2
Political party	4	4	2
Environmental organisations	4	4	5
Human rights or humanitarian organisations	5	4	5
Professional organisations	2	3	1

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Focus group participants are not fully informed about the work of youth non-governmental organisations in their municipalities. They state that such organisations are present in greater or smaller numbers varying from city to city, but few could name them.

The opinions of young people on the effectiveness of engagement in non-governmental organisations differ. Most participants believe that activism through non-governmental organisations could allow young people to effect changes to improve their position and contribute to solving youth problems. They understand the role and importance of non-governmental organisations as a link between citizens and the government/state, and see their main function as pointing out problems in society.

Non-governmental organisations, including youth organisations, should, therefore, pressure the government and state structures to resolve certain current issues and problems (through various projects, initiatives and petitions). However, most of them claim that there are many youth non-governmental organisations in BiH that do not perform this function relegating it to a dead letter, or whose activities deal with secondary issues, and that they generally lack concrete results. This is also the reason why some participants stopped being active members of such organisations.

Understanding and experience in volunteering

For most focus group participants, volunteer work means unpaid, voluntary service and/or humanitarian work. A certain number of young people first associate volunteering with gaining experience or an internship. Also, most of them have stated that volunteering was not organised during their schooling. A smaller number have cited examples of organised volunteer work within the school or other organisations, or they recount how they independently found places to perform voluntary services in order to acquire the work experience necessary for future employment. The participants see this as the main benefit of volunteering – to acquire work experience, practical knowledge, skills and working habits, but also to fulfil their social obligations, meet new people, socialise, etc.

“By volunteering, I get the knowledge and practical experience I need. Also, there is the need to engage in socially beneficial activities.” (Sarajevo, female)

“Voluntary service.” (Bihać, male)

“You work for free.” (Tuzla, female)

“It’s a kind of internship.” (Banja Luka, male)

“Helping others.” (Doboj, female)

“Independently, I found a way to do it, because I thought I needed more experience. I was afraid to be left without any practical experience.” (Vitez, female)

“Internship and experience.” (Banja Luka, female)

Some participants have a negative view of voluntary service, because it is unpaid labour. These participants believe volunteering is not the solution for young people who are already under economic strain, especially because volunteering in a certain company does not necessarily lead to employment at that company. Still, most participants are prepared to engage in volunteer work and see it as increasing their chances for employment.

→ **Mobility and leaving the country****Travel**

Young people who travel outside their community mostly go to places within their own entity, but young people from RS cross the entity border much more frequently.

Excursions abroad and within entities are the most frequent programmes of organised travel.

Every third person is not prepared to participate in organised forms of socialisation and travel with members of other nationalities from BiH and from abroad.

78% of young people, 81% from FBiH and 74% from RS, have travelled to another city in BiH in the past 12 months. For the most part, young people travel within their entity. So, young people from FBiH have travelled to RS in only 12% of the cases, while 33% of young people from RS have travelled to FBiH.

Excursions abroad (12%) and excursions within the entity (10%) are the most frequent programmes of organised travel for young people. Young people from FBiH go on excursion within their entity or to the other entity more frequently than young people from RS who go on excursions outside of BiH more frequently. In all other programmes presented in table 11, young people participated at a rate no greater than 5%.

70% of young people are prepared to host or be a guest in the household of another nationality from another city in BiH. Young people from FBiH are somewhat more open to this form of socialisation and travel than young people in RS, as well as men in comparison to women, and young people from larger in comparison to young people from smaller communities.

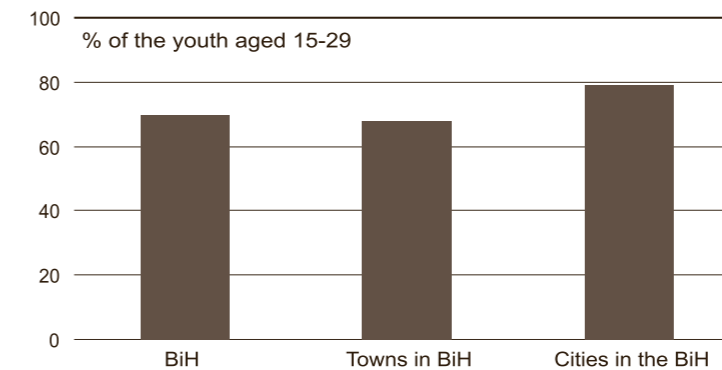
Tab. 11 Participation in activities organised by various organisations in the past 12 months

% young people between 15 and 29

	BiH	Smaller BiH cities	Larger BiH Cities
Student exchange	1	2	1
Summer school	2	2	3
Volunteer or other youth camps	5	4	8
School in the outdoors	5	5	4
Study visits	4	4	6
Excursions within the entity	10	10	10
Excursions to the other entity	6	6	6
Excursions abroad (outside BiH)	12	11	17

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph47 Readiness to host or be a guest in the household of another nationality from another city



Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

39% of young people from rural areas have never travelled to another country.

Neighbouring countries are the most frequent destination for young people in BiH.

80% of young people go to other countries as tourists or to visit family and friends.

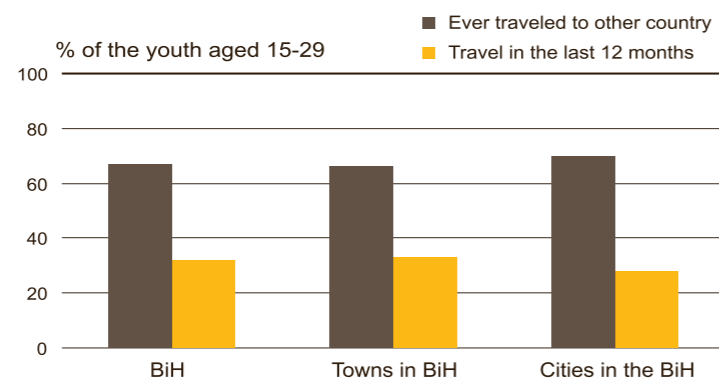
A third of young people have never travelled outside of BiH. This ration is considerably higher when it comes to young people from rural areas (39%) than those from urban areas (29%).

When it comes to travelling abroad, in the past 12 months, two thirds of young people have not travelled abroad. Here, too, young people from rural areas travel at a considerably lower rate (26%) in comparison to young people from urban areas (41%). Apart from that, men have travelled at a higher rate (36%) than women (29%).

Croatia (39%), Serbia (20%) and Montenegro (11%) are the most frequent destinations for young people from BiH, with young people from FBiH going to Croatia more frequently (50%) than young people from RS (25%). Alternately, young people from RS go to Serbia and Montenegro more frequently (47%) in comparison to young people from FBiH (19%).

80% of young people go to other countries as tourists or to visit family and friends. Young people from FBiH travel more frequently as tourists (58%) than young people from RS (42%), while young people from RS travel more frequently to visit family (39%) than young people from FBiH (20%).

Men travel for business or temporary employment (16%) more frequently than women (6%). Young people from rural areas have a somewhat higher rate of travel abroad for temporary employment (7%) than young people from urban areas (3%).

Graph48 Frequency of travel abroad

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Youth mobility for the purpose of acquiring international experience should be supported, and the formation of a government fund for this purpose is a solution suggested by young people.

The results from focus group discussions confirm that most young people most frequently travel to visit family or friends within BiH, and somewhat less frequently abroad. Apart from that, most young people travel once a year (or less frequently) to the Adriatic, and some of them mentioned going to EU countries on excursions during secondary school or university. A smaller group involved in sports or folk dancing has had an opportunity to travel for competitions or performances in other countries.

Those who have not travelled for a number of years have explained this is mostly due to a lack of financial means, while a few pointed out not being able to travel due to insufficient spare time, that is, they did not get or use time off from work.

Apart from lacking the financial means, which the participants cited as the main obstacle to travelling, they also pointed out the very limited opportunities for organised student exchanges.

International university associations that organise student exchanges are active in our country, too. However, there is the problem of young people not being sufficiently informed about such opportunities, but also with young people not being involved in such organisations. Apart from that, one of the focus groups pointed out that the existing student exchanges are not available to all, because the students must cover part of the expenses, although the participants stated that each municipality has budget funds allocated for the purposes of mobility, but young people are not informed about this. In that sense, participants recommend establishing a state-level fund to allocate resources for student travel and exchange.

Obstacles to youth mobility

Apart from financial obstacles, the prejudice created through political propaganda is the main impediment to greater youth mobility.

During discussions about the main obstacles to youth cultural exchange and their greater mobility in general, all the participants pointed out the lack of financial means. However, they also emphasise that more travelling was done before the war, and that today there is a lack of student exchanges and other opportunities for young people to travel and get to know other countries and cultures, all of which was common in the previous system.

The war has also contributed to young people seldom visiting cities in the other entity, although most participants have pointed out having nothing personal against such visits, and that the nationalism characteristic of this region is not an obstacle for them to establish links with young people from other parts of BiH.

The participants cited numerous examples of socialising with their peers of other nationalities. They believe most young people in BiH think in the same way, but that some are still under the influence of prejudice stemming mainly from their immediate surroundings and their families. In addition, there is also the influence of the media and politicians stoking these prejudices and contributing to conflicts between national groups.

“Finances are the main obstacle.” (Bihać, male)

“Because of the war, we’ve lost a sense of other cultures, other peoples and the need to travel and meet each other.” (Brčko, female)

“We used to travel a lot more before the war.” (Mostar, female)

“I’m a nationalist and I don’t care about that.” (Bihać, female)

“Most parents wouldn’t let their children just go off somewhere like that.” (Banja Luka, male)

“Politicians influence this. We were both 7 or 8 years old when it all began. It doesn’t matter what someone is, we’re all human.” (Doboj, female)

Time spent abroad in the past

11% of young people have lived abroad for more than 3 months. An average of 2.5 years.

11% of young people, 13% from FBiH and 7% from RS, have lived abroad for more than 3 months. Slightly more people from rural areas have lived abroad than people from urban areas.

In most cases (47%) young people lived abroad up to one year, while 31% of them lived abroad for more than one but less than three years. On average, young people have spent about 29 months or 2.5 years abroad.

Leaving the country

40% of young people from 18 to 30 do not have a passport.

5 of young people from 18 to 30 do not have a passport.

14% of young people have an immediate family member who has emigrated in the past 7 years.

67% of young people would leave BiH for at least one other reason apart from education.

9% of young people, 13% from FBiH and 5% from RS have already undertaken concrete steps to leave the country.

40% of young people from 18 to 30 do not have a passport. This percentage is somewhat greater for persons from rural areas (44%) than those from urban areas (34%). Apart from a Bosnian passport, 14% of young people, 22% from FBiH and 3% from RS, have a Croatian passport.

14% of young people from 16 to 30 have an immediate family member who left the country in the past seven years. 29% have an extended family member who has left the country, while 37% know someone from the neighbourhood who has emigrated. In all the above cases, more people have left FBiH than RS, and more people have left from urban than from rural areas.

55% of young people would definitely leave BiH given the chance for temporary employment, 46% for studying/school, 46% in order to permanently settle in another country, and 35% for the purpose of marriage.

67% of young people would leave BiH for at least one of the above reasons apart from education.

Also, when asked whether they would spend an extended period of time abroad or settle there permanently, 67% of young people answered in the affirmative.

At the time of this study, 9% of young people, 13% from FBiH and 5% from RS, had already undertaken concrete steps to leave the country.

