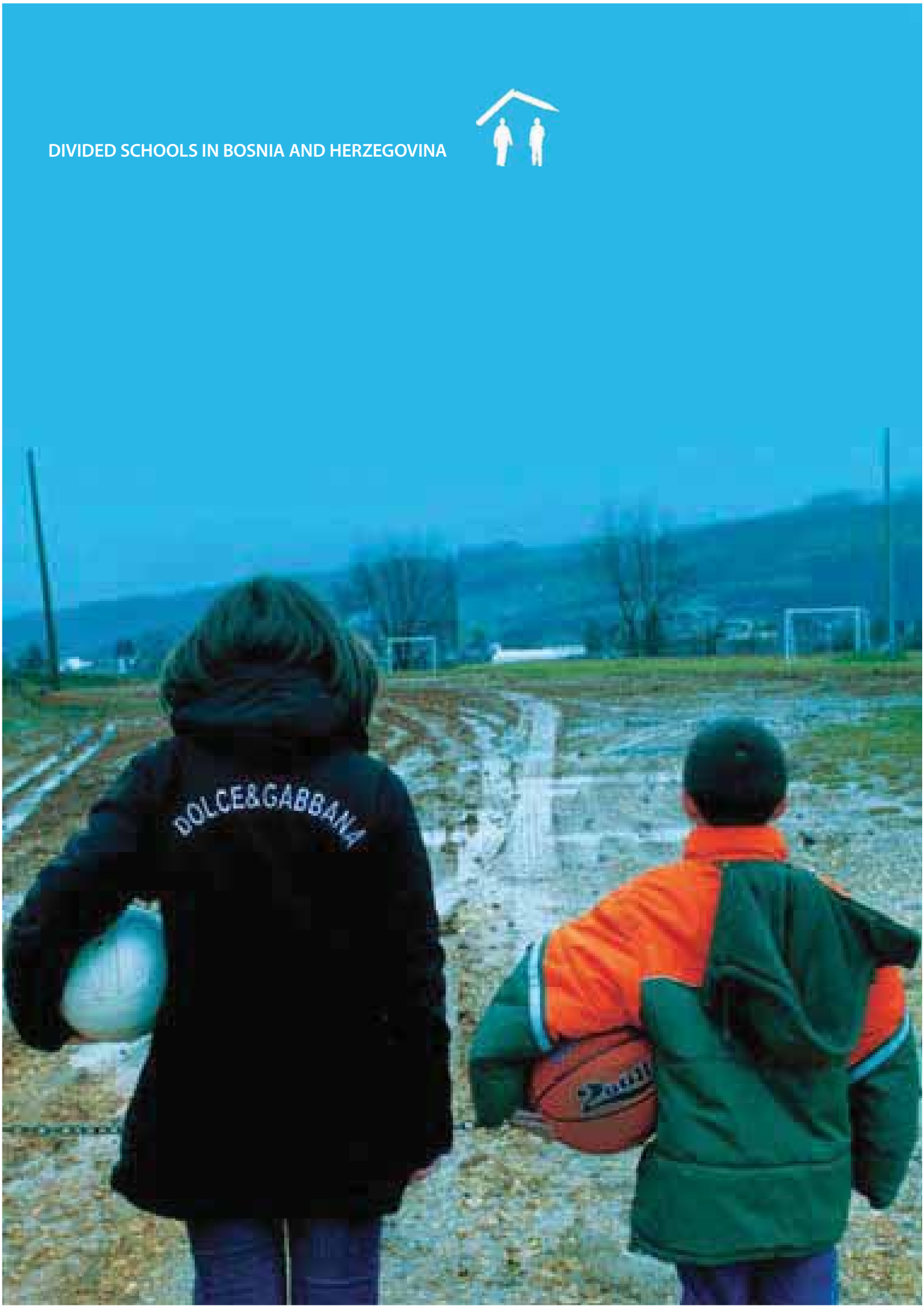
DIVIDED SCHOOLS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Pupils, teachers and parents

It is interesting to note that, as opposed to the quantitative findings of the study, during the course of focus group discussions and interviews held with teachers and parents they consistently claimed that they were in favour of the joint education of children of different ethnic backgrounds.

> Parent: "I'm in favour of that 100%. I just want to say that children have no opportunity. How could a child be friends with another child if he never met him and if the two have no common topics to share?"

> Parent: "I would opt for multiethnic schools again. Children can learn about other cultures, different traditions and customs more than in mono-ethnic schools. I repeat that there is no mono-ethnic country in the world, which simply negates other cultures, faiths".

> Teacher: "I don't know about the advantages of the mono-ethnic schools, I wouldn't know how to single out any as I can't see any whatsoever, but I prefer multiethnic ones, as we should all be open and appreciate our richness rather than turn our heads away from it, or turn it into an obstacle".

> Pupil: "We congratulate them on their holidays and they do the same to us. We respect their holidays and we don't disturb them. For example, we don't demolish Christmas trees and we respect their traditions as they respect our".

We should point out that we expected the findings obtained through questionnaires and those obtained through interviews to be different. This is because respondents express themselves more easily when they know that a survey is anonymous. However, in some places, in particular in those communities with the divided schools, we were able to hear different views expressed publicly.

> Surveyor: "Would you like to have the opportunity to hang around with children of different ethnic backgrounds?"

> Pupil: "Not so much".

> Surveyor: "Right. Why not?"

> Pupil: "I don't know. I never got used to it".

It is clear here that the pupil is expressing his distance towards members of other ethnic

groups and that the reason for this, according to him, is the fact that their sporadic contact has not lead to an improvement in their relations.

In fact, it is characteristic that reciprocity is usually sought in relations, namely in order for contact to lead to positive outcomes it is necessary for the participants to take notice of any mutual desire for and equity in these contacts.

> Parent: "As a parent I was against the division. Why? Well, if the divisions should be made then they should be made throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is inevitable. Secondly, if schools should be mixed then they should be mixed across Bosnia and Herzegovina. That's the issue of politics. Because, if politics don't allow a school in Croatian language in Sarajevo how could, let's say, five, ten, fifteen, fifty Bosniak pupils have the right to have their school and vice versa? Why shouldn't there be a school in Bosnian language in West Herzegovina if there are Bosniak children there, why not? But only if that implies the whole country. It can be in Serbian language it doesn't matter, but only the whole country: either one system or division".

The sources of the children's opinions should be sought as the different influences exerted upon them by their community, the media and parents contribute, through exclusive attitudes, to the creation of prejudice, either deliberately or accidentally.

> Surveyor: "Is ethnicity important to you?"
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> Schoolgirl: "To be honest, no. Not to me, but it is to my parents. My name is Zorana and when I go out with Ajla or Amra my mum says, 'Does it always have to be Amna, Amra or Seila. Are there any of our girls anywhere?' That's what she says".
>
> Surveyor: "And how do you feel about it?"
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> Schoolgirl: "I disagree with her but I can't oppose her. I disagree with her. If a friend of mine is an honest true friend her ethnic background is of no relevance to me".

Here is an example of openly expressed prejudice:

> Parent: "I'd allow any but the Chinese".
>
> Moderator: "Let's hear your reasons, why not?"
>
> Parent: "Well I can't say exactly, but the Chinese, the very thought of the Chinese, all the contagious diseases, that's all Chinese".

Therefore, we can see that at the rational level adults are aware that contact should be es-

tablished and maintained between different ethnic groups, but there are also some latent views stemming partially from culturally incorporated information and in part from compartmentalised knowledge obtained through the media, as well as the result of diverse fears.

> Teacher: "A small people like the Croatian people, for example, or to be precise, if we were with the Bosniak people we would be lost in a couple of years".
>
> Moderator: "You are afraid of assimilation?"
>
> Teacher: "Yes, exactly".

The fear of assimilation and the loss of national identity were quite frequently expressed, especially among Croat nationality respondents. They are one of the main generators of ethnic distance within communities that contain so-called "divided schools" and both parents and teachers believe that the roots causes can be found in politics.

> Teacher: "There are political parties in government right now that wish to keep the divisions and what could be the ultimate background I couldn't say. I can tell you my own experience, which is that the things will affect all children passing through this system of education, the one that is being implemented in this country. Of course, a normal human being cannot support segregation in schools, on any grounds. That is a very difficult situation that this school has been passing through since the end of the war. It is obvious that these politicians, who represent us up there, and we have no pedagogic institute, it means that they are totally in favour of keeping this system of divided schools".
>
> Moderator: "And who is most responsible for the current situation in education?"
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> Parent 1: "Politicians, in my opinion".
>
> Parent 2: "Politics".
>
> Parent 3: "Government".

We can see that adults perceive the political structures, at various levels, as the bearers of the current situation, firstly in education but also in the society as well. On the one hand, it is perceived that there is an interest group that is satisfied with the current status quo and which profits directly through the augmentation of the bureaucratic machinery. On the other, this way of thinking allows the cause of the problem to be placed somewhere else and thus elegantly removes the responsibility for one's own actions.

Representatives of school authorities and political and religious groups

In all communities religious workers were against ethnically homogeneous schools.

> Interviewer: "Do you think that children of different ethnic backgrounds should go to different schools and do you think that Bosniaks in Vrbanja should have their schools?"
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> Religious worker: "I don't".
>
> Interviewer: "Why?"
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> Religious worker: "Because in that way we would create classic segregation in society, we would divide the society".
>
> Interviewer: "And, in principle, do you believe that children of different ethnic backgrounds should go to different schools or one school only? Are you in favour of mono-ethnic or multiethnic schools and homogeneous or heterogeneous schools?"
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> Religious worker: "I personally believe that primary education, and now we talk about primary education only, but even more so both secondary education and special schools at the very start ask for certain affiliation, in a way. But when we talk about education as a whole, children from an area should be able to, if that is primary school, all be in one school. If, I don't know, it is a secondary school of economy then all should attend. I am not familiar with the rule books, but, if successful, the school should educate children in that direction. So I would not like to have, in any community, if half of the population is Bosniak and the other half Croat or Serb, it doesn't matter, to have Serbo-Croatian or Bosniak schools. I don't support that".
>
> Interviewer: "You stated earlier on that you are in favour of heterogeneous schools".
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> Religious worker: "Yes, I did. I am, because I would never tell anyone to run away from a person just because of the person's name. I'd tell him to have friends regardless of the nationality or faith and to be aware of his own relative if that relative is not a good man".

In their arguments against ethnically homogeneous schools religious workers pointed out the fact that divided schools lead to divisions in society, although it could not be said with any certainty that it is just the opposite. As the additional reasons included were the quality of education (as the dominant criteria for the selection of a school for their children) and the equality of all people, regardless of their ethnic background, faith or race.

Here is what the religious workers thought the causes of the current divisions within the education system and in society were.

Interviewer: "Who is to be blamed for this situation?"

Religious worker: "Politicians and those dealing with history and writing".

Religious worker: "I don't know, but I think that all this depends on the parents and teaching staff. Maybe the teaching staff can't influence so much, they can't for sure, because if a parent doesn't want his child to go to such schools the child won't go for sure, because the child usually does what his father tells him to do. I think that educators are helpless there, they can't, their task is to teach, educate children".

Religious worker: "It is exactly the politics that should work more for a human being, not for itself. I think that they should work harder rather than taking care of themselves only. Most often the problem comes from them and what parents see on television, in the news programmes. Of course they would protest and of course children will please their parents and that is why we have this vicious circle in Bosnia, which is difficult to break and get out of".

Religious worker: "Well we know who is passing the laws. It is not the Islamic Community and neither is it the Orthodox nor the Catholic Church. We know who is passing that. To what extent it is in somebody's interest that the situation gets better, that this country could get back on its feet and how much this situation suits somebody. We can see that every day".

The majority of religious workers saw politicians as being responsible for the causes of the current situation within education and society as a whole. One respondent believed that parents were also responsible for the causes of the problems, because they have the major influence over their children during their developmental period and they make binding decisions for their children. It is interesting that, in addition to the majority of our social phenomena, we also encountered contradictions here. On the one hand, religious communities in the country want to maintain or even enlarge their social influence through becoming more involved in public schools and by constructing numerous religious facilities, while, on the other, they deny having any influence over children and adults, who are the beneficiaries of their services. The very fact that the subject of Religious Instruction is included the public schools curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrates that religion and its institutions are built into the foundations of this society. Therefore, the principal view of religious representatives in regard to the equality of all people, whilst being commendable, lacks concrete ideas on how to reconcile BiH society. None of the religious communities have taken the first step; seemingly because they are prevented from doing so by their desire for political influence and to a certain extent by their fear of losing the level of influence that they have gained thus far. In principle, the representatives of school authorities, including school principals, education ministry staff and religious workers were in favour of living together and joint schooling.

Interviewer: "What would the consequences of such an education system be for the children and youth?"

School principal: "Well, we are in fact getting more and more estranged from one another; we'll become foreigners to one another, foreigners living in the same country".

Interviewer: "Would you enrol your child in an ethnically homogeneous or heterogeneous school?"

School principal: "My children go to primary school and have friends of different ethnic backgrounds".

Interviewer: "A hypothetical question: let's say, for example, that there are two schools equally distant from your home, both of equally good quality, with good teaching staff. The only difference is that one is an ethnically homogeneous and the other ethnically heterogeneous school. Where would you enrol your child?"

School principal: "I'd rather have my child enrolled in the heterogeneous school".

It should be mentioned that it was expected that school authorities would opt for the integral education of children of all ethnic backgrounds, but it should also be pointed out that we encountered other views as well.

