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MONITORING AND EVALUATION SUPPORT ACTIVITY (MEASURE-BIH)

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MAIN CHALLENGES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BiH (BASED ON DESK RESEARCH)

MARCH 2017

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POLITICAL AND REFORM CONTEXT AND SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES

The education sector is the most striking example of the unique complexities of the Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) structure established by the Dayton Agreement that make reforms extremely difficult, if not impossible. The Dayton Agreement prescribes that education, as one of the powers not expressly assigned to state institutions, is given to the entities. The Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (FBiH) further gives the cantons jurisdiction over education, including decisions concerning the regulation and provision of education—that is, having their own teaching curricula and textbooks. Combined with the Dayton Agreement’s protection of the Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian languages and the inclusion of the European Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees the right to be educated in one’s own language, this gives justification to continued segregation, with essentially three education systems along ethnic lines and virtually impossible state-level coordination, all resulting in inefficient spending with low quality of education (for example, see Council of Europe, 1999;¹ Magill, 2010;² and Perry, 2014³). The high level of decentralization with weak practical coordination results in uneven education policies, emphasis on the national group of subjects, and lack of valid external evaluation of students’ achievements after primary and secondary school.⁴

It should be noted that despite three curricula (Bosniak, Croat, and Serb) being implemented, essentially the only significant difference is in the so-called National Group of Subjects (language and literature, history, geography, music, art, and nature and society in some grades), whereas in all other subjects there is broad consistency (as much as 90–95%). In practice, although ethnically divided jurisdictions and National Group of Subjects are cited as the main political obstacles to coordination and reforms, the essential issue in education is the quality of all education, including the ethnically non-contentious content—teaching curricula are old-fashioned, dominated by decontextualized information and lists of facts, and with little recognition of skills, values, and attitudes as desirable learning outcomes, whereas teachers rely heavily on lecture and didactics and on single, state-endorsed and state-produced textbooks.⁵ Overall teaching curricula are both old-fashioned and too cluttered, while at the same time requiring too little from the students—there are too many teaching units with insufficient time devoted to each unit and with students being required to exhibit only the lowest level of knowledge of remembering theoretical facts, as opposed to being required to apply the knowledge and use critical thinking.⁶ This is further exacerbated by uneven initial education of primary and secondary school teachers, with insufficient focus on competencies in pedagogy, psychology, didactics, and teaching methods,⁷ resulting in teachers who lack modern and effective knowledge transfer skills.

¹ Council of Europe (1999). *Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Management, Financing and Leadership*. Strasbourg, France. Retrieved from http://unze.ba/download/ects/Obrazovanje_u_BiH_1999_CoE.pdf

² Magill, C. (2010). *Education and Fragility in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. UNESCO and International Institute for Educational Planning. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001910/191060e.pdf>

³ Perry, V. (2014). The Permanent Interim: Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Ongoing Educational Crisis. *E-International Relations*. Retrieved from <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/10/12/the-permanent-interim-bosnia-and-herzegovinas-ongoing-educational-crisis/>

⁴ Initiative for Monitoring the European Integration of BiH (2015). *Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Current State and Recommendations for Reforms*. Retrieved from <http://eu-monitoring.ba/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Primary-and-secondary-education-in-Bosnia-and-Herzegovina.pdf>

⁵ Stabback, P. *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Synopsis of the Case Study*. Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe. Retrieved from <http://www.erisee.org/sites/default/files/Case%20study-%20Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina.pdf>

⁶ Zecevic, I. (2014, September 1). “The Students Should Not Be the Book Worms.” *Buka*. Retrieved from <http://www.6yka.com/novost/34812/ivana-zecevic-ucenici-ne-treba-da-budu-knjiski-molci>

⁷ Brankovic, N., Husremovic, Dz., Zecevic, I., Vukotic, N. (2016). *Brief Assessment of Basic Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo: MEASURE-BiH. Retrieved from <http://www.measurebih.com/uimages/Basic%20Education%20Assessment.pdf>

Despite these core problems in the quality of teaching and knowledge outcomes that are unrelated to the continuous ethnical contents of the National Group of Subjects, there is fundamental political resistance to coordination in educational reforms. As a result, no real reforms have been implemented in the past two decades, with the cosmetic transformation of primary education from an eight-year to a nine-year system being the largest implemented reform. Although some legislative and strategic documents that could be seen as the first steps to a more concrete reform were adopted at the state level (the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH in 2003, the Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training in 2008, the 2008–2015 Strategic Directions for the Development of Education in BiH, the 2017–2013 Strategy for Development of Vocational Education and Training in BiH, and the development of common core learning outcomes for seven of eight subject areas since 2014), their essential parts for the quality of education have mostly not been implemented in practice, due to both the lack of political will and the fact that these documents are generally written in broad terms and are not accompanied with concrete operational guidelines for implementation.