Tab. 12 Leaving BiH – family and neighbours

% young people between 15 and 29

	BiH	Smaller BiH cities	Larger BiH Cities
From the immediate family	14	14	13
From the extended family	29	28	36
From the neighbourhood	37	36	40

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

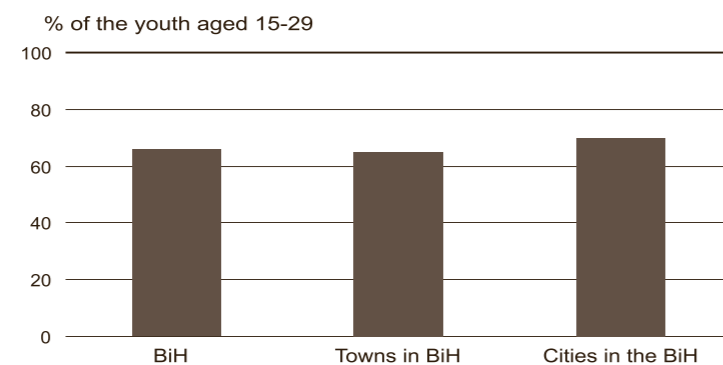
Tab. 13 Personal reasons for potential emigration from BiH

% young people between 15 and 29

	BiH	Smaller BiH cities	Larger BiH Cities
For studying	46	45	48
For temporary employment	55	55	48
For marriage	35	36	36
In order to permanently settle in another country	46	48	41

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph49 Proportion of young people who would leave BiH for at least one of the above reasons



Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

→ Information

The need for information

Young people are most frequently in need of information on employment and education opportunities, as well as leisure activities.

Young people are most in need of information about opportunities concerning leisure (41%), employment (40%) and education (39%). The need for information is least expressed in relation to politics (14%), social protection (16%), business (17%) and loans (18%). Men, considerably more than women, need information on employment, loans and business, while women need considerably more information on education, cultural events and healthcare protection.

Sources of information

Apart from television as the most frequent means of information, young people also use the internet for information on education, and newspapers for information on job openings, politics, cultural events and scholarships.

Three quarters of young people read daily and weekly newspapers.

Young people mostly read the entertainment section.

In the last three relevant months, only 7% of young people had acquired information through an information service specifically intended for the needs of young people.

For young people, the most frequent means of acquiring information about all issues is television. Apart from television, they mostly use the internet for information on education, and newspapers for information on job openings, cultural events and scholarships.

81% of young people read daily newspapers regularly or sometimes, while 74% of them read weekly newspapers. Young people in FBiH and those in urban areas use these sources of information considerably more than young people in RS and in rural areas.

In terms of the contents young people read in newspapers, articles on entertainment topics are dominant, while articles on political, social and economic topics are secondary.

In the last three relevant months, only 7% of young people had acquired information through an information service specifically intended for the needs of young people.

The focus group participants stated that they are not well informed, i.e. that they do not have enough necessary information. The participants mostly focused on employment information, citing various sources – job opening ads in the newspapers, internet sources, radio and television. Apart from these information sources, the participants said that employment and other information they are interested in often come from informal conversations with friends, acquaintances and family.

Internet use

With only 30% of households with internet access, BiH is far below the EU average.

Two thirds of young people use the internet, which is about 22% less than the EU average.

Young people in BiH mostly use the internet from home.

Young people use the internet mostly for entertainment – games, chat, downloading music and other contents.

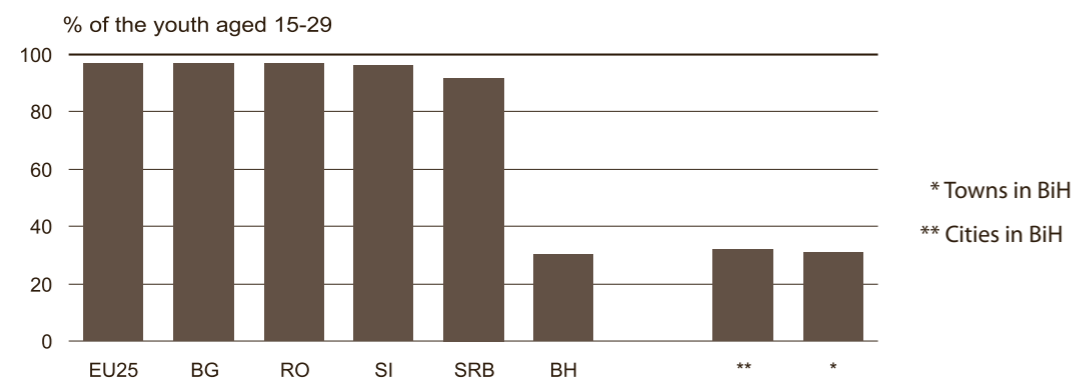
With only 30% of households with internet access, BiH is far below the EU average. It is also far below the average of some countries in the region. Urban household have a significantly higher rate of internet access (39%) when compared to rural households (23%).

When it comes to actual internet use, the situation is somewhat better: two thirds of young people between 16 and 24 have used the internet in the past three months, which is by about 22% less than the EU average. With this proportion, BiH is at the level of some countries in the region, namely: Serbia, Bulgaria and Rumania, but also Italy and Cyprus.

Apart from Ireland, Greece, Sweden and Slovakia, the difference in internet use between young men and young women is mainly negligible. This discrepancy is present in BiH and amounts to 13%, which is at the level of Slovakia, but far below the level of Serbia (23%).

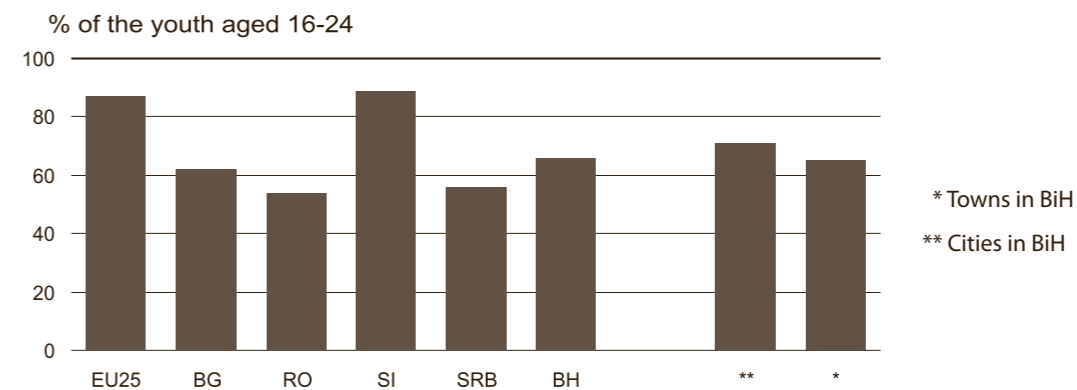
Furthermore, BiH students and pupils are considerably below the EU average of internet usage in their peer group, by about 20%. Young people in BiH mostly use the internet from home (37%) and at internet centres (27%).

Graph50 Percentage of households with internet access



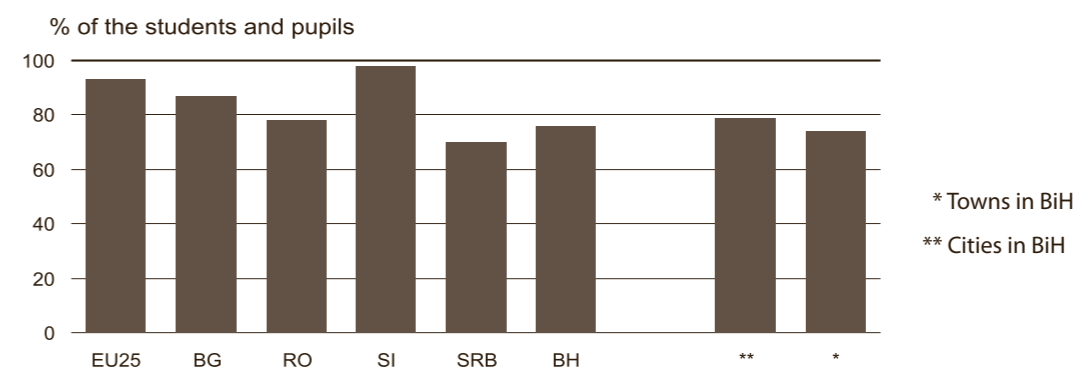
Sources: Eurostat (2007), GTZ Study on the Position of Youth People in BiH (2008)

Graph51 The percentage of people from 16 to 24 who have used the internet in the past three months



Sources: Eurostat (2006), GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Graph52 The percentage of students and pupils who have used the internet in the past three months



Sources: Eurostat (2006), GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

Knowledge of foreign languages

Two out of three young people believe they can speak English, and every fifth young person feels the same about German

Two out of three young people stated they could speak English well enough to be understood. Such persons are more frequent in larger cities (77%) than in smaller cities (59%), and in FBiH (68%) than in RS (59%). 22% of young people, 25% in FBiH and 14% in RS, have stated they could speak German.

Tab. 14 Claimed knowledge of foreign languages

% young people between 15 and 29

	BiH	Smaller BiH cities	Larger BiH cities	Tuzla
None	25%	27%	17%	7%
German	22%	23%	20%	39%
English	63%	59%	77%	88%
Spanish	6%	5%	7%	13%
Russian	4%	4%	3%	1%
Arabic	1%	1%	0%	1%
French	2%	2%	2%	4%
Turkish	1%	1%	1%	1%
Italian	3%	3%	1%	3%
Other	1%	1%	1%	4%

Source: Commission and GTZ Study on the Position of Young People in BiH (2008)

→ Counselling

Only every third young person expressed the need for counselling services, and only one in five have used such services.

3% of young people have sought counselling assistance with religious organisations.

Only 38% of young people stated that in the past 6 months they needed counselling in at least one area. Employment opportunities (21%) and education (13%) are the areas where young people need counselling most.

In the past 6 months, 3% of young people have sought counselling assistance from clerics or religious organisations.

Leisure

Shopping, helping out in household chores, watching television and going to cafés are the activities young people spend most of their free time doing.

Young people spend most of their free time shopping, helping out with household chores, and the least on going to the cinema, hiking in the mountains and going to the theatre.

On the other hand, watching television and going to cafés and bars takes up most of young peoples' time.

The way young people spend their free time varies depending on affinity and habits. Participants at focus groups believe that quality leisure is something that makes you feel good afterwards. Thus, some of them stated they engaged in sports, that they spend their free time listening to music, watching television, surfing the internet, and going on outings in nature. Others mainly use their free time for walks about the town and socialising in cafes, and although they often admit that neither represents a beneficial use of free time, they said it was the dominant leisure activity in their environment and is not even considered a matter of personal choice, but a mandatory daily activity.

→ Culture

Friends and peers, followed by television, have the highest degree of influence on decisions of young people to participate at cultural events.

Most young people are dissatisfied with the support of local authorities for organising cultural events.

Friends and peers (58%), followed by television (29%), have the highest degree of influence on decisions of young people to participate at cultural events. Radio (16%) and teachers (19%) have the least influence in these matters. The internet and newspapers have somewhat more influence on young people in urban areas and in FBiH than in rural areas and in RS.

When it comes to the attitude of local authorities to cultural events, the research indicates that most young people are dissatisfied with their support for creating cultural contents, and a third of young people did not express any opinion on this matter. Apart from that, young people in RS express a somewhat higher degree of satisfaction than those in FBiH.

