



United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2003.

Are you part of the problem or part of the solution?

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FOREWORD

Three years ago, UNDP presented the National Human Development Report on Youth. The group of UN agencies has prepared this update report, based on a new survey to keep the attention on youth issues and to review any progress.

One issue highlighted in the 2000 report was that 62% of youth who would like to leave BiH. That was the first indication that it was time to act to prevent the generation representing the future of BiH to disappear from the country. It is now high time to take action. The analysis in this report nuances this issue. Still 24% of youth respond that they would like to leave BiH and never come back. This may seem like a great improvement compared with the previous survey, but this assumption might be inconclusive, as the previous survey did not distinguish between those who would leave for good and those who would like to come back. It is still very troublesome that one of four youth would like to leave the country and never come back. The only way of addressing this problem is to improve the incentives for BiH youth to stay, in other words, improve their living conditions. This cannot be addressed in a simple way, but this report gives good guidance as to what can be done in different areas to take steps in the right direction.

It is, however, positive to see some progress in the development of a youth policy with the Governments of BiH. One example of this is the creation of a National Youth Advisor post. It is also encouraging to see that several civil society organizations dealing with Youth issues are vigorous and involved in the national discourse. Nevertheless, an overall youth policy is still not in place and there is still a lot to be desired regarding the inclusion of youth in all forums where decisions are taken regarding their situation and future. One flagrant example is the reformulation of the national education strategy for BiH with very low youth involvement.

General economic policy and administrative barriers are also affecting youth. It is staggering to see that 38% of all youth either gave up creating a new business or were discouraged to even try, due to complicated procedures.

Youth is the biggest future asset for Bosnia and Herzegovina. But this asset must be secured through investments, not to lose its value or disappear. In other words: focus and resources must be allocated to youth and youth must be taken seriously. I hope this report will serve as a practical tool for everyone involved in youth policy formulation to review how to improve the situation for youth. The sum of individual will lead to great progress.

Henrik Kolstrup,
UN Resident Coordinator

Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Introduction

In June 2000, UNDP launched the first Human Development Report on Youth (HDR 2000: Youth). This was the first comprehensive report dedicated specifically to the young population of BiH since the war. The report revealed a lack of a coherent youth development strategy. Young people felt marginalized in their society, which led to apathy.

That apathy was characterized by the lack of youth involvement in civil society, political life, sports and youth clubs. Over the past three years, more data on the population and the socio-economic environment of BiH has become available. The new alarming findings show that children and young people are identified by various sources as vulnerable groups affected by poverty¹ (for examples, see UNDP Human Development Report 2002 or the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for BiH (PRSP). Children and young people growing up in an environment where poverty is a constant threat are affected by the choices they have for education, work, mobility and for leading healthy lives. Because of the awareness that poverty has become an issue for young people in BiH, the United Nations Development Working Group (UNDWG) has decided to keep the spotlight on youth and monitor the development of youth-focused policies and the situation of young people in this country.

This report is thus the follow-on report from HDR Youth 2000. It shows the trends in young people's perceptions over the past three years. To a certain extent it follows the same structure as the previous report, in that it analyses a poll of 1,000 young people from BiH, who were asked similar questions in 2000. The report further provides information on some youth projects and policy developments. It shows trends in what young people think about the education sector, how the economy affects them, health, leisure time and political life.

Some issues relevant to youth have recently been addressed by other agencies and will therefore not be analysed in detail in this report. For example, juvenile delinquency was covered in HDR Youth 2000, detailing the inadequate legal and protection system in BiH since the end of the war. In

2002, juvenile justice was taken up as priority issue in the context of the Rule of Law Task Force. The Open Society Fund and UNICEF published a study on young people in conflict with the law in 2002.² The working group then highlighted the urgent need for a comprehensive situation analysis in the field of juvenile justice, which has been prepared by Save the Children UK.³ These documents provide background information and trends on causes of offences by young people; legal developments; the role of the police, courts and social care; and the media and the public's perception of juvenile delinquency.

In the conclusion, the authors state that in order to comprehensively address issues concerning young people in BiH, it is essential to develop a state youth policy. Over the past year substantial progress has been made to develop a policy in cooperation among youth, youth NGOs, the IC and the government. The last chapter on youth policy sums up these developments and emphasises the need for government at all levels to develop specific youth policies. Hence, we hope that this report will contribute to a more in-depth understanding of the situation of young people in BiH and foster and further encourage youth-focused development.

Defining Youth

The UN General Assembly Resolutions no. 40/14 1985 and 50/81 1995 define the age span for young people between 14 and 25. This age period marks a transition from childhood to adulthood, and is heavily influenced by external economic, social and political factors, and a variety of internal developments that affect a child's path to adulthood. Because of the legacy of the war in BiH and the disruption it caused in young people's lives, the definition of youth used in this report is more flexible.

The age of young people considered for the poll in our survey was between 15 and 30 years. It is estimated that there were 950,330 young people between the ages of 15 and 30 in BiH in 2000 (24 percent of BiH's total population).⁴ Because of the war and post-war transition, thousands of young people have left BiH. One source indicates that 92,000 young people left BiH between 1996 and 2001.⁵

¹Poverty may be defined as a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights". UN Economic and Social Council E/C, 12/2001/10, 10.May 2001

²Young People in Conflict with the Law in Light of Topical Problems

Related to Juvenile Justice in BiH," Open Society Fund and UNICEF, 2002.

³Situation Analysis of Policy and Practice in the Field of Juvenile Justice," Save the Children UK, with support of UNICEF and SC UK, report release expected in June 2003.

⁴UNDP, 'HDR 2000:Youth,' Prism Research, Sarajevo.

⁵UNDP, 'Human Development Report 2002,' 42.

EDUCATION

Structure

The post-war educational structure means that more than one dozen government bodies have jurisdiction over education: the RS; 10 canton education ministries in the FBiH; the FBiH Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (in a predominantly coordinating role with no real power); and the Brcko District (BD). The education sector has not so far been regulated at the state level. The competencies in the Federation are decentralized and divided between cantons. The RS educational system is fully centralized with only one body – the Ministry of Education and Culture – in charge of the entire entity. Before the war, under the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), the education system was centralized for the entire country, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today, as many as 13 different and complex structures have been set up in BiH alone, to serve the students that are currently part of its education system.⁶

Education Quality

The post-war education system in BiH is not only fragmented, but is also characterized by a severe decrease in quality. It is important to note that a large number of young people interviewed think that the major shortcomings of the current system are the lack of practical approach in classrooms (29 percent) and overloaded curricula (24 percent). This view is not surprising, considering that the old teaching methods and curricula from SFRY have hardly changed since the country's dissolution.

In the present remnants of the communist school system, students largely remain passive recipients of knowledge and there is no real communication between students and teachers. In a 2002 study, 47.4 percent of students interviewed said that teachers did not care about students.⁷ Furthermore, only 12.6 percent said that teachers were interested in them as people, and only 17.3 percent said that teachers respected young people's views. This implies that students receive little or no encouragement from school staff to take a more active role in school life, from basic issues such as taking part in classroom discussions to presenting their own views freely. Young people therefore do not feel they can change anything by

taking part in student councils and/or other student movements and organizations. Furthermore, they do not feel respected by their teachers or by other stakeholders in their school community.

Confirmation that education reform is necessary comes from the 92 percent of young people polled that stated so (see Table 1 in the Annex). However, young people are not involved in the reform that is underway. Only 9 percent said yes when asked whether their institution had pupils actively involved in education reform. Sixty-nine percent said no, and 22 percent said they did not know. This is an alarming indicator that the institutions in charge of education reform are not sufficiently involving the very students they are trying to help. It is delusional to think that schools can become democratic and healthy environments for young people's development if young people are not included in the creation and implementation of such schools.

Young people therefore need to be given the opportunity to take part in the ongoing reform process. It should not be forgotten that the radical education reforms that are so badly needed in BiH will be much more effective if they have the strong support of the people that those reforms will affect the most, such as students, teachers and parents. The reform process could provide young people with an opportunity to voice their opinions and take active part in the process of shaping their lives.

Main Aspects of Education Reform

The basis for education reform in BiH is the Education Reform Agenda that BiH education ministers and the human rights and refugees minister presented to the Peace Implementation Council in Brussels in November. The Agenda consists of five pledges and recommendations for their implementation. All educational authorities and ministers in BiH have committed themselves to upholding this document. Based on the pledges, some of the key areas to be reformed are:

- **Legislation**

The goal is to develop, adopt and implement a set of education laws based on European standards. This is also one of BiH's major post-accession commitments to the Council of Europe. Local experts, with the support of other local and international actors, have produced a state-level draft law on pri-

⁶Around 630,000 students are enrolled in the education system. For more details, see the Development Strategy BiH - PRSP; Education, Sector Priorities, October 2002, p. 4 and Appendix 1

⁷Kacapor, Zehra, Master Study 'Should I Stay or Should I Go? - The Prospects of the Youth in the BiH Transitions", Sarajevo 2003

mary and secondary education. Once the law is adopted by the BiH Parliament, it is supposed to serve as a prototype framework law for similar laws at the entity and cantonal levels by the 2004-05 school year. Local experts, with Council of Europe assistance, have also drafted a state-level framework law on higher education, which is tentatively planned for adoption by August 2003.

- ***Finance and Management***

The deep fragmentation of the system referred to above means that large amounts of money are being irrationally spent on the education system. According to PRSP data, the overall education budget is four to five times higher than those of other European countries.⁸ In order to solve this problem, USAID aims to establish a centralized treasury system to include all cantons by February 2004. This rationalization process would probably make it possible for higher education institutions to set aside funds for scholarships and other financial assistance.

Our research shows that the lack of scholarships, loans and other financial aid is one of the major downfalls of the current system. In fact, as many as 17 percent of young people polled said that the lack of financial assistance was the education system's major shortage.

- ***Transforming the Higher Education Funding System***

The cantons currently manage funding for universities, which means that in most cases a university will not receive funds for students coming from outside the canton, making it almost impossible for students, professors and other staff to move from one canton to another or between the entities. In principle, the DPA allows for the entities or FBiH cantons to transfer key higher education responsibilities to a higher governmental level, which could drastically improve the overall quality of education, including student and teaching staff mobility. Transforming the present cantonal funding system into entity funds, for example, would also facilitate student mobility. In addition, reforming the funding system would help sustain other aspects of higher

education reform. The objectives of the reform are clearly set out in the Bologna Declaration and Prague Communiqué, and emphasize among others:

1. university autonomy (a draft law on higher education covering the transformation of universities into corporate institutions so that faculties no longer function as self-governing legal units has been drafted,
2. a system of credits, such as the European Credit Transfer System (by July 2004),
3. quality assurance/recognition of diplomas (the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, by July 2003), and
4. adult learning.

The reforms apply to all stages of education: pre-school, primary and general secondary education, vocational and higher education. OSCE has been assigned the role of the reform coordinator. The principal foundations for the reforms should be laid between 2001 and 2005, with the tentative deadline for finalization of all aspects of reform in 2010.

Harmonized Curriculum

After Dayton, responsibilities for curriculum policy were given to the entities, which resulted in three different curricula in BiH – a Federation core in the five Bosniak majority cantons, a Croat curriculum in the three Croat majority cantons, and a "mixed" curriculum in the two "mixed" cantons. The RS has a curriculum of its own. Our research shows that 37 percent of young people entirely support a harmonized educational system and 37 percent support it partially (see Table 4 in Annex).

This means that there is 74 percent partial or full support of a harmonized curriculum. Considering that only 51 percent favoured the harmonized (the term used in the poll was "unique") curriculum in the HDR Youth 2000 poll, the significant upward trend is an encouraging sign that young people realize the advantages of a harmonized curriculum. In 2003, the support (by ethnic background) is as follows (Table 1).