Assistant to the Minister for Youth: "Yes, definitely, I would enrol my child in the school where he wouldn't loose his sense of belonging to the people that he represents".

The representatives of school authorities were reluctant to comment on the sources and causes of the division within schools and society; when they did decide to comment they mainly saw politicians as being the cause.

Interviewer: "Tell me, what do you think the reasons and causes for the current state of education are and why do divided schools exist?"

School principal: "Well, in my opinion it is certain politicians who only see their own goals and have to maintain tensions".

Interviewer: "And, in your opinion, what consequences could education in divided schools have for the children?"

Assistant to the Minister for Youth: "Well, consequences for children definitely, children receive their main upbringing in the family. Family is the foundation for eve-

rything. And it is difficult now to talk about some concrete consequences, as children of that age don't understand those spheres, children who, in fact, have no idea that the war took place here. I mean, they are not aware of the meaning of the war at all, of the war and of historic and cultural facts that happened. Just, they found themselves in Bosnia and Herzegovina owing to circumstances and that is their country. But also, children are not guilty for that. That's why, I repeat, authorities at the state, federal and cantonal levels should take care of that. I can't comment that definitely".

The caution on the part of the school authorities was understandable as the issue required them to express their opinion on the causes related to education and because the majority of them were appointed to their positions by their political parties. Still, some of them did express the view that parents and politicians are among those responsible for the current situation.

What are the attitudes of political representatives towards ethnic relations in the country?

Interviewer: "Right. Here is the question. If you were able to choose would you rather enrol your child in an ethnically homogeneous school or in a school attended by children of different ethnic backgrounds?"

Political representative 1: "It's a very simple question to answer. I would enrol my child in the school where children of different ethnic backgrounds go. Children belonging to different peoples, I attended such schools myself. I lived and I live in that way in the local community and if I had one hundred children I would keep living in that way".

Interviewer: "If you were able to choose would you rather enrol your child in an ethnically homogeneous school or in a school attended by children of different ethnic backgrounds?"

Political representative 2: "Believe me I would rather have them go to a heterogeneous school. I used to attend one and my children are there now. When they came here from Zenica, after they were expelled from there, they attended a mixed school here as well and believe me they hung around with other kids too. I think it is better that way".

Interviewer: "You say you have children, so basically, if you had an opportunity to choose between two schools of the same quality, one heterogeneous and the other homogeneous, where would you enrol your children?"
Political representative 3: It makes no difference to me at all. It's all the same to me. If my children are able to study the history of their own people, if they are able to learn their language and have the right to Religious Instruction it's all the same to

me. Basically, I would go for the one that is nearer physically; the other stuff is less important".

Just like the rest of the group, the political representatives showed a clear orientation towards having contact with all ethnic groups, expressed through their attitudes towards a joint education system for all children. Let us see more in relation to their perception of the causes of the current situation.

Interviewer: "Therefore, the politicians are the cause of all this?"

Political representative: "Politicians are the cause of all this. Look, this situation suits them. There are three power utility companies in the country, three education systems and we used to have three armies and police".

Interviewer: "But you are members of the Steering Board of your local community, aren't you?"

Political representative: "Yes, I am".

Interviewer: "You are part of the politics, what can you do there?"

Political representative: "We can't do anything. That is the situation now. We are just the long arm, what can we do as a local community? We can only submit a request as citizens or as a certain group from a certain location can request something, but with that respect there's no use of us because, first of all, we have no power".

Interviewer: "And if that situation is still being maintained who is the cause of the status quo, what do you think?"

Political representative: "Who is the cause? Politics, politics is both the cause and the effect. First it was the war, then politics, then the war, then the politics again, but I think that with the assistance of the international community this could have been sorted out".

Interviewer: "Do you think that politics interferes too much in education?"

Political representative: "Well, you see, everything is politics, it can't be resolved; politics approves the law and education follows the law".

It was interesting to see how the political representatives described the causes of the current division within education and society, because it is precisely them who have been most frequently proclaimed as "the usual suspects" by all sides encompassed by the

study. Yet another absurd finding is that the politicians themselves find the culprits in politics! It seems that in the discourse of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina the word "politics" appears as something that is out of their range and sphere of influence in general. The responses of the politicians we interviewed, quoted above, look like a cartoon illustration of the political life of a fictitious country, yet in fact this is an illustration, not only of the sense of helplessness, but ultimately of the lack of responsibility among those persons who should be the chosen representatives of social life in this country.

Conclusions

1. Social relations with Bosniaks: As expected, social relations with Bosniaks were accepted most by pupils, teachers and parents in Bosniak majority schools. Median levels of acceptance were evident in communities with a Serb majority population, while the lowest levels of acceptance were found in the communities with a Croat majority population.

2. Social relations with Serbs: Just like in the case of Bosniaks, the social relations with Serbs were accepted most by pupils, parents and teachers in schools with a Serb majority population and the lowest levels of acceptance were found in schools with overwhelming Bosniak or Croat majorities.

3. Social relations with Croats: Logically, the highest levels of acceptance of relations with Croats were reported by pupils, parents and teachers in schools with Croat majority populations and in this case the issue concerned almost absolute acceptance, as all individually suggested relations were accepted. A somewhat lower level of acceptance was expressed by teachers in Serb majority schools, while the lowest levels were found in the so-called "divided schools" and schools with a Bosniak majority, and foremost in those areas where they live together with Croats.

4. Social relations with Romany people: Quantitative indicators showed that relations with Romany people were most accepted by pupils in Bosniak majority schools and that a certain number of Romany children identified themselves with the Bosniak majority. It seems that the high levels of acceptance expressed by both sides correlate with their affiliation to the same religion. Social relations with Romany were accepted to almost the same extent by teachers in schools with Bosniak or Serb majorities, whereas those in schools with a Croat majority expressed the lowest levels of acceptance. The highest levels of acceptance were expressed by the parents of children attending Bosniak majority schools, the medium levels were reported in Serb majority schools and the lowest levels of acceptance were in Croat majority schools.

5. Social relations with British people: Social relations with British people were most accepted by pupils, parents and teachers in schools with a Bosniak majority population, while these categories of respondents in the remaining schools expressed median lev-

els of interest in these relations.

6. Social relations with Chinese people: Again, the pupils and parents in Bosniak majority schools expressed the highest levels of acceptance of and interest in relations with Chinese people, whereas the lowest levels were found in schools with Croat majority populations.

7. In general terms, pupils in schools with Bosniak majority populations accepted the largest and schools with Croat majority populations the smallest number of individually suggested relations with members of different ethnic groups. Statistically significant differences were not observed between children of different gender or age in regard to the general acceptance of social relations.

8. Just like their pupils, the teachers in Bosniak majority schools accepted the largest number of individually suggested relations with members of different ethnic groups. The lowest levels of acceptance of these relations were found in schools with Croat majority populations, where the acceptance rate was approximately 39% after the indicators of social relations with Croats had been deducted.

9. Parents of children attending Bosniak majority schools accepted the largest and those whose children attend Croat majority schools the lowest numbers of individually suggested relations with members of different ethnic groups.

10. Among the individually suggested relations with members of different ethnic groups, the most accepted by all respondent categories were "to be friends" and "to live in the same country", while the least accepted were "to marry him/her", "to be the president of my country" and "to be my child's school teacher".

3.8 Ethnic Identification

In order to explain the complexity and dynamics of the education system in our country and the fears that, according to some assumptions, are prevalent among certain ethnic groups regarding the possible loss of national identity through the joint education of children of different ethnic backgrounds our intention, through this research, was to examine the level of ethnic identification and connections to own nation.

By all accounts, one of the most important psychological features of a nation is the feeling or sense of nation. Thus, Šiber (1998) defines the national feeling as, "The feeling of belonging to a certain group-nation, which is gained through the process of nationalisation and through which an individual receives the language, tradition and culture of a certain nation and identifies him/her with its values and interests". Studies into the phenomenon of national identity not only have theoretical importance, but also practical significance for the development and wellbeing of a society in the broader sense, primarily for the purpose of identifying possible guidelines for the promotion of inter-ethnic tolerance.

There are different criteria for defining national identity, such as birth or citizenship, then cultural criteria, such as language and religion, but also somewhat less explicit ones, such as the feeling of belonging to a certain nation (Druckman. 1994, according to Fra□to). According to Phinney (1990), language is one of the most important elements of national identity. Yet other key aspects of national identity are equally important, for example self-identification and feelings of belonging and pride aimed at one's own group. To varying degrees, these determinants are present in all ethnic groups. In spite of the fact that the objective of this study was not to explore national identity primarily, nonetheless, it is important to refer to social identity theory that claims that national identity stems from the feelings of belonging to a certain nation. □orkalo and Kamenov (1990) claim that an individual shares his or her beliefs, values, traditions, attitudes, language and culture with the national group to which he or she belongs.

We explored this issue by applying an Ethnic Identification Measurement Scale. Some questions were drawn directly from already existing scales, while others were modified and adjusted to the target population: pupils, teachers and parents. The results are shown in the tables below. Table 1 shows the arithmetic means of pupils' views pertaining to each of the statements included in the Ethnic Identification Measurement Scale, with respect to those schools that participated in the study. Table 2 shows the average values of teachers' views and Table 3 includes the average values of parents according to their ethnic background.

Pupils

Table 1: Average values of pupils' views

School	Q28. It is important to teach children as early as possible which people they belong to.	Q28. I think that my people have more quality features that the other peoples.	Q28. The feeling of national belonging is a positive trait.	Q28. I do not have any feelings of national belonging.	Q28. The feeling of attachment to one's own people is one of the most wonderful feelings one could have.	Q28. It is normal that I appreciate members of my own people more than those of the other peoples.	Q28. The awareness of belonging to my own people stirs feelings of pride in me.	Q28. I can recognise members of the other peoples at first sight.	Q28. National belonging is emphasised only by those who have no other values.	Q28. I try to use only those words and expressions from my municipality and people's language.
Stanko Rakita	4.17	2.87	3.69	1.94	4.05	3.68	4.26	2.98	2.92	3.68
Dositej Obradović	4.22	3.51	3.69	2.28	4.14	3.96	3.82	3.18	2.84	4.04
Kiseljak 1	3.95	2.68	3.63	2.21	3.89	3.67	4.21	2.94	2.95	3.74
Brestovsko	4.62	3.75	2.62	2.29	3.50	4.12	4.12	3.38	2.50	4.75
Osman Nuri Hadžić	3.33	2.50	3.58	2.19	3.94	3.33	4.14	2.67	3.00	2.47
Alija Isaković	3.87	3.52	3.57	2.13	3.52	3.83	3.97	3.32	3.16	4.03
Marko Marulić	4.67	3.90	4.48	1.38	3.98	4.44	4.70	3.62	2.40	4.70
Total	4.12	3.15	3.76	1.91	3.87	3.79	4.19	3.06	2.82	3.75

On the basis of comparisons made against average values for the fragment "It is important to teach children as early as possible what people they belong to" we can see that the highest arithmetic mean was obtained in the case of pupils attending the "Marko Marulic" Primary School (M=4.67), followed by the "Brestovsko" Primary School (M=4.62). On the basis of these results, the pupils fully agreed that "Children should be taught as early as possible about belonging to one's own nation". Pupils at the "Stanko Rakita" and "Dositej Obradovic" primary schools mainly agreed with the statement, pupils attending the "Osman Nuri Hadzic" Primary School (Sarajevo) were not sure (M=3.33), while those attending the "Alija Isakovic" (M=3.87) and "Kiseljak 1" (M=3.95) primary schools were either not sure or mainly agreed with the statement.

On average, the pupils from all schools that participated in the survey mainly disagreed (M=2.50) or were not sure (M=3.52) if "their own people have more quality features than the other peoples", while respondents from the "Marko Marulic" (M=3.90) and "Brestovsko" (M=3.75) primary schools mainly agreed with the statement. In relation to other ethnicities, pupils of Croat ethnic backgrounds perceived their own people as being "of higher quality in relation to the other peoples". In addition, the pupils attending the "Marko Marulic" Primary School (Prozor-Rama) either mostly or fully agreed that the "sense or feeling of national belonging is a positive feature". The average value for this group of respondents was M=4.48. With the exception of pupils attending the "Brestovsko" Primary School, the remaining pupils were either not sure or mostly agreed with the statement that "Emphasising feelings of national belonging is a positive characteristic". It is interesting to note that the pupils of the "Brestovsko" Primary School had the lowest average value for this fragment (M=2.62), which shows us that these respondents mainly disagreed or were not sure that "Attachment to one's own nation is a positive trait". However, this outcome is inconsistent with the opinion that these pupils provided for the first two fragments of the scale.

All respondent pupils either totally disagreed or mostly disagreed (M=1.38 / M=2.29) with the statement that they "do not have any feelings of national belonging".
In regards to the statement that "the feeling of attachment to own people is one of the most wonderful feelings that a person can have" pupils mostly responded that they mainly agreed. Apart from those pupils attending the "Osman Nuri Hadzic" Primary School in Sarajevo (M=3.33), relatively high average values were obtained for the statement "It is normal that I appreciate members of my own people more than those of other peoples", which means that these respondents had a neutral attitude towards the quoted statement.
All respondent pupils mainly agreed that "The awareness of belonging to their own people stirs the feelings of pride in them" and they mainly disagreed or were not sure that they "could recognise members of other peoples by their appearances". In addition, all respondents were not sure or disagreed that "national belonging is emphasised only by those who have no other values".
The majority of pupils ("Brestovsko", "Marko Marulic", "Alija Isakovic", "Dositej Obradovic", "Stanko Rakita" and "Kiseljak 1") claimed that they mainly or almost always used words and expressions from their own people's language. The lowest average value (M=2.47) was obtained from pupils at the "Osman Nuri Hadzic" Primary School who claimed that they did not use words or expressions from their own people's language exclusively.