In view of the quality of media space allocated to cultural contents, a third of young people are dissatisfied, and almost 50% have no opinion on this matter. Young people from RS are considerably more satisfied with this issues than those from FBiH.

→ Sports

Most young people are dissatisfied with the support of local authorities for organising sports events.

The number of young people dissatisfied with physical education classes exceeds that of those who are satisfied with these classes.

Only 7% of young people are involved in sports activities within an organisation or association, and most of them are satisfied with the available sports events.

Every fifth young person has spent money on sports or other physical activities in the past month.

Similar to the issue of support for cultural events, most young people are not satisfied with the support of local authorities when it comes to creating sports contents (50%). In this case, too, a third of young people did not express any opinion on the matter. There is a similar difference between entities.

The proportion of those dissatisfied with physical education classes is somewhat smaller (30%), but still surpasses the number of those satisfied. There is no significant difference between entities in this respect.

Only 7% of young people are involved in sports activities within an organisation or association, and most of them are satisfied with the available sports events. Satisfaction is somewhat greater in FBiH (65%) than in RS (54%).

Every fifth young person has spent money on sports or other physical activities in the past month. Men are much more likely (31%) to spend money on sports than women (12%).



Recommendations

Formal and Informal Education, Lifelong Learning

✓ Message 1

The incompatibility of the education system with the needs of the labour market in BiH and in the EU, and with the challenges of the future leads young people into a long-term disadvantaged position and makes the BiH economy non-competitive in the long term

Key Problems and Challenges

- Poor links between the education system and the labour and employment sector, that is, the labour market on the whole.
- The education system is based on teaching without a practical component, and leads to insufficient preparedness of young people for contemporary working conditions, that is, to a lack of knowledge and skills required in the labour market.
- The futility of knowledge acquired through secondary education in the labour market is directly linked to the high rate and long-term unemployment of young people.
- An extremely high rate of unemployment and an unproductive labour force.
- Education in secondary vocational schools is highly specialised and inflexible, and as such cannot be adapted to changes and demands in the labour market.
- The education system prepares young people for professions that are not in demand on the labour market.
- The education system does not provide assistance or training for young people to facilitate their transition from school to employment, and there is a general lack of support for their professional orientation.
- The education system does not provide internship opportunities, and leaves young people unprepared for employment and without working experience often required by law for certain positions.
- The inadequate education process leaves young people unmotivated to launch their own business ventures.
- Delays in education system reforms put young people in a long-term disadvantaged position, while the low level of productivity makes the BiH economy non-competitive.
- There are no human resources development policies.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Devise a human resources development programme in BiH as the most important part of development strategies.*
- Harmonise employment strategies with the recently adopted mid-term education strategy and the BiH Development Strategy 2008-2013, which includes horizontal sector policies concerned with social inclusion
- Create a permanent and institutional link between the education system, the academic community, the business community and institutions dealing with monitoring labour market trends, as well as other relevant executive government institutions.²¹⁶

²¹⁶ Young People and European Integration (Commission, GTZ 2008)

- Ensure that young people in BiH are educated at the secondary and higher level for professions in demand on the labour market both in BiH and the EU.
- Develop a system of professional guidance for pupils starting already from primary school.
- Institute a programme of educating expert staff at renowned universities abroad with the aim of enabling improvements, modernisation and education system reforms, as well as improving the quality of education at BiH universities.
- Ensure continuous professional development of the existing teaching and administrative staff, supervision of educational institutions and the application of new teaching methods.
- Define the role of the state in organising and encouraging research, technological development and innovation as done in the EU.²¹⁷
- Connect the education system with the business community and the public sector with the aim of facilitating the practical component of education, as well as internships. Increase the ratio of practical as opposed to theoretical learning.
- Stimulate employers to actively cooperate with schools and universities.
- Ensure recognition for practical learning and research accompanying education as partial working experience.
- Develop less highly specialised and more flexible education in secondary vocational schools in the service of rapid adaptation to changes and demands in the labour market.
- Introduce assistance and support opportunities into school curricula to facilitate the transition of young people from school to employment, as well as support programmes for their professional orientation.
- Strengthen cooperation in the education system between schools and between universities with the help of good practice examples.

✓ Message 2

The priority for education policies should be increasing the level of education for young people, as well as the development of youth entrepreneurship in order to ensure a highly educated and competitive labour force.

Key Problems and Challenges

- Young people are not motivated to continue their education due to perceived corruption in education and employment and perceptions about the labour market in BiH not functioning based on ability.
- When it comes to the proportion of persons under 25 with completed four-year secondary or higher education, BiH is considerably behind EU member countries, including new members.
- A very low rate of secondary school enrolment in the region.
- Only 20% of secondary school pupils complete their general secondary education, and

²¹⁷ Strategy of BiH Integration into the EU (CoM BiH 27 April 2006)

only 30% of those enrolled in secondary vocational schools complete four-year education programmes²¹⁸.

- Only a small number of young people completes secondary education in the foreseen timeframe.
- In most cases, pupils completing secondary education are not equipped with the necessary general knowledge and skills and are not sufficiently prepared to enter the labour market or continue their education.
- The fragmentation of professional profiles in secondary vocational education, of which at least half are completely irrelevant and unnecessary.
- The irrelevant and useless nature of professions produced through secondary vocational education makes education considerably more costly and increases possible public spending, because, among other things, this problem requires additional training and prequalification for persons already in possession of a formal education diploma.
- The net generational rate of university enrolment amounts to only one quarter of all young people.
- Only 10% of those enrolled complete their education in the foreseen timeframe.
- The greatest number of students are enrolled in social sciences and humanities programmes.
- It is estimated that students spend an average of 5 to 7 years working towards their degrees.
- Students most frequently drop out after their first year.
- The lack of scholarships or other financial opportunities is one of the most significant problems to continuing university studies.
- Every second young person coming out of the formal education system remains at the level of three-year secondary education or lower.
- Young people left without a formal education enter the vicious circle of social exclusion and poverty.
- The education structure of human resources in all sectors, the public, private and non-governmental sector, is unsatisfactory, communications and information abilities are poorly developed, as is knowledge of foreign languages.
- The curricula have been identified as the most problematic part of the education system because they suit only the existing staff at schools and universities, provide poor knowledge, that is, only a certain level of theoretical knowledge outside contemporary science and technology trends.
- For the most part, educational institutions do not contribute to the systematic promotion of youth entrepreneurship and do not offer young people the necessary business skills.
- There are no programmatic measures to improve the student standard in order to ensure equality in access to education and prevent poverty and social exclusion.
- There is an internal incompatibility between curricula in BiH, in the pre-school, primary, general secondary and secondary vocational education and training, as well as adult education and training and lifelong learning.

²¹⁸ "Strategic Directions of Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina with an Implementation Plan, 2008 - 2015", CoM adopted on 03 June 2008

Recommendations and Possible Measures

BiH must urgently and as consistently as possible follow the example and apply 'good practices' from developed countries where it has been shown that the education system is the most important channel for providing young people with assistance for leading better lives. Also, international experience has shown that the better solution for the youth unemployment problem is prevention through the education system, rather than direct interventions in the labour market.

- In line with the BiH Development Strategy for Secondary Vocational Education and Training 2007-2013²¹⁹ (OG BiH 28 August 2007), the following guideline should be implemented: "vocational education and training are a key generator of economic and social recovery and further development of BiH, as well as its integration into EU and global processes."
- Develop less highly specialised and more flexible education in secondary vocational schools able to rapidly adapt to changes and demands in the labour market.
- Ensure the creation of a productive labour force and support for innovations in production in secondary vocational education.
- Increase secondary school enrolment to 90%, of which 80% should be enrolment in general secondary schools and four-year vocational schools.
- Provide opportunities for continuing education, i.e. transfer from three-year to four-year vocational schools.
- Introduce a compulsory external school-leaving exam at the end of four-year secondary education.
- Establish standards of knowledge and assessment including a "state school-leaving exam".
- Increase enrolment in higher education to the level of the regional average of at least 32%.
- Link higher education with scientific and research work.
- Ensure systematic study of foreign languages and use of IT.
- Enable student and teaching staff mobility through consistent introduction of the ECTS, a standardised diploma supplement and a standardised diploma.
- Adopt a qualifications framework in higher education on the BiH level²²⁰.
- Enable the implementation of functional integration and strengthening of university autonomy.
- Establish and develop a unique system of three study cycles through the consistent introduction of master's and doctoral study cycles.
- Urgently modernise teaching and learning at all education levels.
- Create completely new, modern curricula.
- Make continuous professional development compulsory for teaching and administrative staff at educational institutions.
- Enable greater representation and compulsory participation of students in the decision-making process.

²¹⁹ www.mcp.gov.ba/admin_zakoni_hr/data/upimages/IZVJESTAJ_O_RADU_MINISTARSTVA_CIVILNIH_POSLOVA_ZA_2007.doc

²²⁰ "Strategic Directions of Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina with an Implementation Plan, 2008 - 2015", CoM adopted on 03 June 2008

- Systematically promote the education of young people at universities.
- Provide more scholarships and make them more available to young people.
- Promote continuing education through promotional campaigns.
- Enable the development of common core curricula for preschool, primary and both general and vocational secondary education and training, as well as adult education and training and lifelong learning.

✓ Message 3

Poor formal education qualifications or the lack of any qualifications leads to social exclusion and poverty of young people along with all the other risks accompanying these problems, and closes the circle of underdevelopment in the community.

Key Problems and Challenges

- A large percentage of the labour force possesses only lower qualifications and has limited opportunities in the BiH, regional and EU labour markets.
- The concept of lifelong learning developed in the EU and globally in response to rapid social changes and the transition to a 'knowledge society', as well as the constant need for new knowledge and skills, has been entirely neglected in BiH.
- Also absent is a qualifications framework for lifelong learning in line with the so-called European Qualifications Framework²²¹.
- Very limited financial investment in additional and professional training programmes. Additional professional training is not widespread.
- Extra-curricular programmes for IT and foreign languages are not widespread.
- A large number of young people have three-year vocational secondary education qualifications and have not participated in any form of training or 'youth work'.
- There is an evident increase in social exclusion of children and young people among returnees and rural populations, as well as impoverished groups and groups of persons with disabilities.
- Information on lifelong learning and informal education opportunities is not available.
- Youth work, defined as planned, rational and conscious assistance to young people through their voluntary participation and extra-curricular education in support of their integration and inclusion in the social life of the community is an unknown and unrecognised category in BiH.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

The concept of lifelong learning entails continuous acquisition of knowledge throughout life and is realised through formal and informal education and training. Economic changes entail changes in the labour market and structure of professions, and require new knowledge and rapid growth of information technologies. In the context of lifelong learning, adult education and training should contribute to social cohesion and greater labour market competitiveness by becoming part of the education process and system, and should be organised around the principles of

²²¹ "Strategic Directions of Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina with an Implementation Plan, 2008 - 2015", CoM adopted on 03 June 2008

complete openness and availability.