Table 1 - To what extent do you support a harmonized educational system?

	N	Support entirely	Partially support	Partially disagree	Totally disagree	Dont know
Bosniac	438	56%	32%	5%	2%	6%
Serb	378	21%	41%	15%	15%	8%
Croat	144	19%	39%	10%	15%	16%
Bosnian/Herzegovinian	22	36%	50%	5%	9%	
Other	18	39%	39%	6%	17%	

⁸Development Strategy BiH - PRSP, Education, Sector Priorities, October 2002, 4.

This means that 88 percent of Bosniaks, 62 percent of Serbs and 58 percent of Croats polled support a harmonized system, either entirely or partially. This is a significant increase from 2000, when only 32 percent of Serbs and 17 percent of Croats polled were in favour of the harmonized curriculum. There has also been a slight increase since 2000 (6 percent) in the number of Bosniaks pledging support. All the data indicates a significant positive change in among BiH youth, in that they are expressing the need for some sort of unification, thus emphasizing what is common among different curricula rather than what is different, which was the prevailing trend after the war. Rather large numbers of young people today support a harmonized curriculum.

Harmonized Curriculum in the Brcko District

A harmonized curriculum is in use throughout the Brcko District, with subjects taught jointly except for the so-called "national subjects" – language; nature and society; musical culture; and history – which are taught separately to a certain degree. Some may argue that this integrated model still promotes segregation in a subtler form, and that it leaves much more space for commonality. Still, for the moment, this is the only true model of a harmonized curriculum in BiH. It was set in place by the former Brcko supervisor, who enforced the law on education in primary and secondary schools to implement it. (The major provisions of this law are stipulated in Article II, which prescribes unified education and institutions that promote multi-ethnicity in their work, and in Article IV, which prohibits discrimination and political action as well as the display of religious symbols within the educational system.)

Since then, the model has been successfully implemented throughout the Brcko District. It should be stressed that this would not have been achieved without political pressure from the international community. It remains to be seen if such action will be again required to avert political obstructionism once similar legislation is enacted by the competent powers in the rest of the country.

Discrimination-free Textbooks and Equal Access to Education

The Textbook Review Commission exercise was re-established in March 2003 by a memorandum of understanding signed by the newly-appointed education ministers. This is the third attempt to make textbooks in both entities free of discriminatory content. Besides discriminatory textbooks, related human rights problems are the bussing of children to mono-ethnic schools (many pupils still travel to distant schools because they fear ethnic dis-

crimination from schools closer to home) and the continued segregation of students in 56 "two-schools-under-one-roof" in the FBiH. Such parallel schools are most often located in the Central Bosnia, Herzegovina-Neretva and Zenica-Doboj cantons. In those schools, the segregation of Bosniak and Croat children and teachers is both physical and psychological. Students use separate entrances and have different recess times. Such a system, besides being troubling from a human rights point of view, also incurs double costs.

Secondary Education/Vocational Education

Secondary school enrollment in the FBiH is only 57 percent, and the figure is even lower in the RS.⁹ In addition, it concentrates on vocational schools, which are supposed to provide students with skills enabling them to succeed in a profession. PRSP data further indicate that the number of students currently enrolled in vocational and technical schools in the FBiH could be as high as 75 percent and 83 percent in the RS, and that the ratio between the number of vocational schools and gymnasiums/general education secondary schools is about 90 percent to 10 percent. At the same time, our research indicates that only 4 percent of young people polled make a decision about their further education based on the present condition of the labour market (see Table 6 in the Annex). It is interesting to note that peer influence and friends' advice influence them almost as much (3 percent). This shows that the labour market barely affects young people's decisions in choosing a career. It is a paradox that such a small percentage of young people select their profession based on the current situation of the labour market, while the majority of them choose to enroll in vocational schools and very often specialize in vocations that the market does not need. It proves that the labour market gives young people no incentive or motivation for further education, and it might go even further to illustrate young people's disillusionment with the present state of economy.

Vocational Reform Projects

One initiative that addresses the problems in vocational education is the EU Phare Vocational Reform Program. The project aims to reform the vocational school system in partnership with the relevant ministries and schools, to connect school training with the post-war, transitional needs of the labor market. The World Bank is also financing the Education Restructuring Project, which aims to reduce the number of vocational professions and developing clusters of similar subjects.¹⁰ These initiatives constitute a helpful step forward.

⁹ Development Strategy BiH - PRSP, Education, Sector Priorities, October 2002, 5-11.

¹⁰ Other international agencies, such as GTZ, are providing support to Vocational Educational Reform.

Higher Education

Sarajevo University figures show that there is a high level of interest in higher education (6,336 students enrolled for the 2002-03 school year although the planned enrollment was only 4,972).¹¹ The most popular faculties are law, economy and political science. Most young people choose their profession based on personal preference.

Young people responding to the poll said there was a great need for career counseling and professional orientation centers, which should be provided on individual/school and municipal levels. As many as 47 percent of respondents said they needed assistance in choosing a career (see Table 11g in the Annex). As many as 61 percent stated the need for career counseling centers. Twenty-nine percent said the centres were partially necessary (see Tables 11f and 11g in the Annex). Schools therefore should have, wherever possible, at least one person appointed to help direct young people and assist them in choosing their careers.

Municipalities should also have some sort of career-counseling centres with up-to-date literature and handbooks that include information on conditions of the labour market.

Another issue is the transfer of students between BiH universities and those abroad. A major step forward for this will come in fall 2003, when BiH authorities sign the Bologna Declaration, a binding commitment among more than 30 European countries to reform their own higher education systems. The Declaration is supposed to create a European common market in higher education and make it easier for students to transfer between universities throughout Europe.

Participation in Student Organizations

- ***Secondary Schools***

Student councils were established in some secondary schools in 1999. Several youth NGOs have since begun capacity-building programmes and the establishment of student councils all over the country. In some cantons, the student councils are even approved by law, and should be created in all schools by 2004 as per Pledge 2 of the education reform package. Unfortunately, no student council umbrella organization or state network exists, and student councils are still not involved in education reform working groups.

- ***Higher Education***

The BiH Student Union was established during the 1994-95 school year, but stopped functioning after Dayton. Today, in the FBiH, there are student unions such as the Sarajevo University Student Union (USUS, with representatives from 20 faculties), the Student Union of the Mostar Sveuciliste, and other unions in Bihać, Tuzla and Mostar. In the RS, there are student unions in Srpsko Sarajevo and Banja Luka. Although the situation today is significantly better than it was just after the war, the unions still encounter numerous obstacles. For example, USUS is registered as a civic association, which means that it does not receive the same treatment as other university organizations, and it does not have the same power as other university groups, which directly limits its scope of action. Another problem is the lack of cooperation among unions and the lack of a state-level student union. At the entity levels, there are the Association of FBiH Students and the RS Student Union, but representatives from the local unions are not involved in their work.

Religion in Schools

Our research shows that 49 percent of the young people polled think that religious instruction in schools should be optional, and that grades they receive for such courses should not affect their grade point average. But quite a large percentage of those polled – 31 percent – advocate the opposite (see Table 10 in the Annex). This reflects the ongoing argument whether religious instruction in schools should be mandatory or optional. In 2000, canton education ministers adopted a decision stating that all major religions practiced in BiH should be taught in schools.

While it is probable that the ministers believed that the decision would promote religious freedom in schools and heal the country, the question remains if the decision has not produced the opposite effect. It has opened a wide debate. Those opposed to the decision say that it provided a basis for the violation of human rights and individual choice, and that those children opting not to attend religious instruction might find themselves in an unfavorable position compared to the children that attend. This is especially problematic in provincial schools that have a number of minority or returnee students.

¹¹Sarajevo University figures.

¹²Save the Children, 'Deny the Future? The Right to Education of Roma in BiH,' 2001.

Another argument against the decision has been that the children attending religious instruction may receive better general grades from teachers as a reward for attending. The issue is highly sensitive and calls for prolonged decision-making paired with the continuous observance of young people's feelings and other trends related to the issue. It is very important that a sound decision on the status of religious instruction is made, and that decision should be no threat to anyone's freedom of choice.

Culture of Religions

To circumvent the problem of religious instruction and to create a subject that would unquestionably serve the needs of multicultural education and be acceptable to all, there has been an initiative to introduce the subject "Culture of Religions" to promote religious tolerance. In the past two and a half years, the organization Abraham, along with the Goethe Institute and OSCE, has worked on curriculum creation and the organization of teachers' conferences and public debates to emphasize the need for such a subject in schools throughout BiH.

Gender

The need for the further examination of possible gender bias in schools has recently been documented in a study by UNHCR. In certain municipalities (notably Modrica, Vukosavlje and Kotor Varos), there are more boys than girls in the schools though more girls have returned to the municipalities. However, there is no data specifying that returnee girls are not attending schools outside the municipalities.

A number of cases have been reported in rural areas in which parents do not allow their daughters to go to school for cultural and/or economic reasons. Such gender discrimination cases have frequently been reported in several villages in Zenica-Doboj Canton. The canton authorities have fined the parents, but the parents continue to violate the law, because the existing legislation is not sufficient to lessen the gender discrimination. The parents also live according to traditional patriarchal cultural patterns coloured by conservative religious interpretation in which women are dedicated to marriage and family life and excluded from the public sphere. Such cases are flagrant violations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

¹³UNHCR Report: Education for Returnee Children in BiH, March 2003, p. 6

Minorities: The Exclusion of Roma from the BiH Education System

Although there has been no official demographic data on Roma population since the 1991 census (the population then numbered about 9,000), the population today is believed to be numbered between 50,000 and 80,000¹², making Roma the largest minority in BiH. According to our research, 64 percent of young people polled think that the Roma population has the worst position in BiH out of all the other ethnic groups (see Table 57 in the Annex). Roma children are particularly vulnerable especially in the context of the BiH education system. The school enrolment and attendance of Roma children is very low.⁷ In Modrica municipality for example, only one child out of the 116 Roma returnee children of school age was enrolled in school for the 2001-02 school year.

Other municipalities with large Roma populations (Lukavac, Tuzla and Gradacac in the FBiH, and Bijeljina and Gradiska in the RS) face similar situations. Of 71 Roma families in the entire Mostar area, more than half of the children (19 of 37, up to age 25) and two-thirds of the parents had no schooling.¹³ But there are positive examples of higher enrolment in municipalities such as Vukosavlje, Teslic and Doboj in the RS, and Travnik and Kiseljak in the FBiH.

In 2002, an OSCE study showed that Roma children are commonly excluded from educational opportunities that other children have.¹⁴ It also indicated the irregular presence of Roma pupils/students and the clear tendency of absenteeism in the later grades of primary school and in secondary school. It pointed to a number of factors leading to exclusion, such as the lack of money for clothing, books and other school supplies, transportation, and tuition, as well verbal harassment from other students and language problems. The costs and/or requirements of registration are also a factor. Canton education laws allow for equal access to education and teaching of minorities in their mother tongue. For Roma children, however, this almost never translates into practice.

Children with Special Needs

This is a very broad category encompassing children with mental disabilities and learning difficulties on one hand, and highly gifted children and/or returnee children that need some sort of modified

¹⁴The unofficial data indicate that 15 to 20 percent of Roma children still do not go to school.

education in order to adapt to the BiH system on the other. UNICEF has introduced the concept of inclusive education, which prescribes a child-friendly learning environment to avert the exclusion of children with special needs. The concept implies the need to include such children in mainstream schools. The right to equal participation of marginal groups in all aspects of society and the basic right of every child to education are both stipulated in the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Also, Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child declares that all children have the right to education.

In the HDR Youth Report 2000, 53 percent of young people polled stated that the existing curricula did not satisfy children with special needs. The report also highlighted the lack of legal guidelines that would deal with this very broad category of students. This year, 50 percent of young people polled entirely support the idea that special-needs children should be included in regular education, while 38 percent support it partially (see Table 46 in the Annex). The data from 2000 and 2003 are consistent and support the idea that inclusive education is a much-needed practice.