Table 2: Average values of teachers' views

	Q28. Disappearance of linguistic and cultural characteristics is an inevitable consequence of joint education of children of different ethnic backgrounds.	Q28. Mainly the teachers of the same ethnic background as their pupils' should work in schools.	Q28. If a teacher does not belong to the majority ethnic group in school he/she should speak in the language of the group.	Q28. I would agree to work by any of the three curricula.	Q28. I would never work in a school where the teaching is not implemented in my language.	Q28. Conflicts occur frequently when children of different ethnic backgrounds attend the same school.
Stanko Rakita	2.25	2.00	2.96	3.09	2.64	1.54
Dositej Obradović	2.29	1.08	1.46	3.54	1.31	1.85
Kiseljak 1	2.36	2.18	3.64	3.00	2.91	2.91
Brestovsko	4.00	3.80	4.10	2.89	3.00	2.80
Osman Nuri Hadžic	1.54	1.17	2.48	3.04	1.83	1.13
Alija Isaković	2.00	1.80	2.80	4.00	2.00	2.20
Marko Marulić	4.42	4.00	3.92	2.25	3.67	3.50
Total	2.54	2.10	2.96	2.99	2.43	2.03

As we can see, most teachers either totally disagreed or mostly disagreed (M=1.54 / M=2.73) with the statement that, "The consequences of a joint education system for children of different ethnic backgrounds would lead to a loss of linguistic and cultural characteristics". However, teachers in Croat majority primary schools ("Brestovsko" and "Marko Marulic") provided quite different responses. On the basis of the average values (M=4.00 and M=4.42) we can see that they mainly agreed that a joint education system for children

of different ethnic backgrounds would lead to the disappearance of linguistic and cultural characteristics of one people.

Similar responses were also obtained for the statement, "Mainly the teachers of the same ethnicity as their pupils should work in schools". The majority of teachers in the said schools either totally disagreed (M=1.08) or mostly disagreed (M=2.18) with this statement. The lowest estimates were obtained from teachers at the "Dositej Obradovic" and "Osman Nuri Hadzic" primary schools. Teachers at the "Brestovsko" and "Marko Marulic" primary schools mainly agreed that teachers should be of the same ethnic background as their pupils.

Teachers at the "Dositej Obradovic" Primary School mainly disagreed (M=1.46) with the statement that, "A teacher working in a school where he does not belong to the majority should speak the language of the majority", while the teachers at the "Osman Nuri Hadzic", "Alija Isakovic" and "Stanko Rakita" primary schools mainly disagreed or were not sure (M=2.48 / M=3.09). Teachers from the "Marko Marulic" and "Brestovsko" primary schools mainly agreed that the "Teachers working in such schools should speak the language of the majority". Teachers from Croat majority schools mainly disagreed (M=2.25 / M=2.89) that they "would accept to work according to any of the three curricula", while teachers working at the "Osman Nuri Hadzic", "Stanko Rakita", "Kiseljak 1" and "Dositej Obradovic" primary schools were either neutral or not sure in relation to this statement. Teachers at the "Alija Isakovic" Primary School were the only ones who were mainly willing to implement the teaching process in accordance with any of the three curricula.

On the basis of average values for the fragment "I would never work in a school where teaching is not implemented in my people's language" we can see that the majority of teachers mainly disagreed with this statement, with the exception of the teachers at "Brestovsko" and "Marko Marulic" primary schools, who stated that they were not sure.

Teachers at the "Osman Nuri Hadzic", "Stanko Rakita" and "Dositej Obradovic" primary schools totally disagreed (M=1.13) or mostly disagreed (M=2.20) that "conflicts frequently occur between children of different ethnic backgrounds attending the same school". Teachers in the other schools that participated in the survey sample were not sure in relation to this statement.

Table 3: Average values of parents' views

	Q25. Disappearance of linguistic and cultural characteristics is an inevitable consequence of the joint education of children of different ethnic backgrounds.	Q25. Mainly the teachers of the same ethnic background as their pupils' should work in schools.	Q25. I would agree to work by any of the three curricula.	Q25. I would never work in a school where the teaching is not implemented in my language.	Q25. Conflicts occur frequently when children of different ethnic backgrounds attend the same school.
Stanko Rakita	2.97	2.91	2.01	3.55	2.78
Dositej Obradović	2.70	2.08	2.54	2.58	2.83
Kiseljak	2.78	2.39	2.33	2.67	2.78
Brestovsko	3.50	3.62	1.62	3.50	3.38
Osman Nuri Hadžić	2.52	1.65	2.57	2.39	2.26
Alija Isaković	2.79	2.83	2.28	3.03	3.59
Marko Marulić	3.90	4.51	1.37	4.15	4.07
Total	3.00	2.87	2.12	3.23	3.01

Parents of children attending most of the primary schools encompassed by the research ("Stanko Rakita", "Dositej Obradovic", "Kiseljak 1", "Brestovsko", "Osman Nuri Hadzic" and "Alija Isakovic") mainly disagreed (M=2.52) or were not sure (M=3.50) that a "joint education system for children of different ethnic backgrounds would have an influence on the disappearance of linguistic and cultural characteristics". The opinions of parents of children attending the "Marko Marulic" Primary School were somewhat different: on the basis of the average values we can draw the conclusion that mostly they anticipate that a joint education system for children of different ethnic backgrounds would lead to the disappearance of the linguistic and cultural characteristics of each people.

Parents of children attending the "Osman Nuri Hadzic" Primary School mostly disagreed (M=1.65) with the statement that "Teachers should be of the same ethnic background as their pupils". They were followed by the parents of children attending the "Dositej Obradovic" (M=2.08), and "Kiseljak 1" (M=2.39) primary schools. Parents of pupils at the "Stanko Rakita" and "Alija Isakovic" primary schools mainly disagreed or were not sure in relation to this statement. Only the parents of pupils attending the "Marko Marulic" Primary School mainly agreed (M=4.51) that "It is very important that pupils are taught by teachers of the same ethnic background". Moreover, these parents and the parents of children attending the "Brestovsko" Primary School were not at all prepared (M=1.37 / M=1.62) to enrol their children regardless of the curriculum being delivered in a school. The parents of pupils attending the other schools that participated in the survey mainly disagreed or were "not sure" (M=2.01 / M=2.57) that they would accept to enrol their children regardless of the curriculum delivered in that school.

The lowest average values (M=2.39 / M=2.67) for the statement "I would never send my

child to a school where the teaching is not implemented in my language" were obtained from the parents of pupils at the "Osman Nuri Hadzic", "Dositej Obradovic" and "Kiseljak 1" primary schools. Therefore, those parents were mainly willing to send their children to schools where the teaching process is not implemented in their own language. Parents of children attending the "Marko Marulic" Primary School mainly agreed (M=4.15) that they would never send their children to such schools. In other primary schools ("Alija Isakovic", "Stanko Rakita" and "Brestovsko") parents claimed that they were not sure whether they would allow their children to attend schools where the teaching is not implemented in their own language.

Similar responses were obtained with respect to the last statement offered on the National Identity Measurement Scale. Parents of pupils attending the "Marko Marulic" Primary School mainly agreed (M=4.07) that "attending joint lessons might lead to conflicts between children of different ethnic backgrounds". Parents of children attending the "Alija Isakovic" Primary School were either "not sure" or mostly agreed (M=3.59) with the statement, while in the parents of pupils attending the "Brestovsko" Primary School (Kiseljak) were not sure (M=3.38). Parents of pupils attending the remaining schools mostly disagreed that joint attendance might be the cause of frequent conflicts among children of different ethnic backgrounds.

Analyses of the Content of Interviews and Focus Group Sessions

In addition to the data collected through the National Identity Measurement Scale, important views and information were obtained through focus group discussions as well as through structured interviews conducted with school principals, teachers, parents, pupils and representatives of municipal and cantonal authorities, religious groups and local communities.

Diverse responses were also obtained through the quantitative data and analysis of the opinions of all surveyed individuals and participants of focus group sessions. Participant "A" from Sarajevo disagreed with the statement that "Some people fear that the joint education of children might lead to the loss of national identity". Participant "B" was of the same opinion saying, "I believe that we have possibilities to show our national identity through other segments of life, rather than in school". We recognised such a viewpoint in the responses provided by participant "C" from Prozor. Although the participant disagreed that "A joint education system would lead to the weakening and or disappearance of own identity" he believes that all children in BiH should have the same possibility to read and write in their own language. In addition, the Principal of the school in question pointed out that conflicts occur neither between pupils nor between their parents: "The problem lies in local politicians who think that there are such problems in schools…", "…they accentuate the problems in order to collect some points".

Participant "D" had a rigid attitude in regard to the issue of national identity. Through an

analysis of the content of his responses we were able to see that he has a considerable level of attachment to his own ethnic group, in spite of the fact that he also accepts the existence of the others: "With some others in a joint school? Then I would give up on such a school. I want national identity. I simply want to recognise myself with national identity. I simply want to be that, the same as my colleague wants to be what he is. But, while respecting what's mine I develop it. Basically, my national identity should not, simply should not, be put out if I were to, even I don't know what, with someone".

A participant of Bosniak nationality from Prozor-Rama thought that the fear of losing national identity as a result of the joint education of children of different ethnic backgrounds was unfounded: "If one knows what his ethnic background is, if one knows what ethnic group he belongs to then why would he fear anything if children would go to a joint school? This is learned in the family mainly. We don't say at school that they are Bosniak children". Moreover, he pointed out that it is wrong for some people to say that children are taught according to the Bosniak curriculum, because the teaching in their school is implemented in accordance with the common core curriculum of the Federation of BiH.

According to the opinion of a participant from Prozor-Rama, who is an adherent of the Catholic faith, the national identity of any people cannot be eradicated if everybody studies the language of their own people. He further believed that the quality of teaching would be the only criteria that he would consider in relation to the enrolment of his children in school.

A participant from Banja Luka believed that there should be no fear of losing national identity through joint education: "Obviously those are some new ones, some new Serbs, some new Moslems or Bosniaks, Croats, who always claimed that they were unable to express themselves and their national feelings in the past. I say again, I point out my own example, I lived here and we always celebrated Christmas, both in the seventies and now. It means we did not have any serious problems. I don't mind now. These new ones do and they always find some ways. Somebody else will be guilty now, but I don't know who prevented them from celebrating before. They celebrate this and that; I don' see anything there. Obviously, some newly designed nationalists; I can't find names for them. They do mind but they shouldn't".

Some political representatives of the Bosniak population did not provide direct answers to this question. One of them believed that people should stop voting for and electing national parties, but should, "Vote for social-democrats for once…", "…who will make this country a better, safer and more bearable place". According to the opinion of a representative of Sarajevo Youth a joint education system cannot contribute towards the loss of national identity and it is completely inappropriate to teach very young children what national identity is. Teacher "XY" felt that, "The safeguarding of identity and culture should be organised in some other places but not in schools".
An Adviser on Primary Education in Sarajevo Canton was of the opinion that national iden-

tity cannot be lost if children attend the same school: "Family will take care of that".

The same views were shared by local religious figures: "God forbid. Something common to eradicate my national identity, God forbid! If it happened that someone eradicated my national identity I would be…", "…no children wouldn't be lost, no! That is a value the kind of which you can't find anywhere in Europe or the rest of the world; Bosnia is the only one on the globe, together with all these hardships. I believe, I am an optimist, I believe in you: young people. You have to be more courageous, open to speak about these things and to cool things down. Let's leave faith in religion, let's leave ethnicity to the nation and instead let's look for something that is beautiful, positive for all and then we'll…"

However, the views of the representatives of the authorities in Kiseljak were in sharp contrast.

W: "I think that this is justifiable. Therefore, the issue is not about some less important subjects the issue is about language. The language is proof of any people's identity and we have Religious Instruction in schools. So I think that practically it would be impossible not to lose their sense of identity and belonging to a certain nation, certain society".

Facilitator: "And do you believe that through diversity, for instance, that the diversity should be emphasised in order that…?"

W: "No, no. The issue here is not about any emphasising. The issue here is about one's own rights. If I speak Croatian but I'm not trying to emphasise how different I am from someone who doesn't, by this I just want to show my right to speak how I want. I respect anyone who speaks his/her own language".

A person, "D", from Kiseljak had the same opinion:

"…with somebody else in a joint school? I would give up that school then. I want national identity and I simply want to recognise myself with national identity. I simply want to be that, the same as my colleague wants to be what he is. But, while respecting what's mine I develop it. Basically, my national identity should not, simply not be put out if I were to, I myself don't know what with someone".

A representative of the authorities in Republika Srpska thought that it would be very difficult to have common curricula at the moment simply because language and culture are the two most sensitive issues. Therefore, the representative believed that the fears expressed in relation to a loss national identity through the joint education of children are justified.