- Improve and promote lifelong learning and adult education, as well as socially excluded young people up to 30 years of age.**
- Responsible education authorities at all levels should systemically ensure the creation of a new, vibrant services market for additional and informal education in order to fulfil the basic premises for lifelong learning and to prepare young people for a knowledge based society and economy.
- It is necessary to develop a network of different education institutions, as well as other providers of education services (e.g. private businesses).
- The priority target groups should be older generations of young people who have not completed primary or secondary education, older secondary school graduates with skills unsuited for the labour market, young people with special needs or socially marginalised or excluded young people such as Roma, children of returnees and young returnees, the impoverished, as well as all those who wish to advance and improve their knowledge and skills.
- In a brief time period, use additional qualification and prequalification programmes to enable young people that have been "ruined" by the existing education system.
- The focus should be on reducing illiteracy and spreading secondary education among older generations of young people.
- Create an open learning framework, attractive and available to all, including the illiterate and non-qualified, as well as persons with special needs.**
- Improve effectiveness, equal access and fairness in education and training.
- Lifelong learning and training criteria and standards should be developed on the state level.
- In view of the wide range of needs, a network of various education institution will have to be developed in conjunction with other providers of education services (e.g. private business).
- Develop a domestic qualifications framework in line with the European Qualifications Framework.
- Promote continuing education through promotional campaigns.
- Devise financial assistance programmes for those who wish to advance and improve their knowledge and skills.

✓ Message 4

The failure to adapt the education system to the European integration process and the lack of insistence on sustainability hinders its development and creates a scarcity of necessary human resources in the future

Key Problems and Challenges

- Although European integration is a long-term strategy, only a small portion of undergraduate and graduate programmes at faculties offer courses and curricula that deal with European law, economics, policy, institutions, EU languages, etc.

- There is a considerable delay in the establishment of common or European standards in the BiH education system. This primarily pertains to secondary vocational education and training, and the implementation of the Copenhagen Process, as well as to higher education and the implementation of the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Convention.
- The failure to fulfil the concrete requirements of the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes, as well as slow reform implementation in the European integration process leave the education system incompatible and non-competitive in the short and long term, as well as unsustainable in the long term.
- There are also delays in harmonising the criteria of higher education institutions with those of the EU.
- Information technology is largely unavailable and very seldom used at all education levels.
- Opportunities to encounter modern technological processes are limited in BiH.
- The low level of knowledge of foreign languages among professors and students is an obstacle in terms of access to research and scientific texts. This is a necessary precondition for the active participation of BiH in EU programmes for development and exchange in higher education, such as for example *Erasmus* and *Socrates*. Additionally, in the future students would be required to spend a semester studying not only away from their university, but outside their country and their linguistic area.
- Small higher education systems such as the one in BiH cannot develop on their own. They cannot reach the necessary degree of quality in higher education, science and research in all the disciplines and programmes needed for harmonious development of the individual, the state, society, culture and the economy.
- Long-term sustainability of the education system is not being developed due to a failure to overcome current political, administrative and other obstacles.
- There are delays in the harmonisation of lower level laws with the FLHE in BiH.
- The 'nationalisation' of curricula affects the mobility of young people and of teaching staff, and produces incompatible curricula.
- Resources for salaries and remunerations are planned on the basis of the number of employees, with a view to pedagogical standards, and the number of classes and class hours, which goes against the main European trend of planning on the basis of the number of pupils and students.
- Depreciation costs for equipment and buildings are not planned at all, and the same could practically be said of capital investments.
- The birth rate in BiH is constantly decreasing. Already, compared to the EU average, BiH has too many classes and teachers per number of pupils²²², which also implies unjustified spending per pupil.
- After the war, most devastated and damaged education facilities were reconstructed with donor resources. The availability of such resources today is minimal.
- Smaller and poorer municipalities will not be able to fulfil their responsibilities or organise additional activities in schools due to an unequal distribution of fiscal and human resources.
- Reporting and monitoring the effectiveness of financing in education has not been developed in line with international standards – on the local, cantonal and entity levels.

²²² In the EU 1:20, in BiH 1:14 in primary schools.

- Statistical data and education indicators are not monitored in line with the procedures and requirements of the European Commission and EUROSTAT.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- In the upcoming period, the priority for the Conference of Ministers of Education in BiH should be the systemic introduction of European standards, the European dimension and European contents into the BiH education system.
- The Conference of Ministers of Education in BiH should also engage in fighting bribery and corruption in education at all levels, and especially in higher education.
- Another priority should be the development of international cooperation and exchange, and a wider selection of so-called joint degree²²³ programmes, i.e. programmes jointly implemented at domestic and foreign higher education institutions. Along with automatic diploma recognition, these programmes are the best way to simultaneously assure quality and stimulate student and teacher mobility.
- In order to become Euro-compatible and competitive, the education system in BiH must urgently begin fulfilling the concrete requirements of the Bologna and the Copenhagen Processes.
- Implement the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education through the activities of the Information and Recognition Centre currently being founded.
- Establish and developed a unique three-cycle study system with consistent introduction of master's and doctoral studies.
- Implement the functional integration of universities in line with the Bologna Process.
- Establish and develop a system of monitoring and quality assurance in secondary and higher education.
- Develop a new network of primary and secondary schools that will reflect and uphold changes due to the reduced birth rate. Cost savings thus accrued should be used for other purposes.
- As all other parts of the BiH administration, public spending in the education system should also be based on EU Standards and Principles²²⁴. Accordingly, it is necessary to conduct appropriate spending surveillance in the education system.
- Form a governance and financing system for education institutions that will enable increased financial, material and technical support for schools, as well as communication technology modernisation.
- Reporting and monitoring of financing effectiveness in education should be established as soon as possible.
- The review and adaptation of an education financing framework primarily based on the per pupil/student formula is of crucial importance because the existing financial mechanisms are often unfair and ineffective, in addition to being non-transparent in higher education, making them susceptible to discrimination and causing losses of already limited public funds allocated to education.
- Every reform has its price, so it is necessary to increase financial allocations for certain

²²³ Programmes implemented jointly by domestic and foreign higher education institutions and that lead to a joint (dual) degree.

²²⁴ the European principles in the work of public administrations are: a) reliability and predictability (legal security, b) openness and transparency, c) accountability, d) efficiency and effectiveness

areas and purposes in education such as, for example, secondary vocational education and training or improving the quality of education.

- Sustainability and progress within the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education and Research Area would be facilitated if higher education institutions were to join forces and profile their programmes on the level of BiH, before doing the same on the regional level, primarily within the so-called mutual intelligibility zone (Croatia, BiH, Serbia and Montenegro). This would make for optimal use of institutional, human and financial resources. At the same time, this is the most efficient way to satisfy the economic and social needs of these countries.
- In cooperation with statistics institutions, education authorities should work on developing education statistics on appropriate levels and in line with the procedures and requirements of the European Commission and EUROSTAT.
- Apart from gathering standard data on education, statistics institutes should also monitor some key indicators through the Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, in view of BiH's road to the EU, special attention should be devoted to BiH establishing a system of monitoring indicators in education as soon as possible, which would enable comparison and integration with EU countries.
- Due to the requirements of EU integration, the gathering of key statistical data on education should be coordinated through a single institution on the level of BiH.
- When it comes to monitoring education outcomes (through statistics and indicators), the starting point should be those set out in the Mid-Term Development Strategy for 2004-2007. Subsequently, indicators for monitoring UN Millennium Goals should be used.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina should as soon as possible, and preferably by 2012, join the OECD knowledge monitoring programmes (PISA, TIMS) in order to determine the starting indicators of knowledge development in 15-year-olds in certain areas monitored through this system.
- The coordination policy, strategy and plans for education development should be adopted at the state level with a clear view of regional development and European integration. This particularly pertains to secondary vocational and higher education, graduate studies, science and research.
- Harmonise the criteria at higher education institutions with those of similar institutions in the EU in order to improve education quality.
- Improve student mobility in order to continue all forms of studies by recognising foreign educational qualifications, study periods and examinations.
- Establish better coordination of public administration in the education sector.

Employment and Anti-Unemployment Measures, Youth Entrepreneurship

☑ Message 5

Most young people see seeking a livelihood abroad as an alternative to working and living in BiH, which is entirely the result of a rational assessment of their existing opportunities and perspectives.

Key Problems and Challenges

- The unemployment rate among young people aged 16 to 30 is 58.5% (Commission, GTZ, 2008).
- The unemployment rate is highest among young people aged 15 to 24. It amounted to 58.4%, of which 55.6% referred to men and 63.1% to women. (ARS – BiH Statistics Agency, 2007).
- Only 13.4% of the unemployed have been unemployed for less than 12 months; half of the unemployed have been unemployed for over 2 years and a fifth for over 5 years.
- 69.9% of the unemployed have secondary school or lower qualifications, while 26.1% are persons with primary school qualifications. The portion of the unemployed with higher secondary or higher education qualifications is only 4.1% (ARS, 2007).
- There is no job creation to absorb the growing labour force.
- Large public enterprises that used to be the main sources of employment have either stopped operating or operate with 20% of their pre-war capacities, waiting either for privatisation and/or restructuring.²²⁵
- The processes of establishing new enterprises and developing entrepreneurship have not been strong enough to mitigate the great loss of jobs.²²⁶
- There is no social security and assistance network for unemployed young people.
- From 1996 to 2002, some 100,000 young people left BiH (UNDP, Young People in BiH, 2003).
- 67% of young people would leave BiH for temporary employment, marriage or permanent settlement in another country (Commission, GTZ, 2008).
- In the period from 1997 to 2005, the birth rate in BiH decreased by 43.3%²²⁷.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- The development, design and implementation of youth employment policies and programmes should be based on regular research on youth unemployment that would also take into account the labour market trends and demands.
- Create sustainable social security and assistance networks for groups of young people near the poverty border.
- Develop, design and implement policies to increase the birth rate in BiH.

²²⁵ Working Document 'FBiH Employment Strategy', 2008

²²⁶ Working Document 'FBiH Employment Strategy', 2008

²²⁷ "Strategic Directions of Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina with an Implementation Plan, 2008 - 2015", CoM adopted on 03 June 2008

✓ Message 6

Economic development should be the No. 1 priority for the whole country, and employment policies should be compatible with realistic needs

Key Problems and Challenges

- Economic development is not a priority for decision makers.
- Cooperation between the relevant stakeholders is weak both on the horizontal and the vertical plane leaving a large proportion of available resources unused.
- There is no programmatic or structured approach to improving the situation. There are no policies or plans of action for youth employment.
- The support for the founding of new enterprises and the development of entrepreneurship is insufficient.
- Since government bodies in BiH have not focused on the financial, organisational and managerial restructuring and modernisation of public enterprises, the result is the destruction of over half of all such enterprises and a tremendous loss of jobs.
- The average annual GDP growth rate of 5% in the past few years is not sufficient to ensure a higher rate of employment. A drop in GDP growth is expected in the upcoming period.
- The lack of policies, as well as slow reforms, especially in the education system, have put the youth population into a long-term disadvantaged position, and have made the BiH economy non-competitive.
- Even measures targeted at an active labour market are poorly designed with little to no effect on the key causes of youth unemployment.
- The high inactivity rate among young people is the result of inadequacy of the government system of support and the lack of assistance for young people in their transition from unemployment to employment.
- Reliable data on young people in the education system and on the labour market are not gathered and labour market indicators and trends are not monitored.
- The existing capacities are being used inefficiently, primarily when it comes to the role of employment services that mediate between the demand and supply of services in the labour market.
- Develop specific employment policy activities – “first job” – in order to facilitate the acquisition of work experience.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Determine the long-term economic vision and development strategy for the country.
- Develop and adopt employment strategies on the entity and other levels in BiH, including the state level.
- Integrate problems related to youth employment into the state employment plan and other development plans.
- Develop youth employment policies on the level of the local community²²⁸.