The Duga Project

In the past couple of years, several non-governmental organizations in BiH have initiated projects involving children with physical disabilities. For example, the local NGO Duga has a project on inclusive education for children with special needs, which aims to introduce and implement inclusive education for children with mild mental and physical disabilities.

The project focuses on kindergartens and first and second grade primary school classes in 16 school districts in BiH, including 10 municipalities in the Federation, five in the RS and one in the Brcko District. The main aspects of the project are in-service training and mentoring for schoolteachers, special education advisors, speech therapists, school directors and pedagogues. The project is modeled after a pilot project implemented in three primary schools in the Brcko District in 2001, with financial support from UNESCO and technical assistance from Medicins du Monde, UNICEF and Duga. For the first time in BiH, children with mild mental disabilities were included in regular first grades of the primary school and not confined at home or placed in special education institutions/classrooms.

Conclusion

Essential steps in education reform have been made in the past three years. The positive trend towards increased support for harmonized curricula is encouraging. Yet it seems that young people do not feel included in the reform process. Now is the time to look carefully at these issues and give young people more room to participate. To begin with, they could be more actively included in the process of reforms through student, teacher and parent councils and unions.

It is also essential to remember that attempts to modernize the education system should always bear in mind the needs of the labour market. This means providing better career counseling services, opening the lines of communication between secondary schools and universities and local markets and employers, and adapting curricula to provide students more practice and skills development so that they can better respond to labour market trends and needs.

YOUTH AND ECONOMY

The state of the economy is a major concern for youth, and one of the main reasons they cite for wanting to leave the country. Pre-war economic capacities have not been revitalized. A high unemployment rate¹⁵ and the fact that a large percentage of the population lives just above the poverty line¹⁶ are indicators of the poor state of the BiH economy. In addition, a large and bureaucratic public administration, which does not foster a good business environment, is an obstacle to achieving sustainable growth rates. The slow economic development has a big impact on the development of the young post-war generation.

The BiH labour market is not developed enough to absorb the available labour force. Young people are finishing their educations and trying to enter a job market that cannot provide them jobs. As a result, young people are faced with unemployment, continuing dependency on their parents and poverty. The first post-war Living Standard Measurement Survey (LSMS) was produced in 2001 and released in 2002, revealing the extent of poverty in BiH. The official general poverty line for BiH was then defined by 5KM/per day per capita or 1843 KM per year. Accordingly, 19% of the population in BiH lives below the poverty line (FBiH 15.6%, RS: 24.8%). Additional 40% show that they only just provide for their basic needs.

Considering that almost a quarter of the total population of BiH is between the age of 15 and 30, a high percentage of young people are, as a consequence, subject to a very low standard of living. Poverty is not static but rather dynamic, which means that those who were not registered as poor in 2001 may already be living in poverty by now. This is confirmed by the results of our poll. Asked if their living standard has changed over the past three years, more than 50% of youth said that they have not seen a change in their living standard (57%), however 40% said it had. Off this, 16% said it got worse and 24% said their living standard has improved (table 14 in Annex). Young people are slightly optimistic about their future living standards, with 46 percent saying it would improve and 38 percent saying it would stay the same. Only 11 percent said it would get worse (see Table 15 in the Annex). Those in the 14-18 age group are more optimistic than those in the 25-30 age group.

¹⁵Federation Statistics office and RS Statistics office data shows that the official unemployment rate is 40 percent and rising. Official statistics, however, do not consider unofficial employment, such as work on the black market or in the informal sector. The Living Standard Measurement Survey, which did consider this work, put the unemployment rate closer to 20 percent.

Interestingly, rural youth are more positive about their future living standards than are urban youth.

When comparing the perception of youth to the perception of the entire population and when looking at Living Standard Measurement Survey indicators, it is apparent that youth are more optimistic than their elders about standards of living.¹⁷ This is normal, since young people are naturally more optimistic about the future than are older people.

Employment, Unemployment and the Labour Market

The speed at which BiH addresses economic reform, and the speed at which the economy transforms into a market economy (an export economy with sustainable growth rate) are the factors that will permanently affect the future of BiH and its young population. The OHR, under its new "jobs and justice" directive, initiated the forming of the "bulldozer committee". This process should identify barriers to development and produce recommendations on how to remove them.¹⁸ As a result, better labor market conditions should be created. Furthermore, BiH is currently developing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The PRSP will define which actions and reforms need to be taken mid-term (2003-2007) in order to improve the current socio-economic situation in the country. In HDR Youth 2000, the majority of youth characterized the BiH labour situation as extremely bad for young people, and they did not feel that the education system prepared them for employment. The international community has sought to shed light on the state of the labour market and done comprehensive research.

Reports by the World Bank and DFID/IBHI, which appeared individually in autumn of 2002, have provided necessary data for policy makers.¹⁹ Other international agencies have engaged in extensive research to identify the most viable economic fields in BiH.²⁰ Despite the high unemployment rate, businesspeople have expressed concern about the lack of a sufficiently skilled and educated workforce that they need to develop their companies. The structural imbalance of the Bosnian labour market is evident. Policy makers need to develop reforms based on this evidence. For example, training programmes in BiH or abroad could be developed to increase workers' skills until the gap

¹⁶ See UNDP NHDR 2002

¹⁷ UNDP, 'Early Warning System Anual Report 2002,' 25, and NHDR 2002, 51.

¹⁸ OHR Economic Newsletter Vol 6, Issue 2, May 2003. www.ohr.int.

in the labour market is filled. Young people in general seem to be confused about the economic situation and its consequences for their employment prospects. Forty-one percent of youth in the poll said they did not know which aspect of the economy is the most promising. When asked which field of study would best enhance their employment prospects, 21 percent said economics was the most promising, 14 percent said medicine, 11 percent said civil engineering and another 11 percent said sales.

Table 2. Which field is most promising?

Don't know	411
School of economics	210
Medical school	135
Civil engineering	105
Salesperson	105
Law School	93
Information technology	86
Hairdresser	66
Tourism	11
Own business	21
Farming	22

Only 5 percent said it depended on the labour market. The poll did not show any gender difference. Young women had more or less the same perceptions as men. Very few of those polled found fields identified by BiH politicians and international actors as promising (2 percent said agriculture, 2 percent said starting a private business and 1 percent said tourism). This indicates that youth in general do not share the same perception of the economy with international representatives or local economists. It also indicates that young people are not sufficiently informed or trained to evaluate and respond to the changing economic environment in BiH. This factor should not be underestimated. The current generation of young people is the first that needs to adjust to a new economic environment. Parents cannot draw from their own experience and guide their children as they have done in the past. Young people need assistance, guidance and direction from outside of their homes. The EU Phare Vocational Reform Program mentioned in the education section tries to provide such direction and constitutes a positive step forward in the reform process. Young people are not convinced that their education will help them find a job. In 2000, 11 percent of those polled said that they felt certain of finding a job, while 25 percent said that they were partially certain. Twenty-three percent said they were totally

uncertain. Rural young people were much more pessimistic, with only 7 percent saying they were certain that their education would lead to employment. Women and men had the same perception. In this year's poll, only 8 percent said they were certain, but 32 percent said they were partially certain that they will find a job. Youth with a higher education were the most certain that they would find work in the future.

Table 3 - How certain are you that your education will make it possible for you to find employment, or are you already employed?

Very certain	8%
Partially certain	32%
Partially uncertain	19%
Totally uncertain	18%
Already employed	18%
Don't know	5%

There seems to be a slight increase in optimism from 2000, although the new poll shows that women are less certain than men. Even though rural young people express more optimism about an improvement in their living standards in general, rural youth were again less certain of finding a job after finishing their education than young people in urban areas. Obviously, the urban parts of BiH are more economically developed than the rural parts, and young people realize that they have fewer job opportunities in rural areas. This fact is supported by the trend discussed in chapter six, that more young people from rural areas want to go abroad to find work. This is a strong indicator that the development of rural areas in BiH needs to be given specific attention in the economic reform programmes.

Where do young people work?

According to a World Bank Report, the average age of employed person in the formal sector has risen from 36,6 in 1991 to 40 years by 2000.²¹ Additional data in the report shows a decrease of employed persons between the age of 25-34 from 37% in 1990 to 23% in 2000²². The inflexibility of the labor market in BiH negatively influences the possibility of employment of young people in the formal sector. Small fluctuations of labor force in public administration, public companies, non-privatized and recently privatized companies, make it less possible for young people to find work in these sectors. Further analysis shows that there is little

¹⁹The World Bank, 'The Labour Market in Post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina,' Nov. 2002, and DFID/IBHI, 'Labour and Social Policy in BiH: The development of policies and measures for social mitigation, employment and labour market status and potential for policy development in BiH,' October 2002.

²⁰i.e. GTZ has conducted a study in 2002 to indentify the most promising economic sectors in BiH.

²¹Worldbank Report No 24889, BiH. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Labor Market in Post war Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nov. 2002, Executive Summary, C. Summary of analysis and main findings, Finding No 1.

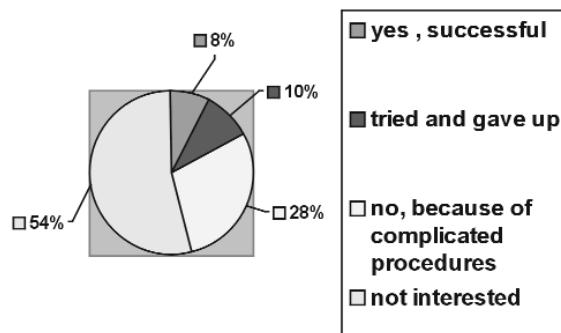
worker mobility in BiH. Taking into consideration that young people in general are more ready to move, the political structure and lack of information – particularly across entity lines – are still detrimental to labour mobility.

OSCE launched a project in 2002 promoting fair employment practices, such as non-discrimination, non-harassment and fair employment and fair redundancy policies.²³ It is also understood that employment bureaus in BiH should take a more active role in promoting and ensuring fair employment. There is a common understanding that the employment bureaus need to be given a much more efficient role in the labour market. The existence of employment bureaus does not mean that they lead an active employment policy, in spite of the large worker contributions to bureaus' budgets (about 2.5 percent of workers' gross income is deducted for unemployment insurance).

Employment bureaus should transform their activities into a coherent and proactive employment policy to support employment processes and labour market information exchanges. On the positive side, last year a large World Bank research project under the Social Technical Assistance Credit II put some momentum into the reform of these agencies. Coordinated support and capacity building of staff is crucial for the successful reorganization of the bureaus. To ensure that reforms have a direct impact on youth, the reformed bureaus should also have specific programs for youth job placement. For example, internships could be promoted more widely, as well as introducing entry positions for young labourers. Companies should be given tax incentives in return, as is the practice in other European countries. The tendency for young people to find work more easily in the growing informal sector, where workers often are not registered or where companies under-report wages, continues apace. As in 2000, substantial numbers of highly-educated young people, who have language and computer skills, are working in either the non-governmental sector or in international organizations.

Many young people in these organizations are hired on a contract basis, and the employer does not pay social security and health care contributions. Many young people therefore do not have the necessary health, social security and retirement coverage, as they opt not to insure themselves privately. It follows that the social security system, health care and pension systems, which are already in dire financial shape, are deprived of a significant amount of contributions

Graph.1: Have you tried to start your own business?



Start your own business

Much emphasis has been put on growth of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) sector in BiH. The survey sought to ascertain the extent to which young people have tried to start their own businesses. It should be taken into consideration that the SME sector is still not attractive enough, and that it is not developing as fast as it should because of the expensive and complicated procedures for registering a company, unavailable financial resources and high taxes and contributions. The poll revealed that a large percentage of young people have no particular interest in starting their own private business (55 percent).