As mentioned earlier, the full implementation jurisdiction is at the cantonal level in FBiH and at the entity/district level in Republika Srpska (RS) and Brcko District (BD), whereas the state level (through the Ministry of Civil Affairs and its Agency for Preschool, Primary, and Secondary Education) and the FBiH government level (through the Ministry of Education and Science of FBiH) have weak and unenforceable coordination jurisdictions.⁸ The Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH (MoCA) defines the governing principles for coordination of activities at all levels, harmonization of plans of the entity authorities, and defining strategy at the international level. The Agency for Preschool, Primary, and Secondary Education of BiH (APOSO), established in 2007,⁹ is responsible for establishment of standards for evaluation of the results accomplished; development of the common core for curricula in preschool, primary, and secondary education; and for other expert tasks in the area of knowledge standards and quality assurance. Coordinating bodies for the education sector in BiH are the Conference of Ministers of Education of BiH and the Council for General Education in BiH. The Conference of Education Ministers has met since 2012; it comprises 14 ministers (the BiH Minister of Civil Affairs and the 13 entity/BD education ministers). The Conference provides advice, guidance, recommendations, and opinions to MoCA for coordination of the education sector at the domestic and international levels. The Conference is envisaged to meet at least three times a year, and more frequently if needed, but in practice it meets less frequently. The Council for General Education in BiH was formed in 2010, based on an agreement between MoCA and all Education Ministries in BiH, as an independent, expert advisory body for preschool, primary, and secondary education, to monitor, analyze, and assess the state and the needs of education system in BiH, and to provide advice for education reform. The Council comprises representatives of educators from preschool, primary, and secondary education and from teacher study programs; pedagogical institutes¹⁰ (there are nine pedagogical institutes in BiH, one in RS, two in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, and one each in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica, Bihac, Gorazde, and the Brcko District of BiH); APOSO; teachers' unions; and parents.¹¹

⁸ In addition, municipal/city level of government is also responsible for some issues in primary education.

⁹ *Law on the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education 2007*, Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Retrieved from

http://www.erisee.org/downloads/library_bih/Law%20on%20Agency%20for%20Preschool_Primary_Secondary%20Educ_engl.pdf.

¹⁰ Pedagogical Institutes are in charge of professional monitoring of educational institutions, i.e. development of curricula, affirmation of new approaches and methods in the educational process, organization of trainings for teachers, school principals, and other activities that fall under their competency.

¹¹ European Commission (2016). *Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016 Report*. Brussels. Retrieved from

https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_bosnia_and_herzegovina.pdf

The main challenges can be grouped into five broad areas, noting that these are intertwined in practice and that the political obstacles related to coordination and strategic planning in particular affect all other areas:

I. INSUFFICIENT POLICY COORDINATION AND VAGUE STRATEGIC PLANNING

In practice, the legislative framework, standards, and strategic directions have not been fully implemented in their parts pertaining to the quality of education and weaknesses persist across the education system. Existing strategic objectives are usually set broadly and at a high level and are, in most cases, not translated into concrete operational guidelines and/or not implemented due to political obstacles. Coordination, which is an absolute necessity in such a decentralized and complex system, is still insufficient due to political obstacles and fundamental disagreement on whether the education system should and can be harmonized, as the existing coordination mechanisms are underused, including the state-level institutions, Conference of Ministers of Education of BiH, and Council for General Education in BiH.

2. LOW QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATION AND LACK OF SYSTEMATIC MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

Improvement of education quality is listed as a priority in all strategic documents in BiH; however, in practice, however, the traditional approach to teaching and perception of quality prevails, placing emphasis on structural dimensions rather than process and outcome dimensions. This indicates that the concept of quality as understood by some actors within the education system might not fully align with international definitions of quality.

Most of the challenges related to quality of education that existed when the 2008–2015 Strategic Directions for the Development of Education in BiH were developed still exist and hamper the quality of education. These challenges include lack of a system of external evaluations, lack of measurement of teacher performance, inflexible teaching programs, learning content burdened with the irrelevant facts and insufficiently in line with life and development of science and technology, and lack of applied methods focused on a child/student and development of critical thinking.

There is no systematic monitoring of the quality of education in BiH. Reliable and comprehensive statistics in education at all levels is lacking, and data collection is not adequately supported, especially in terms of learning outcome data. The scarcity of available data indicates low quality of education.