²²⁸ Pavelić, *Study on Youth Employment in BiH*.

- Create partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and education institutions, along with civil society initiatives and youth NGOs in order to promote and develop youth employment policies.
- Increase the participation of youth NGOs in resolving problems related to the youth labour market.
- Consider the introduction of tax incentives for companies employing young people. These measures should be carefully targeted at groups of unemployed young people in the most disadvantaged position.
- Consider continuing programmes for subvention of youth employment. Such programme have already been implemented and the evaluation of their effects is rather negative. They are mainly linked with considerable losses of dormant capital, exchange and re-settlement effects. This was the case primarily due to a poor selection of both companies and young people. If such programmes are to be continued, they should have a better selection of beneficiaries (companies) and end users (young people in a disadvantaged position).
- Special attention should be devoted to young people outside both the education system and the labour market. A greater part of assistance and more attention should be devoted to young people with lower levels of education (primary school or less) and young women who have considerably lower activity rates than young men.
- Promote employment-oriented education and training and ensure that education is continuously adapted to the changing economic environment.
- Increase the enrolment rate of young people in secondary and tertiary education.
- In cooperation with the private and non-governmental sectors, consider the introduction of internship programmes.
- Ensure that young people have access to training, additional training, internships and other employment measures.
- Establish a channel for directing attention to problems of young people employed in the informal sector.
- Increase the role of existing unions in advocating the interests of this large group of workers employed in the informal sector.
- Initiate the foundation of youth associations of those employed in the informal sector and provide them with the necessary support and assistance.
- Consider the introduction of a social security network for groups of young people at greater risk of poverty.

✓ Message 7

Legal policies must respond to the problems of the labour market that does not function on the basis of abilities, but on the basis of corruption, ethnic and political suitability and other discriminating qualifications both in the public and the private sector

Key Problems and Challenges

- The overall situation in the BiH economy has given rise to an informal labour market generating the greatest number of new jobs.

- Labour laws are not adhered to or implemented in the private sector, where young people are illegally employed without contracts.
- Labour laws are not adhered to or implemented in relation to employment in state-owned firms (e.g. BH Telecom, Elektroprivreda BiH etc.). Additionally, corruption and required work experience are the two greatest obstacles to finding employment in the public sector.
- A large number of young people are employed in the informal sector on low-quality jobs without even their basic labour rights, while jobs in the formal sector remain unattainable in the long run.
- One out of five employed young people does not have a signed contract with his/her employer. According to this indicator, the informal labour market is somewhat more extensive in FBiH (23%) than in RS (16%) (Commission, GTZ, 2008).
- Lacking also are legal policies for young people that would ensure equal opportunity for paid jobs for young women and men, as well as equal protection for all from discrimination in the labour market.
- The labour market in BiH does not function on the basis of abilities. The widespread corruption, nepotism, ethnic, political, social and other affiliation as employment criteria, as well as the lack of transparency in employment procedures are the main obstacles young people face in seeking employment.
- Legal provisions pertaining to minimum wages and required work experience are unfavourable to young people.
- Almost every second woman believes that women and girls are discriminated against in the labour market (Commission, GTZ, 2008).
- The situation in the labour market affects the motivation of young people to get an education – a third of young people do not complete secondary education, which leads them into the vicious circle of social exclusion and poverty.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Youth policies must ensure equal opportunity for paid jobs for young women and men, as well as equal protection for all from discrimination in the labour market²²⁹.
- Consider introducing tax incentives for companies employing young people.
- Consider introducing a separate minimum wage for young people as a first contract.
- Consider introducing an “atypical employment contract” for the employment of vulnerable groups of young people.
- Create an environment where young men and women have equal opportunity for education. The issue of equal opportunity for young men and women does not depend exclusively on how the labour market functions – the root cause of this inequality is to be found in unequal access to education.
- Ensure that young people have access to information and education on their labour rights.
- Tax and income policies should be aimed at reducing the informal labour market.
- Sanction every form of discrimination and corruption in the labour market.

²²⁹ Pavelić, *Study on Youth Employment in BiH*.



Message 8

The transition of young people from education to employment in the formal sector must be facilitated, employment opportunities must be expanded and made widely available, and youth entrepreneurship must be recognised as a key mechanism

Key Problems and Challenges

- There is no policy of investing into human resources or a policy to create necessary professions.
- The lack of motivation of young people to start their own businesses is pronounced. Young people do not perceive entrepreneurship as sustainable.
- Educational institutions do not contribute to the systematic promotion of youth entrepreneurship and do not offer young people the necessary business skills. Entrepreneurship principles are rarely or never taught at schools and faculties.
- Programmes for developing creative youth entrepreneurship are lacking.
- There is insufficient support to the development of small and medium enterprises in general, in terms of access to knowledge, information and financial resources.
- Young people are poorly prepared for the labour market and lack the skills for finding employment, especially those with lower levels of education.
- There are no programmes for professional orientation or career guidance.
- There is no system that would take in and guide young people upon completion of their education, a system that would provide guidance and counselling.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Education and training institutions should provide young people with career counselling.
- Invest in youth entrepreneurship capacities, ensure access to skills and resources to start up businesses with a special focus on rural areas.
- Adapt curricula in order to improve professions available to young women.
- Improve youth access to information on the labour market²³⁰.
- Improve the skills of young people necessary for finding employment and ensure counselling and guidance from public employment services.
- Make entrepreneurship a sustainable option for young people.
- Devote special attention to improving the skills and qualifications of non-qualified or poorly qualified young people.
- Improve access to information and the provision of high quality information on the labour market and business opportunities.
- Improve employment seeking skills through trainings, counselling and guidance.
- Create an environment to facilitate transition from informal to formal employment and offer more business opportunities to young workers in the formal sector.

²³⁰ Pavelić, *Study on Youth Employment in BiH*.

- Ensure assistance to young people leaving school from the first 12 months upon graduation. The same should be applicable to those who leave school earlier. The first 12 months are critical and if in this period young people receive assistance for finding a job, an internship or additional training, this increases the chances that the transition from school to employment will be successful.
- Ensure access to professional guidance, counselling and information on the labour market, both during education and later through employment services.
- Introduce professional orientation and career counselling into the education system.
- Improve the quality of formal education and increase flexibility and the response of the formal education system to changes in demands on the labour market.
- Introduce entrepreneurship into the education system through a curriculum and develop entrepreneurship models. Still, apart from theoretical knowledge, additional opportunities for practical exercises through reality-based simulations should be provided.
- Enable young people to learn directly from the experience of successful entrepreneurs. The youth support system should build capacities for recognising potential entrepreneurs among young people and focus further assistance on this scarce group of young people.

Healthcare and Preventive Protection, Reproductive Health of Young People

☑ Message 9

What needs to be applied is a regulatory framework that would ensure equal access to healthcare protection and insurance, optimal coverage through preventive measures, and that would respond to the healthcare needs of particularly vulnerable groups

Key Problems and Challenges

- The fragmented structure of healthcare in FBiH and the division of competencies and funds between the cantons and the entities in BiH is a problem when it comes to enjoying health insurance rights. The right to health insurance can be realised only within a certain canton in FBiH, or within the entity of residence, while the application of this right in other cantons and entities is practically impossible due to administrative and procedural obstacles. This primarily affects students, as well as young people seeking employment and those who wish to start a family in another canton or entity.
- In light of this, it is necessary to take into account the impossibility for young people to seek advice or go for a health check-up outside their community of residence in order to ensure confidentiality of data and avoid possible stigmatisation. This particularly pertains to smaller communities that are often closed off and insensitive to issues of sexual and reproductive health, as well as addiction.
- Due to a lack of adequate institutions to provide information in local communities, and the impossibility of using health insurance in a nearby larger urban centre in another canton or entity, young people often forgo check-ups and counselling. The result of this situation is that young people are exposed to unsafe behaviour often leading to unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and other problems. The competence structure in health insurance, that is, the effects of this system are contrary to the freedom of movement trend of freedom of mobility promoted by the EU.
- A part of the youth population in BiH, about 10%, does not have health insurance coverage (Commission, GTZ 2008). Also, the financial unavailability of healthcare for the poor is often a reason to postpone the need for healthcare services until symptoms have advanced to a stage that makes treatment even more expensive.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- It is necessary to adopt a law on youth issues in FBiH, a law on youth issues of the Brčko District of BiH, a framework law on youth issues, as well as changes and amendments to the Law on Youth Organisations of RS in parts pertaining to youth work and support to the non-governmental sector.
- One of the basic rights of all persons is the right to equal access to healthcare protection. In that context, it is necessary to adapt the legislation so that it ensures equal access to healthcare services for all citizens, including young people (and those belonging to vulnerable groups from among them). Concretely, this means ensuring the right to healthcare protection throughout the country by passing laws on health insurance on the state level, or via inter-entity and inter-cantonal agreements on this issue.
- It is necessary to ensure the minimal package of healthcare services for young people

irrespective of their status. To that end, recommendations from the EU White Paper on Youth (*A New Impetus for Youth*) should be applied.

- The second important area where access to healthcare protection should be ensured for all citizens is the physical inaccessibility of healthcare services for certain categories of the population. If we take into account the significant number of physically disabled young people in post-war BiH, there is need to introduce provisions of physical accessibility of institutions and services in all legal regulations in BiH.
- BiH should adopt the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. It is necessary to fully harmonise entity and Brčko District laws with the Convention, apply a multi-sector approach to this issue and its regulation, and ensure an institutional framework and mechanisms for implementing these laws.
- It is necessary to reinforce the legal regulations on limited consumption of alcohol that would particularly pertain to young people and be in line with the European Council Recommendation 2001/458/EC from 5 June 2001.
- Full implementation and reinforcement of the state Law on Fighting and Preventing Drug Abuse is necessary. This particularly pertains to provisions on education, in all spheres, about the prevention and repression of drug abuse.
- Introduce provisions into the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence specifically related to punitive measures for violence against children.
- Full implementation of provisions regulating reproductive health, and introducing provisions on sexual health into laws on education are also needed.
- Introduce provisions on HIV/AIDS prevention into education laws, and introduce provisions to improve the healthcare protection of persons infected with HIV/AIDS into healthcare protection laws.
- Follow the guidelines from the Green Paper on Mental Health²³¹.

✓ Message 10

Health-hazardous habits must become a topic of discussion for decision makers and the basis for institutional cooperation, participation of young people and finding inter-sector solutions

Key Problems and Challenges

- Poverty and poor health often form a vicious circle. Unemployment and compromised socio-economic determinants of health lead to poor health of the population, and primarily young people.
- A lack of coordination between the healthcare sector and other sectors, primarily the social and education sectors in the process of addressing and working on youth health issues.
- Lack of coordination within the healthcare sector, among other things, in terms of promoting youth health and healthy lifestyles.