The Youth Entrepreneurship Project in Brcko

One example of how young people can be motivated and supported during the process of starting a business is the Youth Entrepreneurship Project in Brcko (YEP), which UNV/UNDP started last year. Young people interested in establishing their own business or improving existing businesses attend business planning trainings. Young entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 30 receive advice on their business management and on how to obtain small loans from microcredit institutions. YEP has also created a network of young entrepreneurs. In the first year, 28 participants took part in two training sessions and 60 people (22 with existing jobs, 38 that are training participants and microcredit recipients) have become members of the entrepreneur network. Fifteen loans totalling 40,000 KM have been distributed. After the first year, 15 businesses were either established or improved.

About 10 percent tried to start their own business but gave up after a while (see Table 16 in the Annex). There is a substantial number (30 percent) of young people who are discouraged from starting their own businesses because of the complicated procedures. A number of projects have been

²²Ibid.

²³OSCE, 'Fair Employment Project Report 2002.'

launched over the past two years that support youth understanding of entrepreneurship and labour market needs. The Open Society Fund, UNDP/UNV, OSCE, GTZ, SDC and other bilateral donors have embarked on valuable projects at the local level. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these programmes, although it is a positive sign that young people are continuing to sign up for them. Donors should be encouraged to continue to support such programmes in the long term. In due course, these projects should be fully evaluated and the results made widely available.

Furthermore, the benefits of these projects should be incorporated in schools throughout the country to provide ongoing guidance for students.

Unemployment

Statistics show that unemployment rate is highest in the 21-25 age group. The 2002 BiH Human Development Report expresses concern that "according to the Living Standard Measurements Study (LSMS) unemployment is 2.6 times higher among 19-24 year-olds than among 25-49 year-olds and 3.6 times higher than among 50-60 year-olds." Young people with low educational skills are frequently facing low income levels and fewer job opportunities, and as a consequence are in danger of living in poverty.

Youth unemployment would even be higher but for the fact that an increasing percentage opt to stay in school longer and therefore have not yet entered the labour market. However difficult it is to extract exact figures, all recent research and published surveys have highlighted youth unemployment as a major cause for concern in the development of BiH. The issue is not so much unemployment itself, as recent analysis has shown that more than 50 percent of people find some sort of income in the informal market. The big problem is how to move workers from the informal to the formal market. The government should introduce specific measures to stimulate entry to the formal labor market. An immediate action should be to offer internship programmes for young people and reward companies with tax incentives. Equally, entry positions for young labourers should be promoted.

Not surprisingly, the average duration of unemployment after finishing education is relatively long. In the absence of previous polls it was not possible to identify this as a trend, but it is significant that only about 30 percent of young people find work within

a year after ending their education. More worrying is that one third are still unemployed even five years after finishing school. The long duration of unemployment has a detrimental effect on any skills gained by young persons during their education and their possibilities of integrating themselves into the labour market. They remain dependent on their parents and on work in the informal market, with all its negative consequences. Long unemployment after education also increases the desire to seek work abroad.

Income

Measuring the standard of living involves various factors. Employment and unemployment, as well as individual and family income, are important determinants that influence living standards. Economic and social dimensions also define living standards. Research on young people's income structure is difficult to obtain and this section is an attempt to show the trends of young people's income situation.

In the last quarter of 2002, the monthly income of 57.3 percent of Bosnian households was lower than price of a consumer basket²⁴ for the same period. The average purchasing power of Bosnians is low, and in more than 60 percent of cases, the household income is enough to satisfy only basic needs.

Table 4 - Monthly income

N	1000
up to 100 KM	9%
101 to 200 KM	4%
201 to 300 KM	9%
301 to 400 KM	8%
401 to 500 KM	6%
501 to 600 KM	3%
601 and more	4%
No income	58%

Fifty-eight percent of the youth polled said they had no income.²⁵ Nine percent said they had less than 100 KM income per month, 9 percent had a monthly income between 201 and 300 KM and 8 percent had a monthly income between 301 and 400 KM. Only 4 percent said they had an income of more than 600 KM per month. When comparing youths' monthly incomes and monthly expenditures, it is clear that they are spending more than they are earning. It should be taken into account that almost half of all youth are still involved in the educational process and that this category usually

²⁴A consumer basket includes the basic quantities of food and beverage for a four-member family for a month. According to the Early Warning System Report 2002, the cost of a consumer basket for December 2002

was 458.19 KM in the FBiH and 461.75 KM in the RS.

²⁵It should be noted that 45 percent of the 1,000 participants in the survey were students and pupils.

does not have regular sources of income. Furthermore it is culturally acceptable for students to be outside the workforce. This is an additional burden on household incomes. Almost half of rural youth spend less than 100 KM per month, compared with 23 percent of urban youth. Parents were identified as a source of additional income by 65 percent of the participants in our survey, while 7 percent regularly receive money from relatives in BiH and 7 percent regularly receive money from abroad. Hence, with a relatively low level of income, 17% of all youth are main contributors in their families' budgets. (See the Table 4). Comparing this data with the poll taken in 2000, the same percentage of youth has contributed to household budgets three years ago.

Table 5
Are you the person that contributes the most to household budget?

N	1000
Yes	17%
No	83%
Total	100%

More males (25 percent) than females (10 percent) said they were the major contributor to the household budget. This points to a significant disproportion in income level between genders. Again, this has not changed since 2000. Economic gender inequality is still an important issue to be addressed in BiH. Because of the low average income level and the fact that the young population often contributes to household budgets, the amount of money available for saving is extremely low. Generally, low individual incomes and high unemployment force family members to combine their incomes. Also, a lack of living space and high rents (as compared to incomes), are additional reasons why young people live with their parents until their late 20s.²⁶ Thought no statistics exist, it is common knowledge that many young people often leave their parents' homes only when they form their own families.

Conclusion

Young people's economic situation has not drastically changed over the past three years. The difficult economic environment in BiH is not expected to improve in the short term. The formal labour market is characterized by lack of flexibility and a shortage of jobs. This is a difficult environment for youth. Young people are more frequently finding employment in the informal market. As was concluded in the 2000 report, the need to reform and modernize the educational system and offer entry

positions in the labour market to young people is still apparent. The long duration of unemployment after finishing education underpins the necessity to provide continuous skills training. Equally important are the needs for professional guidance and study programmes abroad. Monitoring the dynamic flow of poverty in BiH is essential for the design of such policies. High unemployment, low incomes and the lack of living space are the main reasons why few youth live independently of their parents.

This is not to say that the process of supporting young people is stagnant, but it does require added momentum. Research and best practice from innovative projects such as UNV/UNDP Youth Entrepreneurship Project in Brcko and the EU Phare vocational reform projects can provide policy makers with insights to the problems and offer approaches to how to deal with the issues.

HEALTH AND SEXUALITY

Introduction

Youth means experiencing the internal transition from childhood to adulthood, in which behavioural patterns change and the young person adapts to the new requirements of their internal and external environment. The inner transition, accompanied by influences and pressures from the external environment and the social and economic realities in which youth live, affects youth attitudes towards health and risk behaviours. Health is an integral part of human development because it enables a society to develop economically, socially and psychologically in the direction that society wants to achieve, and is therefore, by WHO definition, "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity"²⁷. The increasing poverty in BiH has a strong effect on the general health of the population. Youth unemployment, the lack of adequate housing and the insecurity and uncertainty that come with any shifts in a community's situation increase young people's vulnerability.

Youth and General Health

The general health of youth is determined by many factors. Young people's perception about health is important because it has both positive and negative consequences on behaviour and the actions young people take to maintain their health.

Abstaining from tobacco, exercising and following a healthy diet are conditions for maintaining good health. The cultural perception of health in BiH, however, does not necessarily link these habits to good health. Health is also based on a cultural framework within which people, and the youth population in particular, deal with health issues mostly within the family. UNFPA research shows that young people in BiH visit doctors only when they are ill, and show no interest in preventive care. In general, people regard preventive visits negatively, and hold the superstitious belief that such visits only provoke health problems.²⁸ A report commissioned by WHO and UNDP emphasizes many weaknesses of the health care system, in that it is bureaucratic, hierarchical and inaccessible.²⁹ The report shows that avoiding treatment and preventa-

tive visits is a result of the health care system's failure to deliver its services. The above-mentioned cultural, social and institutional aspects of public health leave little opportunities to protect the health of young people. One of the only opportunities to discover illnesses is the obligatory check-up required by law before a student can enter secondary school.

Causes of Death among Youth

The leading causes of death may be indicators of risk behaviour and the general health of young people. These are difficult to monitor, however, as there is no coherent, integrated and continuous data collection in this area. Existing data in this field is controversial and incomplete. The unavailability of data regarding the health of youth population may cause significant problems in approaching this issue in the long run.

The HDR Youth 2000 reported that the leading causes of death were injuries and poisoning, followed by diseases of the circulatory system (21.9 percent). In third place were external causes such as car accidents, drowning, electrocution, and wounds from firearms (16.1 percent).³⁰

Federation statistics for 2002 show that injuries and poisoning were the leading causes of death for youth in the entity (26.74 percent).³¹ As many as 21.32 percent of deaths were caused by external factors, which confirms that youth are engaging in risk-taking behaviour. Young people are not sufficiently aware of the risks or consequences of that risky behaviour. Malignant neoplasms (cancers) and diseases of the nervous system are increasing dangers to youth health. The number of fatal nervous system diseases has risen significantly since 2000, and is now the fifth leading cause of death, up from ninth place in 2000, which shows that there is a link to the stressful environment in which so many young people live.

Diseases, Conditions and Injuries

Recent research on the 10 leading diseases is similar to the findings of the 2000 report. The leading ones are respiratory system diseases (53.5 percent), followed by infectious and parasitic diseases, as well as diseases of the skin, subcutaneous tissue and the digestive system.³²

Diseases related to hygiene and living conditions

²⁶Seventy-eight percent of the surveyed youth live with their parents.

²⁷The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being."

²⁸UNFPA and Prism Research, 'Reprodukтивно и seksualno zdravlje, znanje i ponašanje mladih ljudi u BiH,' 2002, 20.

²⁹'Health Care in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Context of Displaced Persons and Refugees,' UNICEF, 2001.

³⁰These percentages are preliminary data from the Federation Institute of Statistics from 1999.

³¹Federation Institute of Statistics, 'Demographics 2001,' Sarajevo, August 2002, 30-35.

are becoming less common. Infectious and parasitic diseases decreased by one quarter between 1999 and 2001. This could be viewed as a result of increased refugee return, which has been followed by a concentrated effort to improve sewage and plumbing systems, to reconstruct private houses and to improve hygiene conditions in public places, as well as more basic health and hygiene education in schools. BiH still faces an enormous problem with issues concerning hygiene and inadequate housing.

Suicide

The number of suicides in BiH is increasing. HDR Youth 2000 found that one-fourth of reported suicides in the Federation were committed by youth. Data from the RS was unavailable. In the Federation in 1999 there were 51 suicides, in 2000 there were 89 and in 2001 there were 165. Men are more prone to suicide than women (70.3 percent of suicides were committed by men in 2001³³).

Young people aged 14-21 in extreme situations of stress and adversity are also linked to suicide. Many participants of the UNFPA group discussions said they thought of committing suicide.³⁴ This is mainly caused by feelings of not being accepted or understood, low self-esteem, and poor relationships with parents and the rest of society. It is possible to conclude that a main obstacle to addressing the problem is the reluctance of young people to talk openly about their psychological problems or to seek professional help.³⁵

The old-fashioned and insensitive health care system is one cause of this. Youth are, however, interested in professional support and counselling. Our poll showed that 57 percent of young people think it is necessary to open counselling centres (see Table 11i in the Annex).