W: "At the moment I believe that this is the right solution and that denial of the right to

diversity would cause a counter-effect. It is necessary that we find a proper measure between one and the other. At the moment, perhaps the most painless and the safest solution for all members of BiH society, regardless of their background and religious beliefs, is exactly that we live and let others live and to let them be different. Any form of exaggeration, insisting on diversity where it does not exist, that is the so-called 'narcissism of small differences' and then diversity is insisted upon even in places where it does not exist at all. And, at the same time, insisting that we are all the same, that we have the same views, the same language is not good as it will cause resistance in people. Everything that causes resistance in man is not founded and simply will not bear fruit, will not yield the effect that has been expected. There is a lot in common and that which is common has been recognised in the Common Core Curriculum. What is common is common in natural sciences and it is completely identical so there is not much collision and difference about it, nor any room for misunderstanding of any kind. And what different views are different views are; it is enough that we show good will in the way that we acknowledge also the one who is different and to allow him to be different. Not only that, not only to acknowledge him but to let him be different as long as that is within the limits of socially acceptable behaviour. That you with your right to diversity don't endanger mine".

Conclusions

1. Based on the comparison of average values for the statement that "It is important to teach small children as early as possible about the people that they belong to", it is evident that the highest arithmetic means were obtained in Croat majority schools, where children almost completely agreed with the statement. Pupils attending schools with a Serb majority mainly agreed, while the pupils of Bosniak majority schools were mainly not sure whether it is important to teach children what people they belong to.

2. On average, pupils in almost all of the schools that participated in the survey mainly disagreed or were not sure that "their own people have more quality features than the other peoples". In contrast pupils of Croat ethnic background mainly perceived their own people as better in relation to the others.

3. With the exception of pupils at only one school, the remaining pupils were not sure or mainly agreed with the statement that "Emphasising feelings of national belonging is a positive characteristic".

4. All respondent pupils either totally or mostly disagreed with the statement that "they have no feelings of national belonging", which corresponds to their mostly positively expressed attitude towards the statement that "The feelings of belonging to one's own people is one of the most wonderful feelings that one could have", as well as towards the statement that "They more appreciate the members of their own people than those of the other peoples".
5. The majority of teachers either mostly or totally disagreed that a joint education

system for children of different ethnic backgrounds would lead to the disappearance of linguistic and cultural characteristics. They also disagreed with the statements that "Teachers should be of the same ethnic background as pupils attending the school" and that "They would never work in a school where the teaching process is not implemented in the language of their own people". Through these views the teachers confirmed their previously expressed position in regard to the questions contained in the portion of the study related to perceptions regarding an integrated or divided education system.

6. The majority of teachers surveyed disagreed with the statement that "frequent conflicts occur between children of different ethnic backgrounds who attend the same school".

7. The majority of parents confirmed their previously expressed views by mainly disagreeing with the statement that "A joint education system for children of different ethnic background would lead to a loss of linguistic and cultural characteristics". The majority of them once again refuted the statement that "Teachers should be of the same ethnic background as the pupils that he/she teaches". However, most parents mainly disagreed with the statement that "They would be willing to send their children to a school where the teaching process is not implemented in their own language".

3.9 Politicisation within Education

Among the questions that we tried to clarify within the framework of this research were: "Has politics been actively present in schools?", "Do politicians have a significant influence over the processes taking place within the education system?" and "Does the current divided education system serve the interests of political power?" The following tables show the responses provided by both teachers and parents.

Teachers

	Q30. Politicians have the largest influence on the curricula content.	Q30. The international community has the largest influence on our education system.	Q30. School management is under the influence of political authority.	Q30. The Parents' Council has an influence on important decisions and activities in school.	Q30. The Pupils' Council has an influence on important decisions and activities in school.	Q30. Teachers may have a significant influence on the state of education in our country.	Q30.vThe current (divided) education system in BiH suits politicians.	Q30. The current (divided) education system in BiH suits schools.	Q30. The current (divided) education system in BiH suits its beneficiaries: pupils and parents.
Stanko Rakita	3.13	3.35	2.88	3.67	3.33	3.58	3.57	3.12	2.91
Dositej Obradović	3.57	3.08	3.62	2.85	2.31	3.23	4.15	2.15	2.38
Kiseljak 1	4.55	2.82	4.20	3.00	2.64	3.27	4.36	3.00	1.45
Brestovsko	3.00	2.67	2.78	3.50	3.13	3.11	3.89	3.89	4.11
Osman Nuri Hadžić	4.42	3.96	2.75	3.25	3.62	2.58	4.43	1.58	1.87
Alija Isaković	4.60	3.80	4.60	3.00	2.60	4.00	4.60	2.20	1.80
Marko Marulić	3.09	3.92	3.67	3.33	2.67	3.00	3.25	3.33	3.58
Total	3.71	3.37	3.34	3.24	3.01	3.09	4.00	2.62	2.58

Parents

	Q30. Politicians have the largest influence on the curricula content.	Q30. The international community has the largest influence on our education system.	Q30. School management is under the influence of political authority.	Q30. The Parents' Council has an influence on important decisions and activities in school.	Q30. The Pupils' Council has an influence on important decisions and activities in school.	Q30. Teachers may have a significant influence on the state of education in our country.	Q30. The current (divided) education system in BiH suits politicians.	Q30. The current (divided) education system in BiH suits schools.	Q30. The current (divided) education system in BiH suits its beneficiaries: pupils and parents.
Stanko Rakita	3.34	3.24	3.39	2.97	2.76	3.90	3.28	3.16	3.16
Dositej Obradović	3.75	2.87	3.79	2.77	2.71	3.65	4.10	2.60	2.27
Kiseljak	4.21	3.05	4.16	2.11	2.32	3.61	4.47	2.68	2.21
Brestovsko	2.62	2.75	3.50	2.75	3.25	3.71	4.00	3.88	4.00
Osman Nuri Hadžić	4.09	3.22	3.61	3.22	3.13	3.87	4.48	2.39	2.39
Alija Isaković	4.10	3.14	4.07	3.32	3.41	3.59	4.03	2.93	2.79
Marko Marulić	3.82	3.18	3.82	3.55	2.92	3.67	3.97	3.79	4.13
Total	3.72	3.13	3.69	2.97	2.82	3.73	3.83	3.04	2.95

On the basis of the information shown in the above tables we can draw the following conclusions: a significant number of teachers and adults surveyed in all eight schools believe that politics is largely present in the education system, that politicians influence the curricula content, that school management is under the influence of political authorities and that the divided education systems suit politicians more than schools, teachers and parents. Such quantitative data matches the qualitative data to a large extent: see below.

Focus groups and interviews

The presence of politics within education

Surveyor: "In your opinion, to what extent is politics present within the education system?"

Representative of an NGO: "I think to a large extent, because in that way people who elected one another protect their interests. Basically, as we were saying, those bad and good things that divisions between schools bring about, education on one side and on the other side advocacy. For example, the way in which they interfere, because it wouldn't be possible in some other way, to ensure every child has to study the language he/she wants to study. That's why politics is involved".

Surveyor: "What should be the role of political leaders in creating a joint solution, joint education system?"

Orthodox priest (Banja Luka): "What I know, politics has been present in schools directly through the Ministry".

Surveyor: "What is the role of the Ministry then?"

Orthodox priest: "I think that a minister can't do much without the political will of the political leaders, because he has been appointed, first of all, on behalf of a certain party, usually the strongest one, and it can give him the power in a certain entity, canton or state. In my opinion, the biggest responsibility rests with them. If for example we speak about schools, the school principal is the long arm of the Education Minister and he will always implement what the Education Minister asks him to. This is because he knows that the Minister appoints him at the end of the day and if anyone files complaints that the Minister can always suspend him".

Surveyor: "What is the role of the school in the integration process?"

Islamic religious worker (Banja Luka): "Everything is reduced to system. The system in education is wrong and schools do not have much influence. The greatest influence rests with governments and politicians who design the education concept. The Ministry of Education designs the education concept and schools in fact are powerless".

Surveyor: "Do you think that politics interferes too much in education?"

Professional Adviser for Education (Sarajevo): "I think it does. I think it interferes. You know what I am afraid of? I am at the end of my career and I am afraid that it has been interfering more and more lately and I am so sad because of that. I am simply afraid".

Surveyor: "In what way could the changes be made or a single education system introduced for members of all national minorities?"

Parent 1: "All politicians should be suspended, first of all. Solutions would be found immediately among the peoples".

Parent 2: "Politicians should reach an agreement".

Parent 3: "They are the ones who divide the people most and the people are fed up with everything: first with the unemployment and then all other things".

Parent 1: "The people are the least guilty".

Surveyor: "Who are the people in your own local community who create school policy, for example one lesson last for…?"

Parent 1: "The cantonal ministries who are in charge of that and they have the final word: what they, the ministry and cantons, say there happens here".

Surveyor: "What are they afraid of? Why do they enrol children in mono-ethnic, homogeneous schools?"

Parent (Sarajevo): "They fear some things".

Surveyor: "Why, what things?"

Parent: "That is called 'a web of circumstance'. I think we can call it in that way: the web of circumstance and a sequence of events. All kinds of things happened. Their politicians are pressing them, I don't know, they are maltreating them; I don't know what to call it. They exert pressure and poor people come under that pressure without being aware of it. I know a girl who graduated from secondary schools there: medical secondary school in East Sarajevo. She was unfortunate to graduate from the school over there, because she can't find any job and now she is looking for a job here. That's so sad, but they are not aware of that. They are not aware that they can live normally, educate children normally, have a normal job and a normal life, but you know, as I said at the beginning, politics did what it wanted to do and people live as they think. I don't know; that community is a little bit different. I am also sad that this school is on the border, it is really on the border, but it's not up to us".

Surveyor: "So basically you think that politicians are responsible for…"

Parent: "Certainly, because they promise them everything, everything, and give them nothing, but common people can't see properly, I don't know. That is the issue of mistrust. In fact we should be more mistrustful than they are".

We can see from the above statements that not only parents but also political, religious and school representatives believe that politics is the creator of the current divided education system. According to the opinion of the majority of respondents the two-schools-under-one-roof phenomenon has been imposed by the political authorities and, as such, suits political needs and interest rather than the interests and needs of society and the citizens of this country.

The fault of politics

Surveyor: "Who is to be blamed for this situation?"

Religious official: "Politicians and those who are dealing with history and writing".

Surveyor: "What is the cause of the status quo?"

Political representative: "What is the cause? Politics, politics is both the cause and the effect. First it was the war, then politics, then the war, then politics again. I think that with the assistance of the international community this could have been sorted out".

Surveyor: "Do you think that politics interferes too much in education?"

Political representative: "Well, you see, everything is politics; it can't be resolved, politics approves the law and education follows the law".

In spite of the fact that the majority of respondents believed that the division of the education system mostly suits the current political authorities, as opposed to the people, a certain number of respondents (including local political representatives) felt that politics is the direct cause of the current situation. In addition to a causal role, politics, that is politicians and political platforms, may also be part of the solution to the problem. However, the question remains what level of authority is able to carry out the necessary changes in a positive manner. The quotations below stem from a local political representative who believes that local authorities are not able to make decisions and implement the necessary changes in opposition to the higher levels of authority.

The Perception of Inability among Lower Level Politicians

Surveyor: "Therefore, politicians are the cause of all this?"

Political representative: "Politicians are the cause of all this. Look, this situation suits them. There are three power utility companies in the country, three education systems and we used to have three armies and police".

Surveyor: "But look, you are part of the politics, what is it that you can do there?"

Political representative: "We can't do anything. That is the situation now; we are just the long arm so what can we do as a local community? We can only submit a request. We as citizens or a certain group from a certain location can request something, but in that respect there's no use of us because, first of all, we have no power. You can write loads of letters, in vain. Because this situation suits them they are doing fine. Through this they keep the situation in BiH unresolved".

Politics as both the Problem and the Solution

Surveyor: "What are the biggest obstacles that prevent the integration of schools?"

Principal (Kiseljak): "Well, you see, that question is not connected directly with us perhaps".

Surveyor: "Yes".

Principal (Kiseljak): "It means that perhaps we cannot give a concrete answer. That is at your level for sure, politicians should …"

Surveyor: "It means that you think that it is not up to the local community?"

Principal (Kiseljak): "Well, it is not. It is in one way, but if the state level politics takes a position, I mean if that starts from the state level and the Entity level, then this will be sorted out for sure".

Of course, although the majority of respondents agreed that political influence is not only present in the education system but that it is a crucial factor in the current situation, one section of the respondents (representatives of the higher levels of authority) did not necessarily agree with this statement. As we can see from the views below, an Adviser to the Republika Srpska Ministry of Education believed that the political influence exerted on the education system by higher levels has been exaggerated at the lower levels (in schools) and that it is not as significant as it is generally presented to be.

Example to Illustrate that Politics is Not Present in Schools

Surveyor: "Is politics present in the BiH education system and to what extent?"

Adviser at the RS Ministry of Education: "Well that's an eternal question; I can't remember a situation when we discussed this topic without someone asking that question. Politics is part of life and politics, as such, is something that is a deed of humans and something that originates from humans, from citizens. It depends how you look at it, you see, what politics means to you? At the end of the day, the Ministry of Education is also implementing education policy and should implement education policy. When asked if politics is present, probably it was meant politics; do you mean the politics of political parties or organisations?"

Surveyor: "Well probably, that's probably what the question is about?"

Adviser at the RS Ministry of Education: "That's a broad concept, politics is a part of everyday life and, as such, it is connected to all areas of life and not only to education. But if you're asking about political organising and activities in schools at the moment and in accordance with the law it is forbidden, as it is not allowed during the teaching process.