²³¹ European Commission. Health and Consumer Protection. Green Paper "Promoting the mental health of the population. Towards a strategy on mental health for the EU" (COM(2005)484 final of 14 October 2005). http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/green_paper/mental_gp_en.pdf

- The survival of youth organisations to date has to a large extent been conditioned by the presence of international organisations as the main financiers of their activities. We are currently witnessing a withdrawal trend by international organisations in BiH, and the youth sector faces the problem of insufficient support to youth work. Since governmental support is still weak, the number of youth organisations and consequently the scope of their activities are decreasing.
- The participation of young people in decision making is very low, although there are certain mechanisms, both in terms of legal regulations and in the form of organisations representing youth issues. Insufficient and unclear mechanisms on all levels when it comes to youth participation in the processes of planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects treating youth health issues.
- Youth participation is also characterised by a 'weak voice' of young people through their organisations. Although they have been recognised as an important factor in the youth health sector, an approach entailing partnership and stronger support has not been forthcoming from government bodies.
- In RS, the RS Youth Council is a strong counterpart to government bodies, while FBiH lacks an organisation that would adequately represent youth interests.
- The lack of programmatic activity and budget planning by government bodies in resolving youth health issues creates poor coordination and underdeveloped partnerships. This in turn results in greater rivalry and unhealthy relations between youth organisations instead of their competitive spirit being expressed through well written project proposals implemented in partnership with competent government bodies.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Devising a state-level youth policy that would include youth health among its priorities.
- Devising and implementing a youth health policy and strategy on entity levels in coordination with other sectors related to youth health.
- Identifying (or if absent, creating) institutions and organisations on the state and entity levels that would implement youth health strategies.
- Improving areas of special interest for youth health (sexual and reproductive health, youth violence, mental health, substance abuse including alcohol and tobacco) by creating specific policies and strategies.
- Opening communication channels and ensuring greater cooperation and coordination of joint programmes and activities by all key stakeholders within the healthcare sector, which would then be linked to the social and education sectors in order to further coordinated work in this area.
- Young people must be involved in the planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation of youth health programmes, both on the state, entity and municipal levels. It is necessary to develop methods and techniques to enable the involvement of young people in the implementation of educational and healthcare programmes.

✓ Message 11

All public institutions, and especially those from the education system, must be sensitised to the healthcare needs of young people

Key Problems and Challenges

A lack of awareness on the part of healthcare workers about the necessity of an amicable approach to young people.

- In BiH, there is a range of institutions and associations dealing with youth health, often with a special focus on vulnerable groups. However, most institutions face the fact that their services are not sufficiently open to young people and in most cases they do not offer youth friendly services. Therefore, young people often refrain from using these services, because they fear an invasion of their privacy that may result in their marginalisation or isolation in the community.
- There are new approaches to youth health issues in BiH today, primarily in terms of peer-to-peer education. However, plans and programmes intended for healthcare professionals at various educational levels are out-of-date and do not reflect today's needs and standards in the approach to working with young people.
- Young people do not trust healthcare workers and are afraid of being stigmatised, which is especially evident in matters of HIV/AIDS counselling and testing in smaller communities. This is one of the most significant reasons why young people avoid using healthcare services of this kind even when they are made available on the local level at family medicine clinics and dispensaries for children and youth at healthcare centres.
- The problem is compounded by the fact that many institutions lack appropriate facilities to enable the provision of youth friendly services.
- University and secondary school curricula are insufficiently focused on acquiring communication skills and raising awareness about specific youth problems.
- Young people are not correctly or sufficiently informed about the risks and causes of diseases.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- It is necessary to consider changing curricula to include health education in primary and secondary schools (with a focus on sexual and reproductive health, family planning, addiction, mental health of young people, domestic violence, and healthy lifestyles, etc.)
- Important support to the introduction of health education in primary and secondary schools is provided by so-called peer-to-peer education, which must find its place in the official education system.
- Specialised school medicine curricula should be modernised and adapted to today's needs of young people with a special focus on promoting health and preventing disease.
- It is necessary to implement continuous education of healthcare workers working with youth in the healthcare system (on e.g. reproductive health, STDs, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, other addictions, healthy lifestyles, domestic violence, youth mental health issues).
- Curricula in formal education must be expanded at all levels leading to skills in promoting health and preventing disease in young people.
- Curricula must be improved to develop the sensitivity of healthcare workers for problems of young people and vulnerable groups within this population.

- Work with school-age youth must be further promoted and supported, as well as work in educational institutions and within the social sector.
- Ensure staff sensitivity for youth healthcare needs, that is, the implementation of a youth friendly approach at all levels of healthcare protection.
- Improve the skills and knowledge for understanding youth health through continuous education of healthcare workers, and remove the stigma and discriminatory behaviour towards vulnerable groups or patients from vulnerable and highly vulnerable groups.
- Ensure a greater number of targeted youth programmes, especially for vulnerable and highly vulnerable groups, as well as greater presence in the community.
- Encourage cooperation between the primary healthcare protection sector, public healthcare institutes and non-governmental organisations offering preventive and promotional programmes on the level of local communities.
- Promote health and prevent disease in a wider and better quality framework through a coordinated and multi-sector approach.
- A continuous anti-smoking campaign and a campaign to prevent the use of drugs and alcohol.
- Quality media contents on the subject of risk and prevention in health.
- Within the primary healthcare sector, it is necessary to increase the number of targeted programmes for young people, and especially vulnerable and highly vulnerable groups.
- Construct an infrastructure to enable an increase in leisure time spent on recreational activities (fitness and bicycling paths, promenades, bathing areas, etc.)

The Social Position of Youth People

✓ Message 12

The position of young people requires a multi-sector approach and cooperation of responsible institutions for social policy, education, labour and employment, healthcare, and youth work, which is the precondition for a sustainable policy of their social inclusion

Key Problems and Challenges

- The total youth population is a vulnerable group living much closer to the poverty border than the adult population. Young people living in households below the poverty border are a highly vulnerable group. In most cases, they leave education early, find jobs in the informal sector offering no security, and have little basis for independence, finding their own place to live and starting a family.
- The last findings on young people (Commission, GTZ, 2008) indicate that a large portion of the youth population belongs to the socially excluded group.
- Young people who have discontinued their education after completing primary school make up the majority of the poor population, 57%.
- Young returnees to certain parts of the country make up 10% of the poor. Apart from them, there are also other categories in the youth population, such as young people with development and health issues and young people with physical and mental disabilities. There are also young people belonging to other minority groups such as the Roma, and young single parents.
- The current legal framework for social protection lack clear guidelines for the cooperation between institutions responsible for education, labour and employment, healthcare, sports and culture, both on a legal basis and based on strategies and programmes.
- The social sector is conditioned by the effectiveness of the employment sector, active and specific employment policies, as well as the development of small and medium enterprises. This policies currently do not exist.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- The social position of young people requires a multi-sector approach and necessary cooperation of institutions responsible for the education system, labour and employment, healthcare, sports and culture, and youth work, to mention but a few. Here, we can cite the example of the German Framework Law on Children and Youth²³², which is part of the Collection of Social Law and which provides for precisely this type of cooperation.

Competent government institutions must ensure that the overall state apparatus, i.e. the relevant institutions develop coordinated policies in various areas of importance for the position of young people.

- Decision makers must establish the main directions for social policies pertaining to young people by using accurate and reliable information on their position.
- The promotion of active labour market policies and the development of coherent and

²³² www.ijab.de

comprehensive strategies for lifelong learning in order to increase labour market integration, especially for the long-term unemployed and highly vulnerable groups in terms of poverty and social exclusion.

- Guarantee that the system of social protection provides enough coverage for all users in order to ensure adequate minimal incomes for dignified living, while at the same time removing the danger of labour market inactivity.
- Focus on exterminating poverty and social exclusion among children as the key step towards counteracting the generational inheritance of poverty through initiatives in early education used to identify children and poor families requiring assistance.
- Reducing the level of poverty and social exclusion and increasing the participation of returnees and ethnic minorities in the labour market to match the majority average.²³³
- Create long-term housing policies that include favourable loans based on a labour force and pro-birth rate model through quality healthcare services and long-term protection services, special and regular education and lifelong learning opportunities, including the transition from education to employment, with a special focus on young people leaving school with poor qualifications or no qualifications whatsoever.
- Establish an institutional framework to facilitate inclusion policies. This entails sustainable integration programmes for specific populations such as persons with special needs, single mothers, Roma, returnees, persons with a criminal record, drug addicts.
- It is necessary to take into account the fact that the transition of young people is determined both by the possibilities available to them and by the decisions they and those in their environment make during transition from one status to another. In that respect, each social policy for young people should include an active understanding of their transition, and not a passive one treating young people as needing to 'survive' youth in order to 'become' adults. Youth is an age to develop the main preconditions for an appropriate and high quality transition to the next phase. This approach does not reduce the importance of socio-economic conditions affecting the perspectives of young people, but clearly directs attention to the development of careers that could lead to the much needed change in decision making by young people and those in their environment.

✓ Message 13

The existing system of social assistance and protection is not able to recognise and respond to the needs of households with insufficient income, and especially not to the complex problems faced by particularly vulnerable groups

Key Problems and Challenges

- Incompatibility of the legal framework and a lack of legal regulations, conditioned inequality in rights of the population within various territories in BiH. This pertains to the inability to realise rights to social assistance, as well as differences in the amounts of such assistance.
- The incompatibility of the legal framework and the lack of legal regulations primarily pertain to FBiH where the distribution of competences between the cantons and the FBiH government is unclear. This leads to unclear competences of providing social

²³³ UNDP NHDR, Bosna i Hercegovina, 2007

assistance and incomplete application of entity laws on the cantonal and municipal levels.

- In RS, the right to social assistance as stipulated by the Law and municipal regulations is often reduced to one-time monetary assistance in cases of illness and the like, which makes it inappropriate as social support.
- The social protection system is governed by a fragmented and expensive administrative and legal apparatus leading to ineffective and inefficient spending of public funds available to governments in BiH.
- The existing mechanism for selecting the beneficiaries of the social protection programmes is inappropriate primarily because it is based on the principle of allocating funds to traditionally defined categories, and as such cannot recognise the real needs of young people, not to mention specific population groups such as persons with disabilities or young people coming out of orphanages, young Romas, etc.
- The categorical approach to allocating public funds to social protection programmes has a very negative effect and discourages employment, that is, the level of labour force activity in the labour market.
- Most of those who receive social assistance do not belong to the category of the poor, while most of those in need of assistance do not receive any.
- Extra-institutional forms of solidarity, such as religious solidarity, can lead to social disintegration in the long term.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- The social system must be reformed in order for social protection programmes to include those truly in need of assistance.
- Harmonise standards, regulations and policies among various administrative units based on the principle that funds are allocated on the basis of needs.
- Increase the effectiveness of social assistance and protection services through organisational reforms and by simplifying procedures at centres for social work in line with international standards.
- The customary approach in social policy making must be abandoned, and a new approach more sensitive to the specific and contemporary needs and interests of young people must be urgently established.
- Governments should develop a mechanism to recognise those households, social groups and individuals truly in need of assistance, meaning those below a certain predefined poverty border.
- Governments should develop policies and measures directed at young people as specific population categories whose social status is different from the status of adults.
- Establish mechanisms to select social assistance beneficiaries based **on an assessment of their total income situation**. The basis for defining sustainable and effective social policy is determining the real social position of the population. Due to the developed informal economy and large scope of unregistered income, this is particularly difficult to determine. This approach would be much better for solving the poverty problem than the existing system based on a categorical approach. The experience of other transition countries provides a prime example of how this can be done in operative terms.
- Ratify the European Social Charter in order to fulfil and realise the rights pertaining to social protection.