The increase in suicides and the high levels of risk behaviours emphasize the necessity of establishing places in which young people can seek advice, counselling and support. Higher education reform should support this by providing a knowledge base of counselling methodologies and techniques to young professionals. This is so far not part of higher education curricula.

³²Federation Institute for Public Health, 'Statistics for Leading Diseases in FBIH 1999-2001.'

³³Ibid.

³⁴ UNFPA and Prism Research, 'Reproaktivno i seksualno zdravlje, znanje i ponašanje mladih ljudi u BiH,' 2002, 83.

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is a sensitive issue. Young people did not feel comfortable talking about their behaviour in the surveys.³⁶ Therefore our poll does not provide accurate or complete information on this subject. Most of those polled said they did not use alcohol or drugs (see Table 55 in the Annex), but this is not in line with the opinion of practitioners, who say that smoking and drug abuse are increasing. This is seen as a long-term effect of war, economic crisis and political transformation, which have all had a significant negative impact on the entire population of BiH. Smoking is a culturally-acceptable habit, and is therefore not considered substance abuse. In 2000, a substantial percentage (46 percent) of young people polled smoked regularly, 14 percent smoked on certain occasion and 40 percent did not smoke. Today, our poll shows that only 36 percent of young people smoke regularly and 45 percent never smoke (see Table 55 in the Annex). These results are surprising when bearing in mind that young people receive no anti-smoking education in school and that they are exposed to smoking role models. This is an indication of a positive trend that should be further explored.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Youth in BiH do not start sexual activity early. According to our research, the age span for the first sexual encounter is from 16 to 20 (see Table 56 in the Annex). But youth have insufficient knowledge about reproductive health.³⁷ This is mainly because sexual and reproductive health are not covered in the education system, nor it is an open topic for family discussion.

Our poll shows that young people have difficulties obtaining trustworthy information about sexual and reproductive health. Thirty-two percent said they do not get any information about sexual or reproductive health at all. Thirty-seven percent said their main information source is the media and 31 percent said their friends are their main source (see Table 39 in the Annex). Because of the stigma attached to discussions about sex and reproductive health in the still-traditional BiH family, only 10 percent of youth said they get information from their family. Not surprisingly, friends and peers are

³⁵Ibid, 85.

³⁶ For further information see UNICEF's Rapid Assessment and Research on HIV/AIDS among Especially Vulnerable Young People in SEE, UNICEF/CIDA, 2002.

³⁷ See UNFPA and Prism Research, 'Reproaktivno i seksualno zdravlje, znanje i ponašanje mladih ljudi u BiH,' 2002, 83.

convenient to talk to because they are often in the similar situation. This raises concern about the quality and accuracy of the information on sexual and reproductive health that BiH youth have. Young people also rely on the media for information. However, media sources are potentially dangerous, as they do not distinguish between age groups and knowledge per se. Teenagers are often exposed to advertising that promotes sex without receiving information about the consequences, such as STDs.

Contraception

UNICEF and UNFPA reports from 2001 and 2002 indicate that knowledge about contraception has improved from the data in HDR Youth 2000. While only 50 percent of young people answered questions relating to contraception in HDR Youth 2000, in 2002 all of the young people participating in UNFPA focus discussions understood condoms and how to use them.

Only a few could explain the effects of taking the contraception pill. But knowledge about condoms is not enough to prevent unwanted pregnancies and STDs. In our poll, young people said they still have unprotected sex, in spite of their rather well-developed theoretical knowledge about contraception methods. Forty-eight percent of youth polled said that they always use protection and contraception when having sex, while 19 percent said they use them sometimes, while 23 percent never use protection and contraception while having intimate relations (See Table 38 in the Annex). Even though this speaks of an improvement in comparison with data from 2000, when 50 percent said they never used protection, it still presents a serious health concern.

Although there are no accurate official data about unwanted pregnancies and abortion rates, field practitioners talk about very rates of both. Some agencies that focus of youth health say that abortion is the main method of contraception in BiH, particularly among young girls. This is a very serious long-term health concern for BiH and should be included as a policy issue within the sexual and reproductive health agenda. Still, young people use contraception for preventing unwanted pregnancies, not for protecting themselves from STDs and HIV/AIDS.³⁸

HIV/AIDS Risks and Prevention

Our poll showed that most young people in BiH do not consider themselves at risk for HIV/AIDS or other sexually-transmitted diseases. The HDR 2000 report based its conclusions on official records from 1998 on HIV-positive cases. The report emphasized a high risk of HIV/AIDS infections in BiH because of the increase in the transit of people and goods in BiH, as well as the increased prevalence of STDs. Subsequently, the international community has sought to shed light on the risky sexual behavior of BiH youth and the problem of HIV, and has undertaken a number of comprehensive research activities. In the past two years, research and situation analyses have been conducted by agencies such as UNICEF/CIDA and IOM.³⁹ The findings have provided the necessary data for the development of a more coordinated response on HIV/AIDS in BiH. One positive outcome of the focus on HIV/AIDS can be seen in the increased number of awareness-raising campaigns and safe sex promotion activities.

The establishment of the National Advisory Board on HIV/AIDS in 2002 has helped as well. The board involves all stakeholders dealing with HIV/AIDS. The government, however, needs to set up a better system for sexual and reproductive health and guarantee a regular flow of contraceptives.

Homosexuality

This population's risk factors are very high. Some reports indicate that the population's limited knowledge of STDs and HIV/AIDS and their rare use of protection during intercourse are the main causes of this group's vulnerability.⁴⁰ Furthermore, most young male homosexuals have their first sexual experiences with older partners. Blind dating is common, and not knowing the partner does not stop one from engaging in sexual intercourse on the first date.⁴¹ Condom use is not common. Some participants in the survey said that sex with a condom was not sex.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation is evident in BiH society. The stigma is such that homosexuals are denied jobs, freedom of speech and often access to public accommodation and ven-

³⁸ UNFPA and Prism Research, 'Reproaktivno i seksualno zdravlje, znanje i ponašanje mladih ljudi u BiH,' 2002, 17.

³⁹ 'RAR on HIV/AIDS among Especially Vulnerable Young People in SEE,' UNICEF/CIDA, 2002 and 'Overview of HIV/AIDS in South Eastern Europe, Epidemiological data, vulnerable groups, governmental and non-govern-

mental responses up to January 2002,' UNICEF/IOM, 2002.

⁴⁰ 'RAR on HIV/AIDS among Especially Vulnerable Young People in SEE,' UNICEF/CIDA, 2002.

⁴¹Ibid.

ues. The homosexual population of BiH is therefore a closed and marginalized group, forced to hide their lives and their orientation. They lead double lives just to survive. There is a great need for society to change its perception of and behaviour towards homosexuals. BiH society needs to address both the stigmatization and the need for additional sexual education and HIV/AIDS prevention programs targeting this particular population group. BiH society also needs to promote equal treatment and equal dignity for homosexual, bisexual and transsexual people. These actions should then lead to equal treatment, protection from discrimination and fair and equal treatment for lesbian and gay couples and families. The first NGO to promote the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals is Bosna 14 Septembar in Sarajevo.⁴²

Youth-friendly Counselling Services

The emphasis that HDR 2000 placed on the need for counselling centres for sexual education and disease prevention was a starting point for establishing a coordinated, cooperative approach between UN agencies and NGOs. These initiatives helped establish pioneer counselling service centres for young people free of charge. In addition, there have been numerous awareness-raising campaigns and information points set up throughout the country.⁴³ These grassroots projects should be strengthened by government policy, such as advocacy campaigns and opening counselling centres for youth, especially in small communities.

At this stage NGOs projects and the pioneer counselling services have no sustainability or long-term funding. These activities should be recognized by policy makers as good models, and funding such activities should be supported by government structures either within or without the youth policy strategy, which would sustain and institutionalize these youth-friendly services.

Conclusion

The health situation of young people in BiH has not changed significantly in the past three years. The BiH health care system is still characterized as unfriendly and bureaucratic, with limited and unequal access to its services. This is an environment that offers little support to youth. The needs for establishing higher standards of public health and opening of counselling centers (mental health, sexual and reproductive health) are evident.

On the positive side, significant progress has been made in BiH youth's knowledge of sexual and reproductive health in the last three years. Many studies and research findings are now available, providing grassroots organizations, donors and policy makers with information for creating country-wide response mechanisms to protect young people. Young people in general seem to practice unprotected sex, though they know about contraception. They also have limited knowledge about HIV/AIDS and STDs.

Youth-friendly services, such as UNFPA/IRC Youth Information Centres in Brčko, Banja Luka, Mostar and Bihać, need to be sustained and locally-owned, and should provide policy makers with the necessary insights to the problems and offer approaches to address the issues. This generation of young people needs to see such efforts, as well as immediate commitment and action plans from all levels of government that will include recommendations from youth themselves about how their health should be maintained and protected.

⁴²The group's e-mail address is bosna_14septembar@yahoo.com.

⁴³UNFPA/IRC project set up information services and youth-friendly medical services for sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND POLITICS

One of the preconditions for the fulfillment of the democratization process is the participation of the individual citizen in political and social changes. Only in such a way can each citizen have ownership over the process and appreciate the result. An active citizen can exercise the right to participation through various means – voting, involvement in various forms of community actions, membership in municipality/government boards or any other forms of social action. Since young people are the present and the future of BiH, it is especially important that they understand the fundamental value of human rights and have an appreciation and ownership of democratic social change.

Influence and participation of young people in political life

Young people in BiH struggle with the concept of active involvement and participation in political life. Large numbers of young people do not understand how the political system works, nor do they have knowledge of their own rights.⁴⁴ This could partially be explained by the insufficient political and human rights education in school, which is still very rigid, traditional and generally built on an undemocratic basis (see the Education Chapter for more details). Furthermore, the complex democratization process in BiH imposes many higher priorities, thus frequently neglecting the "importance of essential support to creating beneficial status in the best interests of (...) young people".⁴⁵

Table 6 - How much influence do young people have on political events in BiH?

N	1000
Great	1%
Enough	3%
A little	44%
Not at all	50%
Dont know	2%

Additionally, youth often complain that they are seen as inexperienced, frivolous and therefore untrustworthy partners in the decision-making process. On the other hand, not many youths are aware that their participation is important. These are some of the reasons that a high percentage of young people have little faith in their ability or capacity to change or influence the state of

affairs in their country. In fact, 95 percent of respondents to our Survey believe that they have little or no influence on political events in BiH. This is supported by the overall feeling of young people that they are "on the margins of any kind of decision-making in BiH".⁴⁶

Table 7 - How much influence do young people have on local-level decisions that affect them?

N	1000
Great	1%
Enough	4%
A little	47%
Not at all	46%
Dont know	2%

The situation is the same at the local level, in spite of the expectation that youth would have easier access to authorities and that dialogue would be improved. (See Table 7.) The results of another youth survey showed that "young people believe that politicians are more interested in gaining and keeping power (whether it be financial gain or political power) than in working for the benefit of the country".⁴⁷ The same survey showed that 52.4 percent of respondents believe that politicians support only activities that favour their political interests.⁴⁸ The situation with political party participation is similar. Following the same pattern of feelings of marginalization, 84 percent of young people in BiH think that young politicians have little or no influence on creating party policy. This may be a reason why youth interest and participation in political parties has decreased, from 8 percent involved in 2000 to the present 6 percent, which is a clear indication of their skepticism about political participation.

Table 8 - Do you vote?