According to the new Draft Law on Primary and Secondary Education, political organising and activity is not allowed in schools at all, regardless of whether the teaching process is ongoing or not. It means that currently it is forbidden in the time of the implementation of teaching and by the new Draft Law it is totally forbidden. It means, when the issue only concerns political organising and activity. But surely it is allowed and it is completely legal that school staff can have or not have certain political beliefs. But, in the same way, as civil servants, regardless of our political beliefs, we have to do our job scrupulously and in a responsible manner without interfering and without political beliefs; the same applies to school staff. People working in school must have full freedom to believe in, support and be the followers of a certain political party in their free time. I believe that many parents of our pupils are in certain ways active in politics. That is the human right of any parent. In essence, what we should refrain from is not only political organising and activity in schools, but also burdening our children with everyday politics. That is the duty of every educational worker and I believe that every person doing that job chose the profession because he/she primarily loves children, is aware that in that period of their lives everyday politics has no place in their small heads and that the children certainly will deal with it enough when they grow up".

Conclusions

1. Both teachers and parents believed that politics is very much present within the education system. It is quite indicative that both categories made the assessment (designating high Indicator Scale levels of around 4) that the non-integrated system of education most suits politicians and that they have the largest influence on curricula content.

2. In addition to that, both parents and teachers agreed (again using high agreement levels) with the statement that "the school management structures are under the influence of politics".

3. The differences between the views of teachers and parents in regard to their own ability to influence important decisions and activities within schools were interesting. In general terms, teachers saw the Parents' Councils as a means to exert a strong influence over school decisions and activities. At the same time, they assessed their own power and level of influence to be at the same level as that of their pupils. On the other hand, parents believed that Parents' and Pupils' Councils were the least influential means through which school-based decisions on the formation of processes and school activities could be influenced, while they saw teachers as having more influence.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Legal Framework

The analysis of the current legislative framework in the field of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina carried out within the framework of this study was focused on four dimensions of the right to education, Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability, described below.

- Availability dimension. The framework laws that were adopted at the level of BiH (firstly the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina) only define the elements of the Availability dimension in principle. On the basis of the provisions of these framework laws and in accordance with the constitutional responsibilities in regard to education the entity, canton and BD BiH authorities, within their respective areas of responsibility, regulate in detail and ensure the assumptions for the full implementation of this dimension of the right to education. Analysis of the legislative framework at these levels has shown that the issues of the establishment and financing of public and private educational institutions, the conditions for carrying out the activity, the kind and type as well as the number of schools (school networks), spatial standards, staff and equipment are regulated in detail by the entity, canton and Brcko District Laws on education. However, due to the separate publication of school network data in the official gazettes of the entities, cantons and BD BiH, the aggravated and unbalanced system for the collection and monitoring of data in BiH regarding the number of schools (central schools and their branch units), their material, staff and technical conditions as well as the fact that there is no single database at the level of BiH the status of all the elements and the level of implementation of this dimension cannot be evaluated in a consistent manner.
- Accessibility dimension. The framework laws and the laws at the entity, canton and BD BiH levels, as well as other relevant documents and acts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, do not include a norm on which the existence of the two-schools-under-one-roof phenomenon could be considered as a legally based or an officially proclaimed position in relation to the competent education authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to this, the current legislation, at all levels, follows agreed and accepted principles that are specified by international documents, which take into consideration and promote the education Accessibility dimension. This is especially true with respect to ensuring free education for all and unhindered physical access to schools for all persons, including disabled children and children from remote areas who have to travel to their schools. However, the fact that there are about 50 so-called "two-schools-under-one-roof" in BiH, that most school buildings have not been adjusted to meet the needs of the disabled in terms of architectural-technical conditions, that a large number of children still travel to schools on foot and that free education (in particular compulsory primary education) is still not available to the citizens of BiH demonstrates that not only has the State of BiH failed to ensure the consistent implementation of those internationally agreed principles to which it committed itself upon the signing of the international docu-

ments/treaties, but also the implementation of its own legislation.

- Acceptability dimension. The Acceptability dimension within education, related to relevance, cultural sensitivity and the quality and form of education, including content and methods, has been included in an appropriate manner within education legislation at all levels. This means that concrete legal arrangements follow the principles specified by the adopted international treaties/documents. In addition to this, through adopting the Agreement on the Common Core Curriculum and the Guidelines on Writing History and Geography Textbooks, as well as by the already implemented process of removing offensive content from textbooks, the competent education authorities in BiH have taken yet another significant step forward in the area of ensuring the Acceptability dimension. However, in spite of this, the Acceptability dimension within education continues to suffer the most in relation to the influence of the country's everyday politics and internal ethnic divisions. As a consequence, the domination of a "stronger" - larger culture over that of a "weaker" - smaller one is quite prevalent in practice. Through the over-dimensioning of the importance of ethnicity and linguistic identity by the "stronger" this leads to the negation of the ethnic and linguistic differences of the "weaker" culture and leads to its silent assimilation.

- Adaptability dimension. The Adaptability dimension has been incorporated into local education legislation more at the level of principle than at the level of concrete or practical solutions. De facto, the education system cannot be assessed as flexible, because it cannot fully respond to the interests and needs of pupils and parents, it cannot meet the demands and requirements of the labour market and the social community neither can it accommodate the needs of national minorities and other disadvantaged groups (the disabled, persons with special needs etc). It seems that the ability to fully exercise the Adaptability dimension of the right to education is currently the most difficult to ensure in BiH.

Main conclusion: The analysis of the legislative framework, at all levels of government, has shown that Bosnia and Herzegovina has ensured an adequate legal framework for the exercising and protection of the right to education for all of its citizens. The legislative framework follows the principles and guidelines of international treaties/documents that Bosnia and Herzegovina has signed, as well as the universal values and principles proclaimed under the Constitution of BiH. The current legal solutions acknowledge all four dimensions of the right to education and have created the basic legal assumptions for their implementation. However, although inaugurated, promoted and protected by the current legislation these dimensions are not implemented consistently. To ensure and protect the right to education is the joint responsibility of all education authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the state to the school level. The competent education authorities are responsible at all levels, each within its own framework of competencies, to monitor and supervise the implementation of the provisions of the education laws. Although the

current legislation provides for subjects, mechanisms and procedures for the monitoring and protection of the right to education, due to the evident occurrences of its violation justified doubts have arisen with respect to the efficiency of the current mechanisms, consistency of procedures and the quality of supervision over the implementation of the education laws.

4.2 Perception of the School and Education System

This part the study was mainly focused on the perception of the four above mentioned major dimensions of the right to education (Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability) by pupils, parents, teachers, principals and the representatives of political, public and religious life, and local communities.

- The perception of the Availability dimension of education – material, staff and technical conditions of educational institutions: including experts, learning and teaching resources, professional support to teaching, developmental education policies etc).

- The way in which the respondents perceived their school in terms of its condition was determined by the local context in which the school is situated and functions. According to the survey, the majority of pupils and parents felt that the school infrastructure needed improvement. Teachers had different perceptions and most of them were generally satisfied with their school's condition.

- When the issue concerned the teaching staff and the quality of the teachers' work pupils' perceptions were much more positive. Nearly 80% of them were satisfied with their relations with their teachers. Almost the same percentage of them felt that their teachers were committed, carried out their job professionally and required them to understand the content matter as opposed to merely learning it by heart. Most parents evaluated the quality and work of teachers as good, but they disagreed with the statement that "teachers are overburdened at school". Parents were not sure in regard to the statement that "Teachers are not motivated enough for their work". On the other hand, teachers shared the opinion of their pupils with respect to the quality of their work and assessed that the quality of education provided by their schools was on a quite satisfactory level, but expressed their dissatisfaction with the status of their profession.

- Perception of Accessibility within education – access to education: including access to education without discrimination on any grounds.

In spite of the fact that the study was not focused on the key or all elements of the Accessibility dimension within education, here are some of the conclusions that based on the respondents' answers deserve attention.

- An analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data leads to the conclusion that the most frequent reasons behind the fact that parents enrol their children in schools out of their school catchment area are the school curriculum and the language in which the curriculum is delivered.

- The results of the study into the level of knowledge of the official alphabets in BiH (Latin and Cyrillic) demonstrate that the pupils' knowledge of these alphabets is largely conditioned by the context and environment in which the children are being educated. Quite often, regardless of the current legislative solutions and inclusion of both alphabets in the current curricula, one of these alphabets is usually dominant in the teaching process.

- Perception of Acceptability within education – relevance, cultural sensitivity and the quality of the education system: the organisation of education - teaching process, form, content, methods of work and the school environment.

- Teachers and parents gave very high marks to the quality of education (including the diversity of the approach to the teaching process) provided by schools and they believed that the teaching process was organised efficiently. It should be pointed out that teachers' perceptions of these segments were more positive than those of the parents.

- The perception of the curriculum was provided through a quite general evaluation, because the survey question was designed in the same way. Both parents and teachers predominantly agreed that the curriculum is overloaded with facts. It is important to point out that their responses did not show any dependence in relation to which of the three curricula was in question.

- The quantitative indicators of the assessment of the curricula, in terms of their being overloaded with facts, did not provide a satisfactory image of the respondents' attitudes towards the relevance, quality and in particular the level of tolerance and cultural appropriateness of the curricula. Certain, although insufficient, indicators to that end were obtained through the quantitative part of the study. The latter, in addition to parents and teachers, included some other categories of respondents who expressed their dissatisfaction with the obsolete content of the curricula, teaching and learning methods as well as other forms of working with children, teaching technologies and the lack of attention to the upbringing-related component of education. More generally, they were dissatisfied with the lagging behind in terms of those practices prevalent

in European countries where children are prepared for life in a world of universal values and practical (rather than theoretical) knowledge, competencies and skills.

- In the context of the Acceptability dimension within education, segments of the study included the respondents' perceptions and opinions concerning stimulation and safety aspects of the school environment. These are the preconditions for quality education and participation in education without fear of discrimination, intolerance, abuse, punishment or the endangerment of the physical or mental health of pupils. Differences were evident with respect to the perceptions of parents and teachers in this aspect of school activities. The context in which the parents assessed the safety of pupils was significantly conditioned by the school that the children attended. This was especially evident when the parents of children attending the so-called "two-schools- under-one-roof" were concerned. This is because they envisaged the level or lack of safety within the school environment mainly within the context of potential interethnic conflict.

- The majority of parents estimated their level of cooperation with schools as good. However, their dissatisfaction with the content and form of cooperation was evident.

- Opinion on the quality of local laws within the field of education was divided. Respondents in some schools thought that the laws were good and adequate and that they matched the laws in other democratic and economically developed countries. Yet, generally speaking, most parents and teachers felt that the laws were not good enough. The teachers' perception of the implementation of the laws in schools was somewhat more positive than the perception of parents.

- Perception of the Adaptability dimension within education – suitability to the needs, interests and expectations of educational service beneficiaries: including different age ranges, social and cultural groups, social communities etc).

  In this part, the study was not focused specifically on the elements of this dimension within education.

Main conclusion: Regardless of certain deflections and contradictions that may be found in the respondents' answers in the qualitative and quantitative indicators in this part of the study, the general assessment of all respondents, with respect to the quality of the education system, can be considered as unsatisfactory. In a large number of its segments parents and teachers perceived the education system as being mainly bad: in the first

place emphasising the outdated and overloaded curricula. The representatives of religious communities shared this opinion in principle. Even so, they believed that the education system had begun to be built on sound foundations. But, at the same time, that its further structuring required the political will, more methodical preparation, well designed and financially supported systemic as opposed to experimental changes and a well guided education policy. The representatives of the political structures also emphasised more negative than positive traits in regard to the education system. While the representatives of the education authorities did not deny its shortcomings they emphasised its good side as well, in particular the legal assumptions for equality in and access to participation in education and reminded us that it is the obligation of education and other authorities to ensure them for all. Parents and teachers put the blame for the poor state of the education system primarily on the representatives of political authority. Representatives of religious communities felt that the poor state of the education system is, among other things, the result of strong and direct political pressure placed on the education system and that it is being disintegrated by the existence of such a large number of ministries of education and pedagogical institutes.

4.3 Religious Instruction

The quantitative and qualitative indicators of the respondents' opinion with respect to Religious Instruction showed the following:

- although, in general terms, they had a positive attitude towards the introduction of subjects about different cultures and religions when offered the possibility to choose between such a subject and Religious Instruction the majority of pupils opted for the latter;

- the majority of parents expressed a positive attitude towards the presence of Religious Instruction in schools. This opinion was largely shared by religious officials, representatives of all three faiths, who emphasised the upbringing-related values of the subject;

- in comparison to other respondent categories, teachers were much more critical in regard to the presence of Religious Instruction as a concessional subject in schools and to a large extent they opted for the study of other alternative subjects, such as a subject about great world religions and cultures.

Main conclusion: The majority of the respondent categories felt that Religious Instruction is quite acceptable as a subject in public schools, emphasising its upbringing-related component on the one hand and on the other the right the democratic choice of whether to attend Religious Instruction. At present, Religious Instruction is taught in all schools and it seems that both pupils and parents are content with such an arrangement. Howev-

er, the views of national minority pupils and parents differed significantly from the views of the majority population in certain areas. They expressed the opinion that the manner of organising Religious Instruction lessons represents a form of separation and discrimination against those children who do not attend Religious Instruction classes, for whatever reason. They also pointed out that no alternative activities are organised for such pupils during the period when Religious Instruction classes take place. Separation from their class during Religious Instruction lessons generates intense feelings of discomfort in these children due to the fact that they are "different".