Message 14

The slow resolution of housing problems of young people has negative effects on all other aspects of life and community development

Key Problems and Challenges

- In the period from 1997 to 2005, the birth rate in BiH decreased by 43.3%²³⁴.
- Government institutions at all levels lack appropriate policies directed at the pronounced depopulation trend.
- Appropriate housing policies that would address the needs of young people have not been put into place.
- Without the support of the authorities in the form of adequate housing policies, young people have a more difficult time forming families and becoming independent.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Creating long-term housing policies entailing favourable loans based on the labour force and pro-birth rate model.
- Increased access of the most vulnerable groups and those in greatest risk of social exclusion to decent housing.
- Enabled housing construction through public and private partnership programmes.

²³⁴ "Strategic Directions of Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina with an Implementation Plan, 2008 - 2015", CoM adopted on 03 June 2008

Active Participation of Young People in Public Life, Development of Civil Society and Volunteer Work

✓ Message 15

The participation of young people in activities of public importance, as well as their influence on decision making and public policies in all sectors must be supported and institutionally regulated

Key Problems and Challenges

- A law on young people in FBiH, a law on young people in the Brčko District of BiH, laws on volunteer work in FBiH and the Brčko District of BiH, as well as a law on youth work in RS are missing. This in turn causes the lack of a uniform definition of the age range for young people in BiH.
- The European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life is not being implemented.
- The definition of a volunteer-intern should be corrected in labour laws. This pertains to internship experience necessary to take the professional exam.
- Young people are not aware of their rights and responsibilities in society, and cannot use their rights in, for example, employment.
- The principle of youth participation is not recognised in society, young people are largely marginalised and lack opportunities to represent their needs in public policy creation processes. Mechanisms of youth participation are lacking and are not widespread.
- Young people do not participate in the decision making of public institutions and enterprises with direct influence on their living conditions.
- Although higher education laws leave room for the formation of student unions, bylaws to this effect are absent.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Urgently adopt a law on young people in FBiH, the Brčko District of BiH, and a law on youth work in RS, as well as laws on volunteer work in FBiH and the Brčko District of BiH.
- Adopt laws on student organisations that would define the functioning of student organisations on the university level, assign clear support and responsibilities to institutions, stipulate the manner of networking and ties with decision-making bodies such as the university senate, the Rector's Office, etc.
- Legal solutions should provide for the institutional support to young people in terms of a youth budget, creating youth policies, youth work, information and youth participation | government bodies and parliamentary commissions dealing with youth issues, as well as for networks of youth associations and youth representation.
- Enable the upholding of the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life through appropriate legal acts.
- Ensure youth participation in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of measures pertaining to improving their position.
- Adopt a systemic framework for developing cooperation between the government and non-governmental sector based on partnership. Enable co-financing and full financing

of activities for young people in full cooperation with the governmental sector.

- Regulate the participation of young people in the decision making of public institutions and enterprises with direct influence on their living conditions.
- The definition of a volunteer-intern should be corrected in labour laws.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote introducing young people to their rights and responsibilities in society.

✓ Message 16

The approach of government institutions to the position of young people is not efficient, effective or cost-effective

Key Problems and Challenges

- There is a lack of understanding among decision maker and among young people about: youth participation, and the development of civil society and volunteer work.
- Government institutions have been inefficient in resolving youth issues and problems.
- There is no programmatic approach in the activities of public institutions and responsible ministries towards young people, an approach that would have visible effects.
- The existing distribution of funds is realised through a non-transparent process. The criteria for evaluating youth projects and allocating financial resources on all levels are questionable.
- Imprecise deadlines for allocating public funds have a negative effect on the planning and development youth projects. Some public invitations are opened in the middle of the year or later for projects intended for that very year.
- There are no performance analyses of resources spending and effects, so-called cost-benefit analyses, and there is no reporting.
- In the past ten years, international organisations have invested the greatest amount of financial resources into youth participation.
- There is a low level of coordination between domestic governments and international development programmes aimed at an optimal prioritising of goals, which would necessarily lead to more efficient, effective and cost-effective spending of funds.
- The principle of co-management is not promoted.
- Young people lack public spaces in local communities.
- Youth work is at a low level.
- There is a lack of access for young people to informal education and youth work.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Enable the participation of young people in the decision making of public institutions and enterprises with direct influence on their living conditions.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote the process of devising youth strategies on the local level.
- Promote the co-management principle.

- Ensure public spaces for young people on the level of local self-governance units and regional centres. With the support of higher levels of government, local self-governance units must ensure appropriate spaces for young people. Ensure the sustainability of these youth “centres”, ensure youth participation in the management of these centres, as well as staff training.
- Enable the use of other public spaces by young people.
- Invest in the construction of contemporary and multimedia spaces for young people.
- Analyse selection criteria for project financing based on concordance with a certain youth policy or study, as well as youth participation in decision making and defining priorities.
- The Council of Ministers of BiH should participate in the EU programme “Young People in Action” enabling full use of the programme, i.e. direct participation of young people from BiH, as well as those working with young people, in all European actions supported by this programme and involving, for example, study visits, the European Voluntary Service, international seminars, etc.
- Enable youth participation in the work of legislative authorities.
- Enable the advising of executive authorities on the position of young people.
- Enable the application of the co-management principle.
- Enable youth participation in governing bodies of institutions of primary importance for young people, such as the steering boards of public institutions – schools, youth centres, culture centres, etc. Apart from clearly defined competences and rules of procedure, ensure adequate funds for their work and training, as well as room for their influence.
- Ensure greater financial resources for youth association projects and activities, with transparent public invitations, with youth participation in decisions on the allocation of funds.
- Create a comparative model – for example, the budget for youth organisations should be at least 20 KM annually per young person in a given administrative unit (e.g. with 10,000 young people in a municipality – the budget for youth organisations should be 200,000 KM).
- Enrich the curricula and teaching methodology in primary and secondary schools to develop young people’s skills and their entrepreneurial spirit as a precondition for youth participation in society. The topic should be: critical thinking, public presentation and speaking skills, raising self-confidence, etc. Ensure the provision of sufficient information on the importance and opportunities for active youth participation in society. In view of the lack of human resources, involve organisations working with young people and with experience in the field in the preparation of changes to the curricula. Also, ensure the necessary training for teachers and pedagogues.
- Encourage authorities at all levels to apply various consultancy methods and dialogue forms with various categories of young people for the purpose of creating and evaluating public policies. With the help of expert consultants, the Council of Ministers of BiH should draft recommendations and guidelines for this areas, as well as resources for lower levels of government.
- Enable the development of peer-to-peer education as a model of youth inclusion. Ensure the mechanisms, resources for peer educators and trainers in schools and local communities.
- The process of devising strategies for young people at the local level should be improved and promoted.

✓ Message 17

Young people can do a lot more to represent their own interests and should do more to get involved in the decision-making process

Key Problems and Challenges

- A very low level of engagement of young people in the non-governmental sector.
- A very low level of participation of young people in the activities of the non-governmental sector on the local level.
- Young people are not prepared to volunteer their services, and voluntary work is not promoted.
- There is insufficient promotion of the active role of young people in society.
- Youth work promotion is not widespread.
- The networking of youth associations is very rare.
- There is no Youth Council of FBiH, and no Youth Council of BiH.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Popularise youth activism and social participation, especially through public electronic media available to young people, as well as radio and TV shows, invest in youth magazines, and in competitions within activism fields such as for the best youth project, the best students council project, etc.
- Create public campaigns on the need of greater participation of young people in activities of public importance.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote youth engagement in non-governmental associations through measures such as special lower prices of concert tickets, etc. Additionally, introduce the criterion of activism and youth organisation experience as an advantage for employment with public institutions, etc.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote the profiling and networking of youth associations.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote the development of volunteer work and youth engagement.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote recognition of youth participation by the public at large, as well as greater understanding for this subject on the part of decision makers.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote media contents on youth participation and those aimed at raising awareness about their needs.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote training of the non-governmental sector on the processes of youth policy creation.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote training of the non-governmental sector on advocacy and lobbying methods.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote association activities.
- Provide more government support at all levels to projects of informal education and peer-to-peer training.

Mobility, Information, Youth Counselling and Working with Young People

Message 18

Governments at all levels must provide planned, appropriate and informed support to young people so that they can become involved in the life of the community, and ensure opportunities for young people to create their own futures

Key Problems and Challenges

- Programmes to support the integration and inclusion of young people in the life of the community and to promote their voluntary participation and cooperation, information and joining of associations have not been developed.
- Planned and appropriate programmatic activities geared at young people in terms of their extra-curricular education have not been developed.
- Activities and programmes to develop abilities, knowledge and skills, as well as the social engagement of young people are lacking.
- There are no planned and appropriate youth policies concerned with youth creative, artistic, sports and cultural activities.
- Youth work is an unfamiliar topic to the public at large in BiH.
- Activities and programmes for youth welfare, their social and healthcare protection, and youth counselling have not been developed.
- There are no programmes designed for specific groups of young people.
- Initiatives and programmes concerning international youth work, inter-cultural cooperation and exchange are weak and underdeveloped.
- There are no professional orientation programmes. Youth counselling is not institutionally organised or developed. Most government programmes for youth counselling are implemented thorough schools, healthcare institutions and centres for social work.
- There is a lack of spaces for young people, their activities and youth work.
- Volunteer work and engagement in youth work are not promoted or valued. Voluntary work with young people is not recognised as work experience for the purpose of employment at government institutions, not even institutions dealing with youth issues.
- There are no institutions dealing with informing young people that have government support on the cantonal, entity or state level.
- Government bodies have not legally defined or structured areas of youth work, youth mobility, information, or counselling.
- There is no law on young people in FBiH, no law on young people in the Brčko District of BiH, and no law on youth work in RS.
- Provisions of the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life pertaining to youth work, youth mobility, information and counselling are not adhered to.
- Although non-governmental organisations are most involved in youth work, the main

problem and risk is the absence of standards in youth work, and the absence of quality assurance mechanisms or certification mechanisms for those engaged in youth work.

- There is no multi-sector approach to subjects related to youth work, youth mobility, information and counselling.
- There is little information about the position of young people in the media, which has a negative effect on how informed youth people are.
- Existing youth policies are not being implemented.
- In 6 regional centres, RS youth information centres have not been established.
- A youth counselling centre for combating drug addiction has not been established.
- A professional orientation programme has not been created in schools.
- A training centre for those working with young people has not been established.
- FBiH and the cantons do not have youth policies or special measures pertaining to youth work, youth mobility, information and counselling.
- No research has been done on the needs of young people as a basis for youth policies in FBiH.
- A unique database on institutions and organisations dealing with youth issues in FBiH has not been created.
- There are no youth programmes of significance that receive government support for youth work and information, only smaller separate projects, and this is true at all levels of government.
- There is no programmatic approach to financing projects that reach out to young people, which leads to a lack of continuity in working on a specific problem.
- Youth projects have not been extracted from the wider budget item intended for financing non-governmental organisations in general, or alternately, youth work, youth mobility, information and counselling are classified under 'grants for youth organisations' as part of the youth policy.
- The process of submitting projects for financing and the process of their selection often is not transparent, and there are no clear criteria for allocating funds that would adhere to an appropriate point system.
- Informal groups are not afforded the possibility to submit their project proposals, which precludes them from contributing to the improvement and development of youth mobility and youth work.
- In almost all cases, the monitoring and evaluation of project effects are at a very low level, being reduced to the obligation of providing bills for moneys spend, without having to justify the use of such funds.
- The coordination between government bodies and international donors when approving projects is insufficient.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Urgently adopt a law on young people in FBiH, the Brčko District of BiH, and a law on youth work in RS, as well as laws on volunteer work in FBiH and the Brčko District of BiH.
- It is necessary to devise an appropriate legal and institutional framework for youth work, youth information, and activities related to youth tourism with precisely defined mechanisms and responsible bodies, and including the formation of youth departments within executive government bodies.