N	806
Yes	64%
No	36%

Generally speaking, the three years since the UNDP HDR 2000: Youth have seen no improvement in the trend of youth marginalization or in the overall feeling of apathy. The 90 percent of youth that felt they lacked any power or influence in 2000 has now increased to 95 percent. However, statistics show that 16 percent of the 2002 elections lists were made up of youth representatives. Of 541 mandates won in the 2002 general elections, 48 mandates were given to youth aged between 18-30.⁴⁹ The BiH Parliamentary Assembly,

⁴⁴ Kacapor, Zehra, Master Study 'Should I Stay or Should I Go? - The Prospects of the Youth in the BiH Transitions", Sarajevo 2003

⁴⁵ Sekulovic, Rasa, 'Different Forms of Children's and Young People's Participation in SEE,' available at <http://www.coe.int/T/E/cultural%5Fco%2Doperation/Youth/Research/Pa>

pers/Individual_Research_Papers/ .

⁴⁶ OIA, 'Specijalni Izvještaj o razvoju omladinske politike u BiH, 1. dio: Mladi i Vlast,' Sarajevo, April 2002.

⁴⁷ Kacapor, Zehra, Master Study 'Should I Stay or Should I Go? - The Prospects of the Youth in the BiH Transitions", Sarajevo 2003, 57

however, has no representative younger than 34.⁵⁰ Exercising the right to vote, which is the minimum level of participation but still the obligation of an active citizen, shows a slightly brighter picture. It is interesting to note that young people whose overall feeling of distrust is prevalent still claim that they are voting. Our survey shows that 64 percent of young people that are eligible to vote (those aged between 18 and 30) do exercise this right.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

The right to refuse to perform military service for reasons of conscience is inherent in the notion of freedom of thought, conscience and religion as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁵⁴ This freedom is also articulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁵⁵ and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.⁵⁶ However, BiH existing practices remain short of international standards in relation to the Right to Conscientious Objection (CO). Defence matters are, according to the Dayton Agreement, the domain of the entities. But the Law on Defence in both BiH entities is outdated and inadequate. Furthermore, OSCE has reported that by far the most pressing problem in implementing the right to CO has been the ongoing failure to inform people subject to conscription of their right to seek conscientious objector status. UNDP/UNV, OSCE, the Council of Europe and UNHCHR have made this issue the focus of their intervention with the relevant ministries.

Information dissemination improved between 2000 to 2003. According to our survey, 65 percent of respondents fully or partially support CO (See Table 29 in the Annex). In 2000, only 42 percent of young people supported. Also positive is the decrease of number of uncertain opinions from 13 percent in 2000 to 6 percent in 2003. This could be the result of countrywide information campaigns, such as the Kampanja za prigovor Savjesti, which has been active since 2002.⁵⁷

When asked where conscientious objectors should do their civil service, 42 percent of young people said it should be done within government civilian institutions, while 24 percent think it should be done in an association. However, 29 percent of young people think the civil service should remain within army units, but without carrying weapons (See Table 30 in the Annex).

It is not surprising that many BiH youth object to carrying arms after the recent war. While civil service satisfies the individual's fundamental right to conscientious objection, it also makes an important voluntary contribution to society, brings benefits to the community and improves the quality of life. Therefore, the dissemination of information on the right to conscientious objection is important.

This is confirmed by the fact that 14.3 percent of voters in the 2002 elections were young people. BiH Election Commission data further shows that 45.5 percent of the 405,247 registered voters aged 17-30 voted.⁵¹ In spite of the general belief that young people do not vote, our survey and the election results show a different picture. It is important to point out that the turnout of young voters in BiH is high in comparison to that of Western European countries.⁵² This relatively high voter turnout needs to be further encouraged and supported by all stakeholders in the community and in the wider political environment. Voting, however, is only one aspect of civic duty. To make the best use of their right to participation, youth should also increase their involvement in other parts of political life and in community action.⁵³

Conclusion

Post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina is heading towards democracy and towards integration into the larger European society. This transition has brought enormous challenges to the population, and it is not an easy task for this recovering and learning society. The poor economic situation, poverty, lack of confidence in the government and the lack of influence on the state of affairs all contribute to the general feeling of marginalization.

Though young people's political involvement is low, there is a good chance for improvement mostly because of the civil society initiatives and informal education, both of which have managed to engage young people in their activities and build awareness among young people. On the other hand, there are high expectations for the current government, which has promised to increase their focus on youth issues.⁵⁸ However, democracy cannot be "reducible to institutions, rules and procedures, i.e. to its formal aspect".⁵⁹ It also relies on an active citizenry able and willing to participate in community life.

⁴⁸Ibid., 57.

⁴⁹Data obtained from the BiH Election Commission, June 2003.

⁵⁰Data obtained from the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, May 2003.

⁵¹Data obtained from the BiH Election Commission, June 2003.

⁵²According to a BBC study of youth participation in the 2001 election in Britain, 1 in 5 young people are voting.
www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/uk_news/education/2966275.stm

⁵³ Research for the 'Youth Initiatives Assessment' report by the World Bank /IBHI was conducted in the beginning of 2003. The report assesses youth involvement in community action in BiH.

STAY, LEAVE OR RETURN

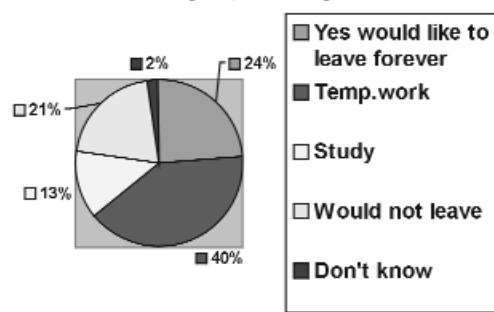
The Youth 2000 opinion poll put international and national stakeholders in BiH on alert. The poll indicated that 62 percent of young people would leave the country if they had the opportunity. This statistic has since been quoted in every report that has been written about young people in BiH. As the following chapter shows, emigration is still on the minds of many young people.

There have recently been a number of perceived success stories of young people from BiH living abroad – filmmakers and football players, but also many who have been successful in the academic field or in pursuing professional careers. News of these successes instills pride in young people but equally triggers the desire for the equivalent success in their own lives. The extent to which young people are coming back voluntarily to work and live in BiH is impossible to gauge. Nevertheless, the survey intended to gain more insight into the multiple aspects of the desire to leave BiH. The polled young people were asked more specifically about their motivation for wanting to leave.

Working abroad, studying abroad, or leaving forever

The table below shows that young people have a strong desire to be free to go abroad temporarily for work or study, either to gain additional experience outside BiH, or to be given a chance to have an income on the formal market. About a quarter said they would like to leave Bosnia forever. The majority would like to go work abroad temporarily or continue their studies abroad. Of the 24 percent that would like to leave permanently, more than half say that they do not see any prospects of living a valuable life in BiH in general. About 40 percent mentioned economic reasons.

Graph 2: If the opportunity was offered to you, would you leave BiH?



⁵⁴ United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18.

⁵⁵ United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18.

⁵⁶ Council of Europe, European Convention on Human Rights, Article 9.

⁵⁷ www.prigovorsavjesti.com

As was mentioned in the 2000 report, the gastarbeiter concept seems to have left a legacy.

Additionally, the frustration regarding the insufficient education system and high unemployment rates on the formal labor market influence the desire to establish a better life outside of BiH. Concerns over security or political reasons are marginal. The Early Warning System report from October to December 2002 at the same time points to an increase of security concerns. This should not be dismissed. In the data received from our survey, it seems that, comparatively, economic concerns are much stronger for young people. On the other hand, 21 percent expressed no wish to leave the country at all. The urban-rural divide is not significant, with only a slightly higher percentage of rural youth wanting to work abroad and a higher percentage of urban youth wanting to study abroad (see Table 17 in the Annex).

About 92,000 young people left BiH between 1996 and 2001.⁶⁰ Our poll was used to find out whether young people are still trying to leave or if they are just thinking about it. Seventy-seven percent of those polled said they would like to leave permanently, or to leave for temporary work or for continuous education. Of those, 18 percent have taken concrete steps to do so. In other words, every fifth young person that wants to leave is taking the necessary steps to do so.

The percentage of those that want to leave permanently is equal among all ethnicities in BiH. Most Serbs said that they do not see general perspectives in this country, whereas most Bosniaks are concerned by the economy. Effective steps to leave the country have been made by more Bosniaks than Serbs, Croats or others (see Table 58 in the Annex). Gender analysis shows that more men than women want to leave BiH forever, and more women mentioned that they wanted to study abroad, but more men want to work abroad (see Table 17 in the Annex).

Slightly more men (21 percent) have taken concrete steps to leave than women (14 percent). This fact indicates that men are perceived as breadwinners in Bosnian society, and are more ready to leave – or are expected to leave – the country to find better income opportunities.

⁵⁸ For more information, refer to the Youth Policy chapter.

⁵⁹ Kaldor, Mary, and Ivan Vejvoda, 'Democratization in Central and East European Countries,' International Affairs 73, I (1997), 59-82.

⁶⁰ UNDP, 'Human Development Report 2002,' 42.

⁶¹ EWS Annual Report 2002, p. 29-30

Table 9 - To what degree do you feel attached to:

	Great	Enough	A little	Not at all	Dont know
Nation ^a	43%	44%	7%	3%	2%
Religion	48%	39%	8%	2%	2%
Entity	31%	41%	18%	8%	2%
City	39%	40%	14%	6%	2%
BiH	29%	30%	18%	20%	3%
Place of living before the war	25%	30%	11%	34%	

a. Nation here means ethnicity

Women are less likely to be encouraged to go abroad. The results of the gender differences in this aspect support the observation made earlier in the education and economy section that gender discrepancies in regards to income and status exist in BiH society.

The degree of attachment to BiH or other relevant countries of the former Yugoslavia can be used to identify the willingness of young people to accept BiH. The survey included the same question from 2000, "To what extent do you feel attached to BiH?" The results of the survey are similar to those of 2000, in that one in five young persons still does not feel attached to BiH.

In stark contrast, almost 50 percent indicated their attachment to religion. One in three expressed their attachment to one of the entities within BiH rather than BiH as a whole. Croats, as in 2000, are again more attached to nationality and religion than are other ethnic groups in BiH. Fifty percent of Bosniaks feel greatly attached to BiH. The trend in attachment among Serbs and Croat is not shifting in favor of BiH. Croat views remained the same as in 2000 (15 percent were not at all attached to BiH, 18 percent slightly). Even more young Serbs said this year that they do not feel attached to BiH at all than they did in 2000 (33 percent in 2000, 43 percent in 2003). This contrasts with observations in the 2002 Early Warning System report, which showed an overall increase in public support for the integration of BiH.⁶¹

However, it must be taken into consideration that the questions asked in the Early Warning System were different than the questions used in this sample. We could also assume that young Serbs' general perception of low living standards and poor economic prospects contributes to the feeling of non-attachment. Serbs' level of attachment to FRY (now Serbia and Montenegro) is the same as in 2000, although we observed a significant increase in "don't know" answers (see Table 33g in the

Annex). Twenty-nine percent of Croats feel strongly attached to Croatia. These results clearly point to the fact that young people identify with what is tangible and what seems to endure, such as their religious background or ethnicity. The majority of the young people interviewed live in the place they were born. Only 13 percent are internally displaced or returnees, which explains why 83 percent answered that they don't know if they feel attached to their pre-war home. Unfortunately, we cannot draw any conclusions about young people's wish for internal return. There was also insufficient data to draw a conclusion on the perceptions of young people from mixed backgrounds. These questions should be dealt with separately in the next poll.

Return?

Many young people might think about returning. However, little research has been done on Diaspora youth. Such research could provide insights into the question of why young Bosnians do not want to return. It could be very useful to establish better links to the youth Diaspora to inform them about general policy developments, the economic situation and civil society development from the perspective of young people in BiH. In return, input from the Diaspora should be taken into consideration in the reform process. The aim should not be to motivate Diaspora youth to return per se, but to get them involved in the reform process in BiH from abroad and provide support in strengthening the state development process by means of skills exchange.⁶²

Conclusion

The young population is as concerned with their prospects of living in BiH in 2003 as they were in 2000. The poll shows that young people want to stay connected to BiH in some way. However, more than 50 percent would like to leave for work or study. Along with the fact that an additional 25 percent would like to leave in any case, these fig-

⁶² For example, the US non-profit organization Community of Bosnia sets up summer internships in BiH for young Bosnians in the US.