4.4 Perception of International Relations

An examination of the perceptions of internal relations, which also included an examination of the mutual familiarity of the peoples of BiH, the perception of similarities and differences between them and the sources and means of obtaining information about one another demonstrated the following:

- almost 50% of the pupils surveyed said that their main source of information about the others was the mass media (TV, radio, Internet), while 30% of pupils said parents and 10 – 12% said schools and teachers;

- the vast majority of pupils perceived similarities between the three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and this perception was far more noticeable and significant than the perception of differences. Even when they noticed certain mutual differences (in terms of faith, culture, language, etc.) the majority of pupils and parents did not see them as an obstacle to their everyday contact and companionship;

- although aware of the disrupted ethnic relations in the post war period the majority of pupils surveyed estimated them as being neither bad nor good. In respect to their assessment of contact with the others they expressed the opinion that willingness and readiness for dialogue is required by both sides for the success of such contact.

Main conclusion: A general evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative indicators in this segment of the study clearly shows that all categories of respondents are aware of the state of disrupted inter-ethnic relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although they were not the specific subject for this research, it can be concluded that the social factors which contribute to this type of perception of the inter-ethnic relations are numerous. However, in spite of the generally unsatisfactory perception of inter-ethnic relations, firstly keeping in mind the fact that the research was carried out in the so-called divided communities or those communities with the "two-schools-under-one-roof" phenomenon, the facts came to the foreground, through their significance and encouragement, that the majority of pupils and other categories of respondents surveyed rated inter-ethnic relations as

middling (neither bad nor good), that the qualitative data obtained through interviews confirmed that the perception of similarities was much more significant than the perception of mutual differences and that the statements of the members of the different peoples showed that they are mainly satisfied with their mutual communication and cooperation. These facts point to the presence of good opportunities for the renewal of inter-ethnic trust, which should be taken up by all means. These facts can also lead to the conclusion that, in spite of the division of schools, the community in the larger sense of the word still does not have to be truly segregated. The division of schools and of the education system does not necessarily reflect the real state of local and wider social communities, but rather that this has been imposed or created and is continuously instigated by the day-to-day politics and frequently supported by biased information supplied to the public through the media. As shown by the research, the media plays a major role in influencing and forming the attitudes of pupils towards the others or those who are different, followed by parents and the school themselves.

4.5 Discrimination in Schools

Being aware of the fact that exploring discrimination in schools is a very complex process and that any relevant conclusions would require much more complex research activities, we endeavoured to take discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds into consideration as the most frequent forms of discrimination in those communities encompassed by the study.

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data led to the following conclusions:

- a large number of respondents were either the victims of insults and or maltreatment just because they belong to another faith and or ethnicity or had witnessed other children being insulted or maltreated. Data that showed that all of the respondent children attending one of the schools that participated in the research activity had experienced insults on religious or ethnic grounds was particularly frightening;

- unlike pupils and their parents, the vast majority of teachers responded that they had not observed children of different ethnic backgrounds and faiths being insulted and or maltreated in their schools.

Main conclusion: Regardless of the different perceptions of pupils and parents on the one side and teachers on the other it is evident that the problem of children being insulted on the basis of their ethnic background does exist in schools. It is particularly interesting that teachers, who are certainly more aware of the harmful effects of discrimination, did not perceive this phenomenon to the same or to a greater extent than the pupils and parents.

The differences in the responses provided by these categories of respondents is quite indicative, because it points directly to a lack of regular communication and mutual cooperation between them in relation to the prevention of discrimination both in and outside of school.

4.6 Views on Integrated and Divided Education Systems

The majority of respondents in all categories clearly recognised the consequences of the divided education system and mainly supported the idea of its integration.

- The quantitative indicators for the responses of pupils, teachers and parents to nine key questions regarding the integrated education system generally showed their highly positive attitude towards this issue. Thus, the majority of them believe that pupils of different ethnic background should attend the same school, that pupils should become more familiar with the cultures, languages and traditions of all of the peoples living in BiH and that the sense of belonging to Bosnia and Herzegovina should be further developed in all pupils. The respondents mainly pointed to linguistic differences and the need to nurture and preserve national and cultural identity through education conducted in their mother-tongue and studying the content of the so-called "national group of subjects" as being the main problem and an objective difficulty in terms of the integration of the education process.

- The vast majority of respondents did not see the previously stated arguments as an obstacle to the joint classroom-based education of children of different ethnic backgrounds, but under the condition that, through adequate curricula content, good organisation of the teaching process and teacher training programmes, the assumptions are ensured for the preservation of the linguistic and cultural characteristics of all pupils. To that end, the respondents believed that it would be possible to design a single curriculum based on the promotion of tolerance that would enable the joint education of pupils of different ethnic backgrounds and prepare them for life and work in a multiethnic community.

Major conclusion: The majority of participants in the discussions were in favour of joint classes, namely schools where children are enrolled regardless of their ethnic background. Moreover, they felt that such a form of education would have numerous advantages in relation to ethnically homogeneous communities, that children would be better prepared for life in a society such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and that this would constitute an enrichment of their children's experience. There were considerable differences between some communities though, for example, the most positive attitude towards integration was noticed in Sarajevo, while the most negative was prevalent in the area of the town of

Prozor-Rama. The correlation between the attitude towards integration between national minorities and the majority population is interesting as is the data that shows that a positive attitude towards the integration of the education system is more pronounced in the case of those communities with a large representation of different ethnic groups. Furthermore, the examples of parents' attitudes in respect to an integrated education system demonstrate that this is a complex issue and that the perception of the problem differs considerably, ranging from a lack of recognition of the problem to the fear of assimilation.

However, the issue of a single curriculum in schools is much more complex. The desire to ensure schooling in their mother-tongue for members of all of the constituent peoples has come to the surface. In some communities particularly, the interlocutors were explicit in respect to the protection of their national interests (this is how they perceive the right to mother-tongue in schools), even if this meant that their children would have to go to schools that are not the nearest to their place of residence, i.e. schools outside of their own catchment area. In reality, there are many examples of children who travel to schools that are not the nearest to their homes in order for them to follow the curriculum in their mother-tongue. On the other hand, in the interviews conducted with the respondents they selected the statement about the desired selection of the nearest school. Quite often the issue of jeopardising national identity was put forward when attempts were made to discuss the integrated education system. Although the current BiH curricula do incorporate certain common content aimed at their harmonisation there is still no single position on the structure and content of the Common Core Curriculum. The major issue is the content of the so-called "national group of subjects", namely language, history and geography, the harmonisation of which is quite challenging. Still there is no clearly expressed political will to reach a compromise solution to this problem. There is the ubiquitous feeling that it is impossible to bring about the changes that will lead to the reconciliation of the positions and a common approach towards teaching without violating the rights of the members of any of the ethnic groups in the country. According to the respondents' statements, the main culprits for such a situation are the political structures that have the power but not the will to find a modus that everyone would be happy with. Even the representatives of political structures, who see political compromise as the only solution to this issue, share this opinion.

4.7 Ethnic Distances

The results of the study into the existence of ethnic distances have shown that they do exist, to various extents and in various communities.

- It appears that the attitudes of adults towards social relations with the members of different ethnic groups stem partly from culturally built-in information and partial facts obtained through the media, but for the most part from various rational or irrational fears. The fear of assimilation is one of the major generators of ethnic distance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in those communities where the so-called "two-schools-under-one-roof" phenomenon still exists.

- The sources of pupils' views regarding social relations with the members of different ethnic groups can be found in the diverse influences exerted by the community and media, as well as by parents who contribute to the creation of prejudices about the others and who either deliberately or accidentally maintain these ethnic distances.
- Considered on the basis of the quantitative indicators for the entire sample, the most open views with respect to contact with members of different ethnicities/ethnic groups were expressed by teachers, then by parents and finally by pupils. It is interesting that these are relations of hierarchical equivalence, but also of greater proximity, thus "we could be friends" is accepted more easily, whereas relations of hierarchical inequality, such as "to be the president of my country" and "to be my child's school teacher" are very hard to accept.

Main conclusion: The most pronounced distances can be found in those communities with "divided schools", that is the "two-schools-under-one-roof" phenomenon, which tells us that if we create a social categorisation this will perhaps help us to keep our ethnic identity, but will undoubtedly not help us to become closer. It seems that fear is the major generator of ethnic distances: the minority reacts by closing ranks in relation to the others, thus wishing to protect itself from assimilation and the loss of identity. It is this wave of fear that the BiH political elite uses in order to both function and survive, because they are aware of the fact that this is the most efficient way to gain power and continue to survive within the centres of power. They provoke this fear from time to time even when no "real" threats exist in society. In addition to this, in situations where ethnic groups in a small geographical area have very few differences politics brings about both religious conflict and the politicisation of religion; the religious differences become the main criterion for differentiation and the ethnicisation of the society and the religious organisations seem either unable or unwilling to recognise this. The compound nature of stereotypes and prejudices also, to a large extent, aggravates the improvement of inter-ethnic relations within mixed communities. The sources of prejudice can be of a psychological nature, socially and or economically motivated or culturally transmitted. One of the important characteristics of biased attitudes is that they are generated directly from inter-group relations (Allport. 1954; Sherif. 1966, Tajfel & Turner. 1986). This means that members of the friendly or cooperative groups are seen as bearers of positive traits, whereas the members of the opposing groups are seen through a prism of explicitly negative characteristics. From the point of view of the sociological perspective on ethnic competition, that deals with both the economic and political causes of intolerance, the economic and political occurrences that arise as a consequence of industrialisation and or modernisation (for example unem-

ployment or the struggle for political power) are favourable to the development of ethnic identification and intolerance towards those who are different. There are findings that confirm such theories, for example Ragin (1979) who finds that ethnic conflicts owe more to manipulation on the part of the elite in search of economic and political power than to the feelings of hatred towards the others that are incorporated into the culture of the people. Numerous other authors (Smith. 1979. / Nagel. 1986. / Belanger and Pinard. 1991) have also noted that ethnic awareness, that is identification, is a very important factor of political activity in modern societies. On the basis of ethnic competition, assumptions are made that this competition, as well as the ethnic bias, will be more pronounced in ethnically mixed societies. The highest level of potential for intolerance would be pronounced among the elite fighting for power. These hypotheses are upheld completely by some of the findings of research that was conducted into the highest levels of intolerance among the most educated elite in Yugoslavia (Kunovich and Hodson. 2002).

4.8 Ethnic Identification

In the segment that explores the issue of ethnic identification several key findings emerged pertaining to the cognitive and behavioural components of positions.

- All respondents reported a sense of national belonging and national pride, while the majority of them pointed out that "The feeling of being attached to one's own people is one of the best feelings one can have", but were not quite certain as to whether "Emphasising this sense of national belonging is a positive characteristic".

- Although all respondent pupils found ethnic identification to be very important when it came to the statement that "It is important to teach children as early as possible to which people they belong" the pupils' views were divided: the pupils from schools with a Croat majority fully agreed with the statement, while the pupils from Serb majority schools agreed for the most part and the majority of pupils from schools with a Bosniak majority were mainly not sure about the statement.

- On average, pupils from almost all schools that took part in the study mainly disagreed or were uncertain that "their own people has more quality features than the other peoples", whereas pupils of Croat nationality mainly perceived their own people as being better in relation to the other peoples.

Main conclusion: The feelings of national belonging and identity are definitely positive feelings. In multiethnic communities these feelings should not be suppressed but approached with care. These feelings must not be manipulated, especially when the issue is about children.

4.9 Politicisation of Education

An examination of the level of politicisation of education shows that politics has a very strong influence on the processes taking place within the education system.

- Both the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the study into the influence of politics on the education system match to a large extent. All respondent categories, including teachers, parents, the representatives of religious communities and the representatives of education and political authorities, mainly confirmed that politicians or politics exerts the highest level of influence over the education system. These categories perceived politics as the greatest culprit for the current divisions that exist within the education system but, at the same time, as undoubtedly the most powerful and influential factor in the area of the introduction of changes aimed at the integration of the education system.

- A similar, if somewhat milder, perception of the influence of politics on the education system was reported by the representatives of political and education authorities. Local level representatives of these respondent categories believed that the highest levels of authority should bear the key responsibility for the state of the education system and that the influence of the local level on changes within the education system was very low.

- According to the estimates of respondents, the smallest influence on changes within the education system, decisions and activities in schools, rests with the direct players in the teaching process: teachers and pupils as well as parents.

Main conclusion: The quantitative and qualitative data suggests that the so-called "two-schools-under-one-roof" phenomenon and other divisions within the education system are imposed by the current political authorities and that such a situation suits, in the first place, the political structures. The respondents' answers also imply that the division of the education system is not seen as a consequence of the intrinsic natural divisions of the peoples, but rather as a phenomenon created and generated by everyday politics. The universal response was that "politics" is the culprit for everything that goes on. For the most part, all social groups surveyed denied any level of accountability for the current state of affairs within education and expressed a sense of inability to influence anything with respect to this particular sphere of society, as well as others. The pronounced feeling of incapacity to change the current state in education was inversely proportionate to their perception of the strength and power of politics in this area. Politics and politicians were recognised as the most powerful factors in the process of implementing the changes aimed at achieving improvements.