- Enable the upholding of the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life through appropriate legal acts.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote youth work as planned, appropriate and informed support to young people through their voluntary participation.
- Establish standards of youth work, as well as quality assurance mechanisms.
- Programmatically stimulate the strengthening of institutional capacities related to issues of the position of young people.
- Programmatically support the work of the Association of Youth Officers in BiH (USM BiH) in terms of training civil servants.
- Programmatically stimulate the establishment of programmes researching youth work at individual social sciences faculties.
- Create databases to be used by responsible ministries to gather information and monitor trends related to young people.
- Adopt a programmatic approach of financial and other assistance to youth work, youth tourism and counselling, as opposed to the current practice of small and ineffective projects.
- Provide young people with access to public spaces where youth counselling by qualified staff will be programmatically supported.
- Conduct a mapping of all youth counselling centres and services and create a database.
- Develop youth counselling strategies with defined needs and existing resources.
- Ensure youth participation in decision making on the best and/or highest-priority activities.
- Programmatically stimulate and promote the learning of foreign languages and the certification of such learning.
- Develop special information policies geared at young people.
- Programmatically stimulate the opening of youth information centres with qualified staff.
- Ensure that public broadcasting services, radio and television, have more information on young people and their position, as well as about activities geared at young people and specifically on youth counselling related to subjects of importance for young people.
- Ensure funds for youth media, youth media projects (web-portals, magazines, radio shows, etc.).
- Ensure resources for youth media projects such as internet websites, magazines, TV and radio shows, etc.
- Enable young people to be informed about relevant international programmes.

✓ Message 19

Local economic development could be improved significantly by stimulating cultural exchange and tourism within the country, and along with international exchanges, this would encourage quality development of young people

Key Problems and Challenges

- Youth tourism and programmatic activities geared at youth recovery and spending time

in nature are not developed, even though such tourism is most profitable in view of the necessary minimum investment.

- Generally speaking, there is a lack of youth hostels and resorts, which is an important precondition for the development of youth tourism.
- Local economic development is not being improved, because cultural exchange of young people and the development of cultural tourism are not stimulated internally.
- The lack of cultural exchange policies on the international plane prevent quality development of young people.
- There is no agency to deal with youth mobility on the level of the Council of Ministers of BiH, which is the key institution for participating in the “Young People in Action” programme of the European Union. This programme is a way to finance youth study visits, multilateral youth projects, volunteer work abroad, etc.
- The Road Map for liberalising the visa regime has not been implemented, which directly prevent greater mobility of young people on the international plane.
- There is a lack of public and media space for programmes promoting different cultures and cultural models.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Introduce exchange visits programmes for pupils or classes in secondary schools in order to promote the different cultures and peoples living in BiH.
- Programmatically stimulate partnerships between the public and the private sector, as well as between the public and the non-governmental sector in the realm of youth tourism.
- Programmatically stimulate and ensure funds for scholarships for young people at prestigious universities abroad, as well as for study visits.
- Create a “youth card” that would entitle young people to discounts at public services and certain firms (museums, theatres, transportation, hotels, etc.) modelled on the EURO26 and ISIC cards.
- Enable the use of student dorms and other similar facilities for stimulating and promoting youth tourism.
- Investment into the development of public facilities for youth tourism and training such as hostels and resorts in Cities in BiH and at attractive destinations is recommended. BiH has good opportunities for local economic development through youth tourism, especially in view of the fact that this type of tourism does not require large financial investments, and the fact that BiH possesses resources in terms of its preserved natural environments and unemployed youth.
- The Council of Ministers of BiH should participate in the EU programme “Young People in Action” enabling full use of the programme, i.e. direct participation of young people from BiH, as well as those working with young people, in all European actions supported by this programme and involving, for example, study visits, the European Voluntary Service, international seminars, etc.
- Establish a state agency for young people that would implement the EU programme “Young People in Action”.
- When it comes to the BiH Road Map for liberalising the visa regime with the EU, the authorities should bear in mind what this would mean for young people.

Culture, sports, and leisure

✓ Message 20

The lack of an appropriate approach of government institutions to sports and culture is a direct neglect of young talents

Key Problems and Challenges

- The success of individual young people in culture and sports happen despite the lack of organisation in these areas. The lack of organisation in sports and culture directly constitutes the neglect of young talents.
- There are no strategies or strategic development and investment frameworks in culture and sports. There is no strategic approach, or it is not realised in practice, there are rather ad hoc individual and partial cultural and sports activities for young people, usually of short duration.
- There is no programmatic approach on the part of government institutions and ministries to youth culture, sports and leisure. The monitoring of the effectiveness of existing government measures is not made possible.
- Institutional capacities for youth culture, sports and leisure are also lacking. At most government levels, there is a lack of adequate institutional capacities to deal with young people, youth policy and youth work.
- Coordination and cooperation between various levels of government is generally poor both on the vertical and the horizontal plain, and does little to improve the multi-sector approach to youth issues required by the needs and problems of young people.
- Public invitations and financing of non-governmental organisations and associations, and sports societies lack clear criteria and strategic priorities, on top of being under-funded.
- The financing of activities of non-governmental organisations, especially those that provide the use of space for youth leisure is still dependent on international donors, while the quality of work is questionable, because there are no youth work and informal education standards, and no official training certificates for this field.
- Financial problems are also reflected in the insufficient budget allocations for the needs of youth culture, sports and leisure, and the insufficient support in terms of infrastructure and basic conditions for the work of youth associations.
- Only wealthier municipalities enable the use of facilities and infrastructure for youth activities in sports, culture and leisure. Vary rarely, local authorities have subsidies for these areas and integrate them into the formal education system. Most often, these obligations are left to schools and their extra-curricular activities, competitions, etc., or to the organisation of sports and cultural events.
- In most cities, there is a lack of resources and infrastructure such as sports grounds, equipment, youth centres or facilities for youth leisure, and in places where they exist, they are made insufficiently available to a wider population of young people.
- Young people are insufficiently informed about all programmes and services in the realm of youth culture, sports and leisure.
- An information system for gathering data on young people to be used by responsible government institutions has not been developed; data on young people are not gathered

and their problems and needs, or trends in the population are not monitored.

- There is a disproportionate lack of cultural events and generally events for young people in rural areas and smaller towns in comparison to more developed areas.
- Physical education is not provided at faculties.
- Physical education teachers do not possess professional qualifications.
- Sports clubs have coaches without professional qualifications.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Developing cultural habits should be one of the main pillars of education.
- It is necessary to increase cooperation between schools and non-governmental organisations, and to enable the use of school facilities for youth leisure and activism, especially in culture and sports.
- Intensify extra-curricular activities and expand their scope to attract more young people.
- Work on involving parents in planning leisure activities for their children.
- Create a strategic framework for developing youth culture, sports and leisure within youth strategies at various levels of government with multi-sector approach measures that provide greater efficiency and maximum use of existing resources.
- It is necessary to ensure greater financial allocations for youth projects and associations in the realm of culture, sports and leisure through special funds on all levels of government.
- Adopt action programmes for young people in culture, sports and leisure.
- Provide support for especially gifted young individuals in the form of scholarships.
- At all administrative levels, it is necessary to create permanent school leagues for girls and boys in a number of mass sports that would involve a large number of young people, while at the same time popularising sports.
- It is necessary to provide greater support and better coordination for special regular contests of young people in cultural and artistic creativity, such as: acting, dance, performance, art exhibitions, popular music, graffiti, photography, sculpture, comics, and other activities of interest for young people.
- Provide free admission for young people to sports halls and grounds.
- Provide special centres and clubs for recreational sports and leisure to students at university centres, and support the use of other resources and facilities where students can engage in sports through subventions. Also, introduce free or discount admission to museums, theatres, cinemas, etc. This programme can be realised with the "youth card", with special discount prices of services for young people and students.
- Government institutions should support the promotion and information about all the opportunities and services catering to young people in the realm of culture, sports and leisure through the media, information centres, 'information points', websites, etc.
- Reorganise the structure of relevant cantonal ministries. Where financially possible and justified, separate culture and sports into a separate ministry and increase budget allocations.
- Employ at least one person at each relevant institution to work on youth issues in culture and sports, as well as youth work.

- Establish bodies to support young people in order to enable efficient coordination of youth projects and activities, as well as funds allocated for such purposes.
- Enable the establishment of youth centres and return former youth centres to their original intent.
- Create an information system on young people and youth associations, regularly gather data on youth activities, as well as direct and indirect users of budget funds.
- Develop better communication between relevant institutions and young people.
- Introduce a special status for pupils and students when it comes to access to cultural and sports events.
- Organise programmes for regular group visits of pupils to cultural institutions.
- Promote youth activism and involvement of young people in youth associations.
- Provide subventions to enable young people to use spaces to organise concert, theatre, artistic and sports events.
- Following the example of the EU, introduce a “culture capital” or “youth capital” programme that would intensify cultural activities, and especially those of young people in a city over a period of one year.
- Introduce additional physical education lessons not only into primary and secondary schools, but also into the study programmes of higher education institutions.

✓ Message 21

The lack of legal regulation for support of government institutions to youth work, their leisure, as well as culture and sports has created a stereotype of young people

- There is no concrete legal framework to ensure mechanisms necessary for the development of youth culture, sports and leisure, and which would lead to certain obligations and investment into these areas.
- There is no suitable legal framework to stimulate the work of youth associations in FBiH and the Brčko District, which limits their activities in culture, sports and generally in youth work. There is no law on young people in FBiH, the Brčko District of BiH, and no law on youth work in RS.
- Governments have not adopted a definition of youth work in their legal acts, including positive measures to prevent juvenile delinquency and activities geared at specific groups of young people.
- The provision of minimum contents and support to young people on the local and regional level has not been defined.
- Due to a lack of uniform legal basis for support to young people by government institutions, young people are generally regarded as irresponsible.
- There is no standardisation for the contents and minimal opportunities of young people in primary and secondary schools when it comes to youth sports, culture and leisure.
- There is poor and insufficient communication between government institutions and young people and their representatives. Young people are not involved into creating sports and culture contents.

- In most cases, local parliaments are not working to provide public spaces for young people, which is a problem both in terms of informal education and youth participation, and generally constitutes a problem for youth work.
- The European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life is not being implemented.

Recommendations and Possible Measures

- Urgently adopt a law on young people in FBiH and the Brčko District of BiH, and a law on youth work in RS.
- Enable the upholding of the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life through appropriate legal acts.
- It is necessary to create an appropriate legal and institutional framework for youth culture, sports and leisure with clearly defined mechanisms and bodies responsible for these areas, including the establishment of youth departments within executive government bodies.
- It is necessary to build and reconstruct sports halls and grounds, and to ensure their maximum use for recreational sports activities of young people as well as their sports societies and clubs.
- Harmonise cantonal and entity laws on sports with the Law on Sports of BiH.
- Legally define the establishment of a school and student sports union on the BiH level.
- Legal define the area of culture on the state and entity level.
- When legally regulating the area of culture, devote attention to the needs of various age groups both as recipients and as creators of culture.

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