⁶³ To name a few: 1.) South East European Youth Network under Danish FRESTA program, 2.) www.seeyn.org Balkan Youth Project - www.youthfo-

ures are again an alarming sign of young people's dissatisfaction with life in BiH. Change will not happen overnight. In the short term, because young people are generally more impatient in their expectations about life's opportunities, it is necessary and useful to provide young people the opportunity to travel in the region and to meet other young people in Southeastern Europe and Western Europe. A few regional programs funded by international donors give young people the possibility to engage in learning and leisure activities in and outside of BiH⁶³. Such projects need to be continued and made permanently available to young people. Equally important is the expected signing of the Bologna Declaration in fall 2003 (see the education chapter), which will increase students' opportunities to study at other European universities. Youth networks in the Balkans and across Europe help young people from BiH feel less isolated and part of Europe.

rum.org 3.) youthNET - IZ Vienna - OIA in Bosnia-Herzegovina
www.iz.or.at/youthnet 4.) youthExchange.SEE - www.oiabih.info, 5.) MOBA
regional program led by Scouts - www.mobaproject.net 6.) Balkan
Children and Youth Foundation (BCYF) - www.balkanyouth.org 7.) Peace

Trails Project where around 100 youth went to USA in the last 3 years on 3 weeks leadership program.

64 OIA, 'Special Report on Youth Policy No. 3: Youth NGO Sector in BiH,' April 2003.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEISURE TIME

Leisure time is one of the most important parts of a young person's life. Spending it creatively can contribute to a person's development and serve as preparation for future involvement in any segment of social life. As the HDR Youth 2000 report indicated, leisure time activities and venues were severely affected during the war, especially in small communities in BiH. Young people have had neither many choices of leisure activities, nor the means to afford such activities. Our research confirms that young people in BiH still do not have many alternatives when it comes to spending their leisure time. Furthermore, the trends in how that leisure time is spent have not significantly changed in the past three years. Young people still spend most of their leisure time in the house (see Table 10). They either spend their leisure time with their family (72 percent) or visiting other family members or friends (70 percent). They also spend a large part of their free time watching TV and listening to the radio (76 percent). This can be explained both by the fact that TV and radio are available in most households, as well as by the fact that alternatives are few, especially in small towns.

Internet

Young people in BiH either do not use or do not have access to the Internet. Only 16 percent of our respondents use the Internet. This is still an

improvement over the 8 percent figure from the 2000 report. The number of young people who never use the Internet went down to 51 percent from 80 percent in the last three years. It can be assumed that this is the short-term result of many projects implemented by youth NGOs and international organizations, which have provided Internet services to young people. Still, the low number of Internet users indicates the digital divide between BiH and Western European youth. In Western Europe, young people are more and more used to doing school and other research through the Internet, while in BiH such facilities are lacking, particularly in schools. This will in consequence lead to unfamiliarity with computers and sustain the digital divide. Therefore, the above-mentioned projects are of high value and should be supported by both the government and donors.

Civil society

BiH youth lack places to gather and spend their leisure time creatively. The former youth centres (Dom omladine) have usually been privatized and used for other purposes. Premises of youth organizations are often in very bad condition, with old infrastructure and with practically no equipment. Municipality budgets often lack finances for youth-related activities. A recent report showed that 23 percent of youth organizations have no premises whatsoever, while 50 percent lack or have insufficient amount of material and technical

Table 10 - How often do you:

	Never	Rerely	Only on special occasion	Often	Regularly
watch TV/video	1%	17%	7%	47%	29%
go to the cinema	27%	35%	14%	19%	4%
play sports	23%	29%	13%	25%	10%
go on outings	11%	34%	30%	21%	4%
go to town/cafes/discos	6%	16%	12%	40%	26%
surf the internet	52%	22%	10%	11%	5%
go to the theatre	68%	21%	7%	3%	0%
attend religious meetings	38%	25%	20%	12%	4%
political activities	75%	15%	5%	3%	1%
listen to the radio	4%	11%	9%	46%	31%
go to parties	12%	20%	32%	30%	7%
attend various courses	52%	28%	10%	9%	1%
read books	11%	23%	16%	36%	13%
go to galleries	71%	16%	6%	5%	2%
go shopping	6%	18%	16%	39%	22%
visiting family and friends	2%	9%	18%	48%	23%
spend time with your family	3%	5%	11%	40%	41%
spend time in the house	5%	14%	8%	38%	34%
doing voluntary work	74%	15%	4%	5%	3%
art	78%	13%	5%	4%	2%
playing computer games	60%	19%	7%	10%	4%

equipment.⁶⁴ The lack of finances and space make it difficult for young people to use their leisure time in a creative way. As long as youth organizations do not have access to municipal funding or space, they will remain dependent on outside sources and will be donor-driven. This will further affect their sustainability and the real impact of their work in the communities. Dependency on ever-decreasing foreign aid will also deepen competition among youth groups and reduce networking with other partners in community development.

Recent research on youth showed that the "vast majority of youth are rarely participating in youth projects".⁶⁵ It can be assumed that the above-mentioned factors influence youth's decisions about being involved in civil society activities. Only 8 percent of young people polled said that they volunteered often or regularly. Volunteering has decreased in the last three years. In 2000, 65 percent said they never volunteered, while today the number is 72 percent. Youth organizations attract only a small number of young people as active members. Promoting civil society activities and volunteerism is important, however, and young people have to feel that their efforts are supported, respected and appreciated. The low level of active volunteerism can also be related to the widespread disbelief among youth in their ability to change the political and public trend of excluding young people (see Youth and Political Life chapter).

Youth organizations also are challenged by the lack of respect in their communities. The communities in which youth associations operate often have negative perceptions of the youth activities and their alternative values that are sometimes at odds with the values of the community. Members of youth NGOs are often perceived as outcasts, drug addicts or promoters of some negative trends.⁶⁶ A useful tool to change such perceptions would be more media coverage of the positive actions of youth NGOs.

Culture

Our research showed that only 3 percent of young people go to theatres, while 5 percent are involved in arts and 7 percent go to galleries. These findings reveal the disinterest and apathy prevalent among young people. The poor economic situation, however, is also a limiting factor in how leisure

time is spent, and these findings are an alarming indicator of the affect of poverty on young people. Cultural life revolves around watching television or listening to the radio, mostly at home. The majority of citizens have said that cultural life consists of watching TV.⁶⁷

Conclusion

There have not been major changes in how young people spend their leisure time. The lack of adequate cultural or sport venues and events leaves young people with the options of staying home or "hanging out" in streets or cafes. Young people do not have enough money to be able to spend their leisure time in certain costly educational or cultural activities. Although municipal budgets are already stretched, the threat posed by youth apathy and lack of activity calls for municipal action. Municipal budgets should provide funds for adequate leisure time activities channelled either through youth clubs, sports or cultural organisations to add momentum to the local initiatives of organizations active in the community.

⁶⁵ Kacapor, Zehra, Master Study 'Should I Stay or Should I Go? - The Prospects of the Youth in the BiH Transitions", Sarajevo 2003, 63

⁶⁶ For a more in-depth analysis of youth initiatives and their impact on society, see the World Bank/IBHI Youth Initiatives Assessment Report.

⁶⁷ UNDP, 'Early Warning System Report 2002,' 25.

⁶⁸ European Steering Committee for Intergovernmental Cooperation in the Youth Field, 'Draft Recommendation on Youth Participation and the Future of Civil Society,' Council of Europe, Strasbourg, December 1996.

YOUTH POLICY

Youth policy deals with "young people's economic, social and cultural situation, their access to information and advice, vocational training, employment, housing, health and cultural and leisure activities".⁶⁸ It furthermore includes strategies on how to encourage young people's participation in society and addresses young people's development needs. These strategies range from providing education or health services to conducting campaigns of social mobilization, active participation and awareness-raising. The complexity of issues involved requires the coherence and cooperation of all the relevant stakeholders during the creation and implementation process. One of the main conditions for the establishment of youth policy is the active participation of young people. Ideally, they should be the leaders of this process, as youth policy means not talking about youth but with youth. The concept of youth policy is only just emerging in BiH society. Post-war transition has put different priorities on the agenda of both the government and international community. The lack of any youth policy development initiatives was listed as a major shortcoming of development efforts in BiH by the authors of the HDR Youth 2000 report. Recently though, the first promising steps forward have been taken.

Establishment of Youth Policy

Considering the low level of active participation and active citizenry among young people, it is very promising that the first steps in creating youth policy were taken by youth themselves. Their active engagement in public policy issues through their affiliation in civil society organizations has contributed to partnerships between youth and authorities at both the state and lower levels of government. One such initiative⁶⁹ led to the first Resolution on Youth in BiH, which was adopted by the BiH Parliamentary Assembly in 2002 as the first official document for the development of

Table 11 - To what extent do you support the idea of forming special institutions or ministries within the government to deal exclusively with youth problems?

N	1000
Support entirely	55%
Partially support	37%
Partially disagree	3%
Totally disagree	1%
Dont know	4%

youth policy. The government has started working on youth policy development at the beginning of 2003, when the Council of Ministers chair announced that youth are a vulnerable group needing special attention.⁷⁰ The Council of Ministers is considering the creation of a body that will focus on youth issues. This body is to be composed of both governmental institutions and civil society organizations that will work together on creation of a youth action plan.

The poll results confirm the necessity of these initiatives. As can be seen from the table below, many young people support the idea of forming such a special institution entirely. International community activities are complementing the efforts of the government to strengthen young people's position in the country. These activities range from sharing skills and experiences from other countries to building capacities and providing technical assistance to the government at all levels. Worth mentioning is the effort of international organizations to coordinate their work by establishing the Youth Policy Working Group⁷¹ with the objective to "coordinate the aid and support provided by the international organizations on youth issues and to assist in the development of youth policy".⁷²

Consultations with the Youth Sector in the PRSP Development Strategy

The PRSP Youth Coordination Committee, made up of youth NGO representatives, has worked on incorporating the youth dimension into the PRSP Development Strategy. The committee held a number of round tables in which young people gave their opinions of the current situation and recommendations and suggestions. The consultations covered education, employment, the social sector, health, the environment, information technology, the legal system and corruption. This good example should be replicated in future governmental policy developments.

Though both the state-level government and international organizations are making progress, the situation at the lower levels of government is less satisfying. The RS government transformed the Ministry of Youth and Sport into the Secretariat of Youth and Sport, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport in 2003. The FBiH government does not even have a body that focuses specifically on youth policy. The former FBiH Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport was split into two ministries (the Ministry

⁶⁹ By the BiH Youth Parliament initiated by OIA

⁷⁰ Inauguration speech of Council of Ministers Chair Adnan Terzic.

⁷¹ The Youth Policy Working Group works under the Democratization

and Citizens' Participation sector of the Institution Building Task Force.

⁷² IBTF Working Group on Youth Policy in BiH, 'Youth Policy Working Group position paper.'

⁷³ The European Charter of Participation of Youth in Municipal and

of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Culture and Sport) in 2003. Even though there is an understanding that youth issues fall under the mandate of these two ministries, there is no coordination between them in regards to these issues. BiH already has an enormous administrative system, but the creation of specific sectors for youth should be encouraged because of the importance of the issues that need to be dealt with. Capacity building at all levels of government should start immediately to ensure effective policy development. Canton governments do not meet the standards of youth participation.⁷³

Not one of the 10 cantons in the FBiH has taken proactive steps to create a youth policy. The legislative authority of the cantons has not been used to promote or develop a standardized strategy to address the youth issue. On the contrary, it is often an obstacle for the lower levels of authority to take initiatives in this field. Municipalities are aware of the lack of youth policy⁷⁴ but they do not have the legislative authority to set up such policies because the decision remains with the higher levels of government.