All aspects of the research show a constant lack of balance between the feeling that society can be much better than at present and the fear that if changes take place it could become worse. These feelings of insecurity and fear are probably the greatest problem in our society and they are fuelled by the ethno-national elite, especially during the course of pre-election campaigns; however, no one is exempt from responsibility. It is difficult to conquer this fear and it is likely that generations will pass before conditions are created for a new beginning free from this sense of endangerment and dissatisfaction. Taken from the perspective of parents the priority is to ensure the safety of their own children, but safety cannot be secured by putting up fences around one's own courtyard. Safety for children and society alike implies the need to ensure a higher quality of education at all levels. Everybody would win through a higher quality of education: at the individual level, the certainty of ensuring existence in this or any other society and at the state level the certainty that society will be both functional and satisfied.

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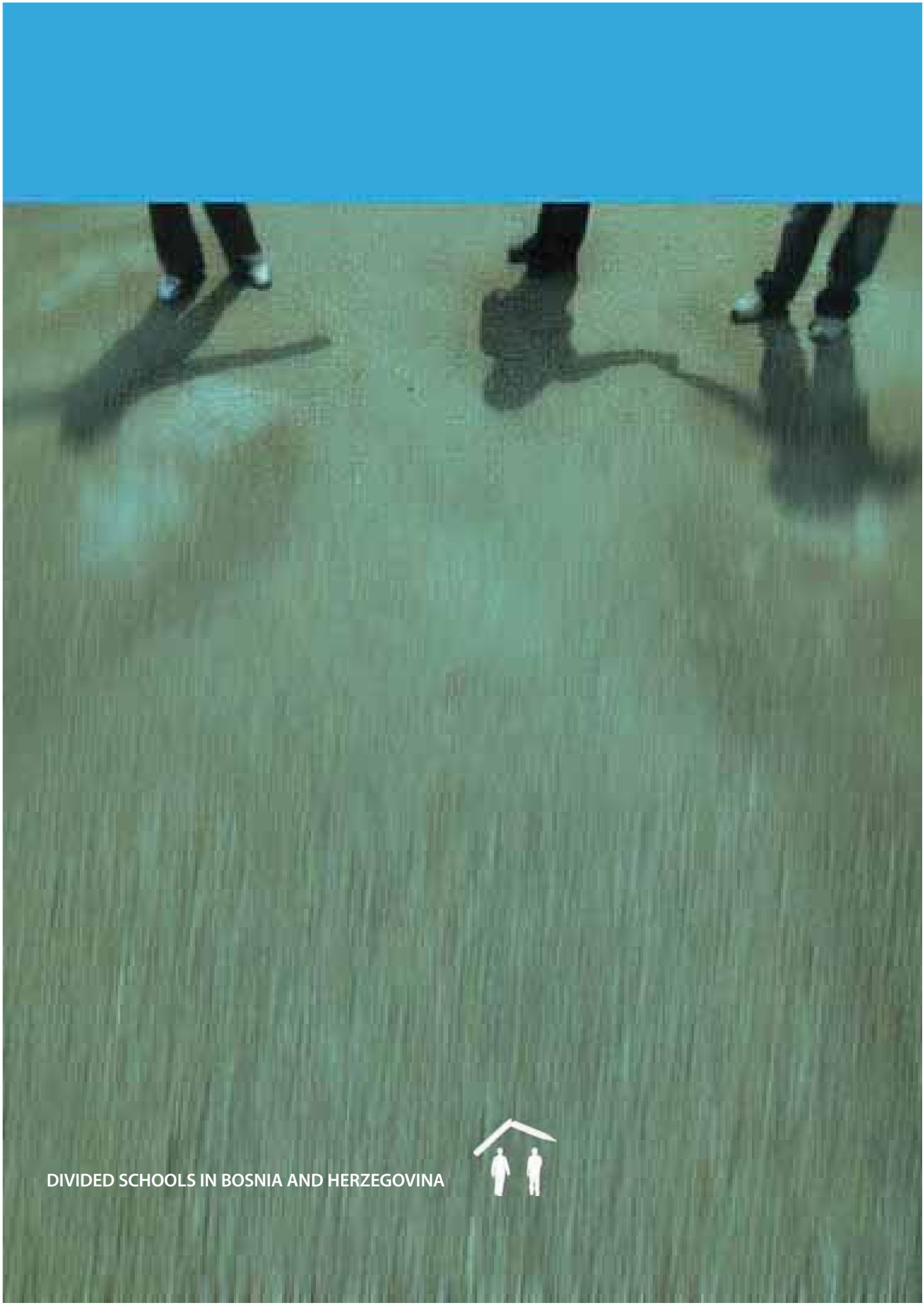
DIVIDED SCHOOLS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



DIVIDED SCHOOLS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

tion have been harmonised with the provisions of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, the harmonisation process for education legislation has not been completed yet. It is necessary to complete the process of harmonising the laws in the field of preschool education and secondary vocational education with the provisions of framework laws adopted at the level of BiH as soon as possible, in order that the legal framework could be completely wrapped up and its compatibility with international documents ensured.

- It is necessary to adopt adequate and missing bylaws that will accelerate and support the consistent implementation of laws, in particular for those segments of the education system where the violations of the right to education are most evident: the issues of the usage of language and alphabet within the teaching process, education of national minorities and the inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools.

- Through adequate decisions and measures taken by the competent authorities conditions could be created for unifying the divided schools and removing unlawful actions aimed at preventing or diminishing the enjoyment of the right to education.

- It is necessary to strengthen the educational inspection services, which have the main responsibility for ensuring equality and equity in education, and through adequate legal arrangements to create the assumptions for their efficient function, freed from potential political or other influences, as well as to establish standards and harmonised procedures for the supervision of the work of educational institutions.

5.2 Perception of the Education System

- Consistent implementation of constitutional and legal provisions aimed at ensuring equal access and participation for all BiH citizens in quality education is directly dependant upon the quality and quantity of the investment by the BiH society into the education system development process. The declamatory modern legal arrangements, the defined educational policies and strategic documents adopted at the BiH level will not yield any results if systemic solutions do not follow in the area of ensuring long-term and secure sources of finance. Although our society suffers on the whole from a lack of financial resources the competent education and other authorities must jointly pursue additional resources intended for education and its development process.

- A re-examination of the current methods of financing (the sources, distribution and efficient management of resources) and ensuring new sources of finance should be aimed primarily at resolving the priority and pressing problems in our education system. This should include, among other things, the so-called "two-schools-under-one-roof" phenomenon. Instead of making inappropriate moves by spending public funds

on the provision of support to such schools, the existence of which cannot be justified by any reasonable argument, the education authorities should undertake adequate measures and ensure decisions of a political, legal and financial nature that will help the successful and sustainable integration of these schools.

- In addition, an assessment of the condition of the school infrastructure, obtained by the survey, shows that, regardless of the legal specifications and standards related to the establishment and work of education institutions, Bosnia and Herzegovina has not in practice completely ensured across the country the Availability of education for all. To that end, the education authorities should turn towards resolving the problems related to the poor conditions in rural areas, communities and small towns as well as addressing the issue of "travelling pupils".

- Because children from small and, in particular, rural communities have a more pronounced need for diverse extracurricular activities it is expected that the ministries of education and pedagogical institutes should provide material, professional and other support to the competent school authorities for the creation and implementation of more diverse programmes of extracurricular activities and to establish better cooperation with local communities. Local authorities, non-governmental organisations, successful businesses from within local communities, potential sponsors and other partners should be encouraged and included in cooperation aimed at providing the necessary support to schools.

- Although teachers expressed justifiable dissatisfaction with the social status and devaluation of their profession, more significant steps forward in the improvement of their material status cannot be expected under the current economic circumstances and the recession. However, stronger support from pedagogical institutes for the work of educational institutions, permanent professional assistance to teachers in the implementation of the teaching process and the implementation of adequate training programmes would provide teachers with considerable assistance and enhance their competencies, skills and methods of work as well as their ability to respond more successfully to the educational needs of their pupils. With respect to the changes that are taking place within the education system, the timely and adequate training of all teachers, in particular those teachers working in ethnically and culturally sensitive environments, is of paramount importance. When it comes to teachers working in multiethnic and multicultural communities, specific content should be designed and developed within the teacher training programmes in order to empower them and provide an adequate approach to the teaching process and other school-based activities.
- Neither the parents or children nor their teachers were satisfied with the current level of quality of the curricula. They expressed their dissatisfaction through assessments mainly related to the overload of curricula content. However, in order to get a realistic picture of the quality of the curricula delivered in BiH schools it would be necessary to carry out a research activity focused on the relevance, cultural appropriateness and ac-

ceptability of the curricula content.

- A broader study into the quality, relevance and cultural appropriateness of the curricula content should also encompass the sources of learning currently in use. Moreover, with the aim to ensure higher-quality textbooks in schools, the current standards related to textbook development, review and selection procedures should be re-examined.

- Schools have the main responsibility for better cooperation with parents. They have to be inventive and innovative in that area and instigate and enhance the parents' level of interest in the school's quality of work in general, as well as in its everyday activities. On the other hand, parents are not expected to be passive observers of school-based developments and activities. They have to be school's main and active partner in all of its activities and decisions, either as individuals or as official representatives of school bodies. The relationship between the school and parents must be interactive and the quality of the school climate, which among other things implies a stimulating and safe environment for all children, will largely depend on this.

5.3 Religious Instruction

- The study shows that a high percentage of pupils attend Religious Instruction lessons in public schools, which is in line with their constitutionally and legally guaranteed human rights and freedoms, including respect for religious freedoms. The respect for religious freedom assumes, on the one hand, the possibility to offer religious education to pupils in schools in accordance with their religious beliefs and, on the other, an obligation for schools to avoid at any cost placing pupils who do not want to attend Religious Instruction in an unfavourable position in relation to other pupils. However, the question is if it is possible for Religious Instruction being taught in schools as a concessional subject to avoid discrimination against those pupils who do not attend Religious Instruction classes, either because they do not want to or because Religious Instruction or other subject lessons have not been organised for them in accordance with their religious beliefs or differing convictions. As a result of this, schools and other education authorities must undertake actions and measures aimed at achieving a consistent approach towards the organisation of teaching in schools; this would imply the organisation of the teaching of Religious Instruction for all pupils, but in accordance with their religious beliefs or of other subjects that are in accordance with the different interests of pupils.
- In a multicultural community such as Bosnia and Herzegovina school subjects must connect pupils and help them to understand each other better rather than, as has been pointed out by the pupils themselves, divide them according to their religious affiliation or beliefs. Introduction of a subject that would represent a common subject for all pupils would not only teach them about universal values but also about their

own and common values based on the specific characteristics of the national, cultural and religious traditions of all of the peoples and national minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This would undoubtedly contribute to them gaining better mutual understanding, acceptance and respect for diversity both amongst themselves and, in general, among the population, peoples and communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the rest of the world.

- In not denying the rights of parents and their desire for their children to attend Religious Instruction lessons at school it is still necessary to identify what aspects of the current Religious Instruction curriculum content belongs to the domain of the school and what belongs to the domain of religious communities. In addition, special attention should be paid to the qualifications of Religious Instruction teachers, the manner of teaching the subject in schools and the sources of learning in particular. This is due to the fact that since its introduction up until the present day the issue of studying the subject of Religious Instruction in schools has entailed both political and ideological connotations, as opposed to discussions based on its scientific, upbringing or educational aspects.

5.4 Perceptions of Inter-ethnic Relations

- The quantity and quality of information about the other and contact with members of the other peoples is one of the most important and most efficient socio-psychological factors aimed at the renewal of the disrupted interethnic relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To this end, schools, parents and local communities must play a crucial and positive role that takes precedence over the media and other sources of information.

- Schools have the greatest level of responsibility to promote tolerance and understanding among pupils and to teach them that the acceptance of others or the different is the value and advantage of society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Content pertaining to the universal as well as joint and specific cultural and other values of the peoples that live within local communities should be incorporated into the curricula, especially in relation to the area of the so-called "School-based Curriculum", which is developed at the school level in accordance with the needs of pupils and the local community.

- Through their own micro plans schools must act as role models for pupils, parents and also the larger community and offer them a pattern of behaviour that can be taken as an example of coexistence and tolerance. The multiethnic composition of school staff, good interpersonal and interethnic relations in school, good communications and companionship as well as cooperation between teachers of different ethnic backgrounds, well designed and joint extracurricular and other activities implemented in administratively divided schools and activities with the local community through

joint projects and cooperation programmes would send a strong signals to the others about the need to establish contact and the will to initiate dialogue and cooperation in order to get to know and understand one another better.

- Parents' attitudes significantly determine their children's attitudes towards members of other peoples and different traditional and cultural values. It is of paramount importance to educate parents to raise their children to live in an environment of peace, tolerance and understanding rather than intolerance with the inherent potential for new conflicts in the future. To this end, education authorities, ranging from the ministries of education through to schools, should design and implement adequate parental education programmes. This is of particular importance for those communities where the parents have a low level of education and where the events of the war left behind numerous personal tragedies and serious levels of frustration, which reflect on the perception of both present and future interethnic relations. Good cooperation between schools and parents in this area would affect the forming of positive attitudes about ethnic relations both in school and the local community alike.

- Religious communities can also do a lot in the area of developing good interethnic relations. Better mutual cooperation between the representatives of the diverse religious communities would have a stimulative affect on local community members. Joint roundtable discussions focused on the fundamental values of faith, various clubs, joint sports and other activities, field trips and other forms of cooperation and socialisation between the members of different faiths would certainly yield new attitudes and deeper understanding of 'the others', who due to insufficient knowledge were seen as a potential threat to the own culture and identity.