Stolac - Municipality Support for Youth Initiative

The agreement on establishing the Youth Volunteer Centre in Stolac, signed by the president of the Modra Rijeka youth organization, the Stolac mayor and representatives of the UNDP/UNV PIP project, is one of the first steps in nurturing cooperation between local government and youth organizations. The agreement is the starting moment of an important partnership between Stolac youth and the local authorities, who are among the first in BiH to provide a youth centre, making Stolac municipality one of the first to promote youth policy and to encourage and support youth participation. "I think this is the first project in Bosnia and Herzegovina which has opened the door for young people, and has given them opportunity to see that they are not forgotten. We are missing young people in Stolac. Most of them see their future in bigger BiH cities. But I think this is just one step forward to make them stay in this town," said Stolac Mayor Zeljko Obradović at the signing.⁷⁵

Some municipalities, however, have shown the motivation to focus more on youth and overall problems. The result of this is partnership between

Regional life and European Standards (1992) sets out the standards for youth participation. The charter promotion campaign was country-wide and was organized by OSCE and the CoE.

⁷⁴ Multilateral Academy research conducted in 2003 indicated that 61 of 79 municipality representatives emphasized the problem of the lack of youth policy. For more information, see www.mla-net.org.

youth represented by youth organizations and some municipality authorities in solving certain problems, such as providing space for youth organizations⁷⁶, inviting youth representatives to municipal council meetings⁷⁷ or providing funding for youth-related activities.⁷⁸ The pioneering steps of some municipalities should be further encouraged and supported, while good practices at the grassroots level should be reflected at higher levels of government.

Development of Youth Policy at the Local Level

The Youth Information Agency signed a memorandum of understanding with 11 municipalities (Bihać, Bosanska Krupa, Jablanica, Laktaši, Ljubuški, Maglaj, Prijedor, Vlasenica, Zavidovići, Zenica, Zvornik) at the end of 2002. Local authorities expressed their willingness to work more on youth policy development at the local level. A range of workshops and technical assistance (information services, consulting, providing useful materials, documents) provided for both local youth NGOs and local authorities have created a good beginning for common work on implementing some youth policy elements. As a result of this initiative, some of the municipalities have established youth advisory boards, and communication between youth and local authorities has significantly increased. Furthermore, all municipalities have found it important to have an officer in charge of youth issues, and municipal councils have started to work on the creation of committees on youth. Some of these municipalities have opened the bidding process for youth projects. The follow-up communication indicated mutual satisfaction with the results achieved in the short term, and more importantly, satisfaction that the youth NGOs and local administration did these activities together.⁷⁹

Conclusion

The process of developing youth policy has finally started. Continuous encouragement to include young people, however, is essential for a participative development process. It is crucial to establish permanent channels of communication between youth and the authorities. Though a substantial improvement has taken place, a strong relationship between the two groups does not yet exist in most communities in BiH. The contacts and part-

⁷⁵ For more details, see www.youth.undp.ba.

⁷⁶ Examples of such practices may be found in Stolac, Prozor/Rama, Derventa, Bosanski Petrovac and Foca/Srbinje.

⁷⁷ In Prijedor, Bugojno and Stolac.

⁷⁸ Examples may be found in Derventa or Brčko.

nerships that do exist are mostly ad hoc and not included in the regular activities of youth organizations or the government. Government representatives assigned to the task of youth policy implementation need capacity building. In order to properly develop this new field in BiH governance, expertise and knowledge on the best practices in youth policy implementation from other countries should be sought, and initiatives should be further promoted through a range of awareness-raising campaigns.

⁷⁹ For more details, see OIA SIROP 4, or www.oiabih.info.

⁸⁰ In 2002, OSCE and CoE started a countrywide distribution campaign to promote the Charter on the Participation of Youth in Municipal and Regional Life from 1992.

CONCLUSION

The results of our survey and the analysis of youth policy development covered in this report show positive trends in education and policy development. But the report also indicates young people's continuing apathy and disinterest in political life. The authors believe that promoting young people's active participation in socio-political processes adds value to development efforts and increases the chances that the introduced reforms will be sustainable. It is therefore important to take youth participation seriously and to recognize youth as partners in development.

It is encouraging that the majority of young people in the study believe that conditions in their communities will improve if young people and people in general take the responsibility for exercising their citizen's rights (see Table 13 in the Annex). Though young people believe this, their continuing apathy and disinterest needs to be addressed.

Marginalization and frequent lack of government support and responsibility are also key challenges to youth participation. The authors believe that to comprehensively address issues concerning young people in BiH, it is essential to research and monitor these socio-economic conditions that affect youth. Research and monitoring results should provide the basis for the development of a coherent youth policy. At the same time, we highlight the urgent need to include young people in this process to overcome their disillusion and apathy. Communication between youth and the government should be clearly defined and established in accordance with the practices set out in the European Charter on the Participation of Youth in Municipal and Regional life from 1992.⁸⁰

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a short summary of key recommendations from all of the report's chapters to emphasize the necessity of proactive development that includes young people. We hope that monitoring the development of youth in BiH will help place the focus on young people during BiH's reform and development process.

Education

- Implement overall and radical reform of all aspects of the education system
- Include young people, parents and teachers in the reform process through student, teacher and parent councils and unions
- Design curricula to allow for more practice and application of theoretical approach

- Make sure that curricula better reflect the constantly varying labour market situation
- Improve communication between universities and secondary and vocational schools on one side and local markets and employers on the other
- Increase municipality budgets so that municipalities can allocate part of their budgets to establish career counseling centers; enable schools to appoint their own counselors
- Swiftly implement the reform of human rights subjects and religious instruction, and include children with special needs; put in place mechanisms (because related legislation does not exist) to allow for inclusive education
- Conduct research on gender and Roma discrimination in schools

Economy

- Disseminate information on market economies to young people through schools and civil society
- Introduce labour market reforms to increase young workers' mobility
- Provide capacity building for the staff of employment bureaus and other relevant governmental institutions to enable them to ensure implementation of reforms
- Design specific programmes for employment bureaus that allow young people to move from the informal to the formal labour market
- Provide guidance through career counselling and entrepreneurship training
- Provide continuing skills training according to the needs of the labour market
- Stimulate youth-oriented real estate development
- Do research at the local level to define youth and poverty in more depth
- Establish career centres to provide career counselling and networking between youth in BiH and youth in the Diaspora

Youth and Health

- Develop accessible, youth-friendly health services
- Develop counselling service centres relevant to the needs of young people throughout the country to provide anonymous and free services
- Introduce sexual education and HIV/AIDS and drugs awareness programs to the school curriculum
- Increase investment in the monitoring and protection of young people's health

Youth and Political Life

- Take necessary steps to act collectively to include youth and other neglected groups
- Encourage cooperation between youth and institutions and support youth initiatives at all institutional levels

- Provide a favourable atmosphere for the active participation of young people
- Strengthen all forms of youth associations
- Encourage authorities, especially at the local level, to work more closely with young people
- Continue facilitating the implementation of the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Regional and Municipal Life of 1992
- Amend entity defence laws to comply with international standards on conscientious objection
- Disseminate information to youth on the right to conscientious objection

Stay, Leave or Return

- Increase youth networking across borders in the Balkans and across Europe to help young people feel less isolated
- Provide educational flexibility and the possibility of movement, such as study programmes or vocational programmes in BiH and abroad
- Develop a strategy in the Human Rights Ministry (in the sector for the Diaspora) to involve youth Diaspora more actively in BiH developments

Youth and Leisure Time

- Prioritize the return of former youth centres (Dom omladine) and continue reconstructing youth centres
- Provide adequate municipal or cantonal resources to support the work of youth organizations and centres
- Provide a variety of cultural, educational and sports activities and venues for young people, especially in small communities
- Encourage volunteerism through the promotion and empowerment of youth organizations

Youth Policy

- Establish bodies at the state and entity levels to deal with youth issues
- Build government capacities in the areas of youth policy and youth participation
- Build youth capacities to become partners in development
- Facilitate communication and cooperation between youth and government

Acronyms

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CO	Conscientious Objection
CoE	Council of Europe
Com	Council of Ministers
DPA	Dayton Peace Agreement
DFID	Department for International Development
EYF	European Youth Forum
EWS	Early Warning System
FBIH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit
HCA	Helsinki Citizens Assembly
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBHI	Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues
IC	International Community
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KM	Convertible mark
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OIA	Omladinska Informativna Agencija (Youth Information Agency)
OIA SIROP- OIA	Specijalni Izvjestaj o Razvoju Omladinske Politike (Special Report on Youth Policy Development)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RS	Republika Srpska
SDC	Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SHL	Schueler Helfen Leben
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP HDR	United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report
UNDP/UNV PIP	Youth Capacity and Confidence Building Project
UNDWG	United Nations Development Working Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICEF RAR- UNICEF	Rapid Assessment and Response
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNMBIH	United Nations Mission to BiH
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
USD	US Dollar

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Methodology Used in the Survey for BiH Youth Report 2003

The PULS agency used its traditional way of sampling for this survey. The stratification of the sample is based on two stages as per the situation in BiH, by a) the proportion of canton population in the FBiH and regional population in the RS (two regions), and b) the proportion of the population living in towns of different sizes – those with less than 2,000 people, those with 2,000-5,000 inhabitants, those with 5,000-20,000 inhabitants, those with 20,000-50,000 inhabitants, those with 50,000-100,000 inhabitants and those with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Population statistics are estimates from statistics institutes in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, UNDP, the 1991 census and those based on previous PULS research.

Settlements included in sample are chosen by the "probability proportionate to size" method, which means the greater size of settlement, the greater the possibility that the settlement would be included. Households were selected by the random starting points method and the random walk method.

In the larger towns (Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar and Banja Luka), households were chosen by sampling one or several "census areas" or districts. Census area starting points were selected from the registers of city streets and available maps. Interviewers sample every sixth address on the same side of the street, turning on each corner to the right. In villages, interviewers are instructed to distribute their walk through the whole settlement, subdividing the village in four nearly equal sub-areas and sampling the entire village.

The selection of respondents in a particular household was made using tables according to the Trohldahl-Carter-Bryant method. In a no-one-home case, interviewers were instructed to make two attempts before declaring the household a non-response. If the selected person was temporarily not at home, interviewers had to schedule a new appointment. In the case of an early termination of the interview, interviewers did not force the respondent to answer the rest of the questions, and coded the household a non-response. A substitute respondent was taken at the next address.

PULS used a sample of 1,000 respondents. Such a sample size leaves a +/- 3 percents margin of error. The face-to-face interviews lasted 30 to 40 minutes.

A random sample is ensured through several steps:

- I. Main strata of the sample:
 1. Entities (FBiH, RS)
 2. Regions within entities (eight regions and the Brcko District)
 3. Municipality size
 4. Type of settlement (urban/rural)
 - i. Random choice of urban area, and sampling of entire chosen rural areas
 - ii. Random choice of households (random starting point and random walk)
 - iii. Random choice of household inhabitants
 5. Gender and age of the respondent

It was not always possible to get honest answers from respondents, especially regarding questions on sensitive issues like sexuality and drug use. The poll was not prepared to target only these sensitive issues.

In certain cases, the number of respondents eligible for certain questions was small, for example young people with special needs. This section is not representative because only 20 respondents had certain disabilities, and their answers cannot represent all of BiH. Those answers can give us only hints, not a complete picture.

For these data, and data obtained from cross tabulations that ended with a small number of respondents it is common to use numbers, not percentages.