- The media has a huge influence in regard to the forming of public opinion and children's awareness about the others or the different. In a multicultural community, such as BiH society, it is essential that the media promotes togetherness and while distributing information about current affairs protects children from manipulation and political abuse.

- In general and wider terms, interethnic relations can be enhanced to a large extent through diverse socio-psychological processes, such as:

  а) Contact between members of different ethnic groups, which should include cooperation (i.e. establishing and achieving joint objectives), the equal status of all parties included and public and institutional support. This type of contact has tremendous potential for the creation of the conditions required for a renewal or development of trust, a reduction of anxieties and frustrations and, at the end of the day, for reconstructing broken relations;
  б) establishment of joint and feasible goals;
  ц) development of cooperation;

д) limiting aggressive nationalistic or symbolic associations (for example, corpses, killings etc. shown on TV programmes) and increasing non-aggressive ones (such as, laughter);
е) avoiding exclusive goals;
ф) avoiding the creation or confirmation of polarised and pejorative stereotypes;
г) development of tolerance through the education system;
х) enlarging positive knowledge about other peoples through education and means of mass communications;
и) increasing the perception of similarities between peoples.

5.5 Discrimination in Schools

- The study has shown that discrimination and insults based on ethnic grounds are present in our schools, especially in those communities with returnee and or minority populations. If these occurrences are difficult to control in the wider social community it seems that it is possible and easier to keep them under control and undertake more efficient preventative measures and sanctions within the school environment. Since pupils and parents perceive these incidents differently compared to teachers and school authorities it is evident that efforts should be made to improve the level of communication between pupils and parents on the one side and teachers and school authorities on the other, in order for these occurrences to be recognised and prevented. The activities of schools and other education authorities must be aimed firstly at the promotion of the positive aspects of mutual communication and cooperation. These positive values should be promoted through the school curricula and consistent procedures related to the sanctioning of all discriminatory incidents and attitudes should be implemented within the school environment.

5.6 Views on the Integration of the Divided Education System

The integration process of the education system is a very complex issue as it correlates, in a large number of its segments, to the fears of the peoples of BiH regarding the jeopardising of their rights to their national identity, traditions and culture. In this context, many questions still remain open and unresolved, such as, for example, the right to education in their mother-tongue and the studying of the so-called "national group of subjects", history in particular. The issue of the war period (1992 – 1995) is a burning issue not only within the BiH education system but also within society as a whole. At present it is difficult to find the right solutions, because readiness has not been expressed to reach a compromise in resolving the major problems related to the education system. To that end, the

first condition for the integration of the education system and achieving a satisfactory level of its coherence is better cooperation on the part of all education authorities involved, the consistent implementation of legal arrangements and unified positions and decisions in relation to the harmonisation of education policies. According to the opinion of a huge percentage of respondents in the study, the ministries of education are the key players in the contemplation and implementation of the changes that will lead to the integration process within the education system.

As the study has shown, the respondents' views differ in relation to the curricula: ranging from attempts to design a joint curriculum for all pupils in BiH to maintaining completely separate "national" curricula. It is more than evident that neither of these options constitutes the right solution; therefore, it could not be expected that, as such, they would be favoured by any of the sides. By its very concept, the latter option is unsuitable to democratic principles and BiH as a multiethnic community striving to provide all of its citizens with the complete enjoyment of the right to quality education without discrimination on any grounds. No matter how good it seems from the aspect of overcoming the evident occurrences of the violation of the right to education, the first solution is not compatible with international trends and standards because even those countries that consider themselves mono-ethnic communities have more than one curriculum. If you consider the level of regional, local and school autonomy that education authorities in democratic countries provide, a high level of freedom exists in the creation of curricula content and this is adjusted to meet the specific needs of pupils and local communities. Thus the result is a large variety of school-based curricula. However, this is not an obstacle to education authorities being able to follow and monitor the quality of the education system, with the aim of ensuring equal access and participation for all. In education this promotes both the universal and specific values of the community and enables all pupils to gain the knowledge and skills they require for their future life and work. This is achieved by defining and setting education standards that, among other things, include a common core curriculum. With that goal in mind, and through the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, as well as the 2003 Agreement on the Common Core Curriculum, it was agreed that the curricula implemented in schools should include obligatorily Common Core Curriculum content. However, although the initial important steps forward have been made in terms of the implementation of the Common Core Curriculum content they are still just a review: a list of joint content from the current curricula and have no structure or content as a document that could presently ensure the necessary coherence of the BiH education system.

In order to accomplish the objective for which it was established first of all the current Common Core Curriculum should be modernised and ways found to ensure the objectives listed below.

- Equal access to education for all pupils.

- Achievement of the education objectives as defined by law.
- Reaching a satisfactory standard of knowledge, skills and competencies for practical life and work in a social community.
- Gaining knowledge about universal values and the specific characteristics of the cultures and traditions of all of the peoples living in BiH and developing a positive attitude towards and sense of belonging to the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Respect of the right to education in own mother-tongue and lessons about own national and cultural identity and values.
- Meeting the specific needs and interests of pupils.
- Freedom of movement for all pupils.

The first step that should be taken in relation to the process of the modernisation and further development of the Common Core Curriculum is to reach a consensus among education authorities on its essence. This would require carrying out a detailed analysis of the content of the current curricula and the extent to which they could be incorporated into the Common Core Curriculum content.

In accordance with the Act upon which the newly formed Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education was establishment it has the key role in the process of defining the structure and content of the Common Core Curriculum, monitoring its implementation, evaluation and the development process. Therefore, the competent education, as well as other authorities, should provide comprehensive support (political, professional and financial) to ensure the efficient functioning of this institution, in particular the strengthening of its staff capacities.

It is both necessary and essential to achieve synergy between the BiH education authorities and all professional educational institutions and bodies, schools and other social partners during the process of developing, implementing and monitoring the Common Core Curriculum.

At the present moment the education authorities should give special attention to the consideration of potential and practical approaches aimed at resolving the issues of the right to education in mother-tongue and the study of the "national group of subjects". Good practice in Brcko District BiH might be followed in this phase, together with agreement achieved by all education authorities regarding the inclusion of harmonised solutions into the current legislation with respect to the organisation of teaching in mother-tongue, the "national group of subjects" and other subjects. This is indeed an expensive solution but efforts should be made immediately to deal with it. It is inevitable that it will be imposed in the future, especially if Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to become a member of the European Union.
Special attention should be paid to the issue of teacher training in the field of Common Core Curriculum development, implementation and evaluation as well as knowledge and

assessment standards. The teacher's approach to presenting and promoting Common Core Curriculum content is as important as its objectives the content itself.

In addition, special attention should be paid to issues related to the quality of textbooks used in BiH schools and the messages that they put forward through their content. This is especially relevant in the case of textbooks for the "national group of subjects" and history in particular. According to the opinion of the majority of respondents who participated in this research activity, the biggest problem relates to the different interpretations of the events that took place from 1992 until 1995, which are difficult to reconcile. It seems that the experiences of Brcko District BiH might also be applied in the case of the implementation of history teaching and that, as an interim solution, this might lead to reconciliation: present and historical facts should be presented in a scientific manner and it should be left to pupils to derive their own interpretations and conclusions. This of course would not absolve the education authorities from their obligation to find an approach that would resolve this extremely sensitive issue in a responsible manner and to find systemic and long-term solutions with respect to the method of teaching for the subjects that comprise the "national group of subjects", adequate textbooks and the selection of other sources of learning.

One of the potential options for the efficient introduction of tolerant education in general, provided here as an example, is the so-called "jigsaw classroom", which was introduced into the North American education system by Eliot Aronson and his fellow associates in 1971 (Aronson, Blaney, Stephen, Sikes & Snapp. 1978). Inspired by the puzzle game, we get the whole picture by fitting together its smaller parts. They designed cooperative classroom learning methodology where children were divided into small groups, studied smaller parts of a unit and then through mutual cooperation mastered the broader learning units. In the course of the learning and teaching process the children go from one group to another and in this way competition is eliminated from the learning process. This form of learning has shown multiple advantages in comparison with traditional teaching and learning processes. It not only contributed to easier learning but it significantly decreases the levels of prejudice and bias, whether ethnic, racial or any other form, and diminishes the negative feelings children hold in regard to school. However, our situation is significantly different to that of North American and in order to apply this system in our country at all we first have to ask ourselves what the children are going to learn. Consensus should be reached in our society as to the content of knowledge that our children will receive in school, but presently we do not have such a consensus and this brings us back to the vicious circle from which we are trying to escape. We believe that a positive step forward could be achieved if an attempt were to be made to approach the problem of prejudice and division within our society, at least through experimental classes, especially in those schools that are currently physically divided. Of course, any attempt at such action is condemned to failure if there is no institutional support from the State, as well as support coming from the local communities. Since we cannot expect local support to appear out of blue, especially within the context of the divisions that have been created in some

communities, the seeds of tolerance and communication have to be thrown somewhere. Therefore, it seems most logical to begin with the youngest through quality school programmes comprising adequate content and teaching aimed at life and work in communities whose specific characteristics and diversity of cultures constitutes their value, rather than an obstacle to building a quality education system and democratic and strong economic society.

5.7 Ethnic Distances

On the one hand, the study has shown that the adults, at the rational level, are aware that contact between members of different ethnic groups has to be established and maintained, while on the other, there are latent fears of assimilation. The latter seems to be one of the main generators of ethnic distance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in those communities that still have the so-called "two-schools-under-one-roof" phenomenon. The question arises of what should be done to diminish the current tensions and how to act to bring all people in Bosnia and Herzegovina closer?

Beginning with the psychological factors, the starting point from which to approach and resolve this issue can be found in the findings of a study conducted by Gordon Allport (1958). He came to the conclusion that social contact alone is not a sufficient condition from which to decrease prejudice amongst people. Everyday experiences tell us that if people meet other persons from other ethnic groups (for example Romany people) begging on the street or bothering them then they are prone to increase their level of prejudice and discriminatory attitudes towards these people. That is why the assumption was developed that the positive effects of inter-group contact would only emerge in case of meeting that follow four conditions: 1) equal status, 2) joint objectives, 3) inter-group cooperation and 4) social support. The first, equal status, implies that contact between the group members will only be successful if the groups have an equal status in a given situation. The second, that decreasing biased attitudes would be more efficient if the groups had a joint objective that they could work on. The third, inter-group cooperation, would contribute toward a reduction in the levels of prejudice only if there was no inter-group competition, because research has shown that inter-group competition is the exact cause of breakdowns in inter-group relations. The last condition, existence of social support, relates to support that stems from a social instance whether it be religion, norms or a person of authority.
Therefore, ethnic distance includes attitudes and behaviour that are massively influenced by the overall social climate. Reduction of prejudice is more efficient if ethnic groups have equal status, a joint objective, cooperation and social support in exercising mutual communication and interaction. Moreover, an important factor is the sense of security in citizens, the feeling that they are not endangered on any grounds. This feeling contributes to their ability to make decisions more freely and without external pressure. Regardless of

the fact that this process will require a long period of time and that other impeding factors and circumstances will arise, it is important that all participants show good will and do their best in order to help achieve the aim of bringing the people and nations together.

5.8 Ethnic Identification

Bosnia and Herzegovina must become a country in which everybody's national, ethnic and cultural identity and the specific characteristics of each culture are nurtured and promoted. Not a single member of any of the ethnic communities or groups in BiH should feel curbed in expressing his or her own ethnic identity or feel "guilty" when he or she does so. His or her right to be proud of his or her own traditions and culture, while fully respecting the other or the different, must be something that is lived in this country on a daily basis. On the other hand, it is very important to encourage and enhance the sense of belonging to Bosnia and Herzegovina, state identity, in all its citizens and in particular in children and the youth. These two identities (ethnic and national) must not be seen as opposing or exclusive. On the contrary, through educational activities in schools both identities should be promoted as the greatest value of society in BiH.

5.9 Politicisation within Education

Politicisation within education does exist, as was confirmed by the majority of respondents who participated in the survey. Although the influence of the political structures cannot be prevented completely, it must not be allowed that education becomes merely an instrument in the hands of the political parties. The majority of direct players in the education system deny any possibility of their exerting influence on the system, but the majority of respondents saw politics as the most powerful source of influence and initiator of change. The situation is near to absurd when parents, teachers, religious representatives, school representatives and education and political authorities all claim that they have no possibility to influence matters. This sense of helplessness is probably prevalent due the combination of diverse circumstances that include, in the first place, the irresponsibility of the political elite, corruption and a lack of transparency in relation to political processes and decision making as well as the expectation that the international institutions will make key decisions. This perspective has to be changed if we wish to become a better society. This can only be achieved through the greater democratisation of our society and increased transparency in political and social processes. On the one hand, the perception of self-reliance among all players in the education system and society as a whole must be enhanced and own responsibility has to be assumed in order to initiate and implement the required changes within the education system.

5.10 Concluding Recommendation

Although implemented using a relatively small sample, this study, with all of its potential shortcomings, indicates the current situation and suggests conclusions that cannot be ignored. Although they cannot serve as an absolutely representative sample, the target groups that participated in the survey, which included all relevant subjects within education, indicated, from the perspective of the key dimensions of the right to education, that not everything is fine in our education system. In principle, the perception demonstrated by all respondents that the education system is bad sends an alarming signal and indicates the need to conduct a new, more comprehensive and thorough research activity that would include a plethora of respondents from the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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