The 2016 EU Progress Report¹² for BiH assesses that the immediate focus of BiH should be on strengthening the capacity of state-level education agencies to develop EU standards and increase the level of quality assurance in education, and on establishing an effective coordination mechanism in FBiH to improve cooperation among bodies responsible for quality assurance across the country. Despite progress in APOSO's adoption of the common core curricula, overall coordination on quality assurance is assessed as weak, with missing operational teaching curricula needed to translate the existing learning outcome-based common core curricula into concrete operational guidelines.

¹² European Commission (2016). *Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016 Report*. Brussels. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_bosnia_and_herzegovina.pdf.

3. UNEVEN AND INEFFECTIVE TEACHERS' EDUCATION WITH INSUFFICIENT FOCUS ON COMPETENCIES IN PEDAGOGY, PSYCHOLOGY, DIDACTICS, AND TEACHING METHODS (PPDM)

Problems have been identified in both pre-service and in-service teacher's education, in both primary and secondary education, including lack of a system for teachers' professional improvement and advancement. The current situation regarding the initial education of preschool, primary, and secondary school teachers and their continuous professional development (CPD) is uneven in different parts of the country, with insufficient focus on competencies in pedagogy, psychology, didactics, and teaching methods.

4. RELATIVELY HIGH TOTAL SPENDING DUE TO DECENTRALIZATION AND HIGH ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS COUPLED WITH INSUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND UNEVEN TEACHER SALARIES NOT TIED TO PERFORMANCE

Teachers' wages are unequal across the country, are not tied to performance, and are generally perceived as low, yet essentially the entire budget for education is used to pay for wages, with no real capital investment. Despite spending a relatively high 5% of GDP on education, BiH's education outcomes are among the weakest in the region, probably resulting from the high administrative costs of a highly decentralized system and the lack of common standards for various levels of education and teacher training and performance evaluation. The portion of the education budget aimed at the quality and development of educational process is extremely limited.

5. CONTINUED STRUGGLE WITH IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education in primary and secondary schools is stipulated as a legal obligation, which includes the possibility of access for all categories of children with special needs, with respect to objective abilities of the participants in education. The legislation in BiH includes the principle of non-discrimination based on race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, and national or social origin, and establishes an obligation for inclusive education. However, in practice, BiH struggles to implement these regulations. The main challenges relate to inclusive education for children with disabilities (poor implementation of legislation due to both lack of funds and inadequacies of teachers' competencies), Roma children and children from the lowest income groups, and in "two schools under one roof."

DEFINITIONS OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BIH¹³

Primary education, according to the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, is compulsory for all children. It starts in the calendar year in which the child reaches the age of six years as of April 1 and lasts without interruption for a period that must not be less than eight years. In the FBiH, the process of introducing compulsory nine-year basic education was completed at the beginning of the 2009/2010 school year, whereas in RS the nine-year compulsory primary education was introduced in 2003/2004. According to the Framework Law, compulsory education is free and it is provided to all

¹³ Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, *Main Information on Education in BiH*. Retrieved from http://www.mcp.gov.ba/org_jedinice/sektor_obrazovanje/osnovne_inf/?id=2021

children. However, due to lack of funds, this provision is carried out selectively, and usually by the criterion of social status of the child or of belonging to national minorities, mostly Roma, to ensure full and equal access to the regular education system. Only Brcko District implements this provision—it provides all students with free textbooks and transportation to school.

Children with special needs are educated in regular schools according to the current curriculum and in special institutions—in primary schools for children with special needs—according to the special curriculum.

In the 2015/2016 school year, 291,362 children attended primary schools in 1,850 primary schools in BiH.¹⁴

Secondary education, according to the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education, is available to everyone, in accordance with the students' achievements in the primary school, personal interest, and abilities. The following are the types of secondary schools:

I. GENERAL SCHOOLS

High school (curriculum lasts for four years, after which a secondary school degree is earned with the possibility of continuing education)

Art schools (music, art, and other, which is determined by the type of curriculum, which lasts for four years, after which a secondary school degree is earned with the possibility of continuing education)

Religious schools (curriculum lasts for four years, after which a secondary school degree is earned, with the possibility of continuing education)

2. VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Technical, economic, medical, and other professional schools (determined by the type of curriculum, and lasting for a period of three years for acquiring secondary education without access to higher education, and for a duration of four years after which a secondary school degree is earned with the possibility of continuing education).

Secondary adult education includes special programs for acquiring secondary school or professional education, retraining, and training programs. Education of students with special needs is organized with the use of special procedures in regular or special classes of secondary schools, whereas students with severe developmental disabilities are educated in special institutions.

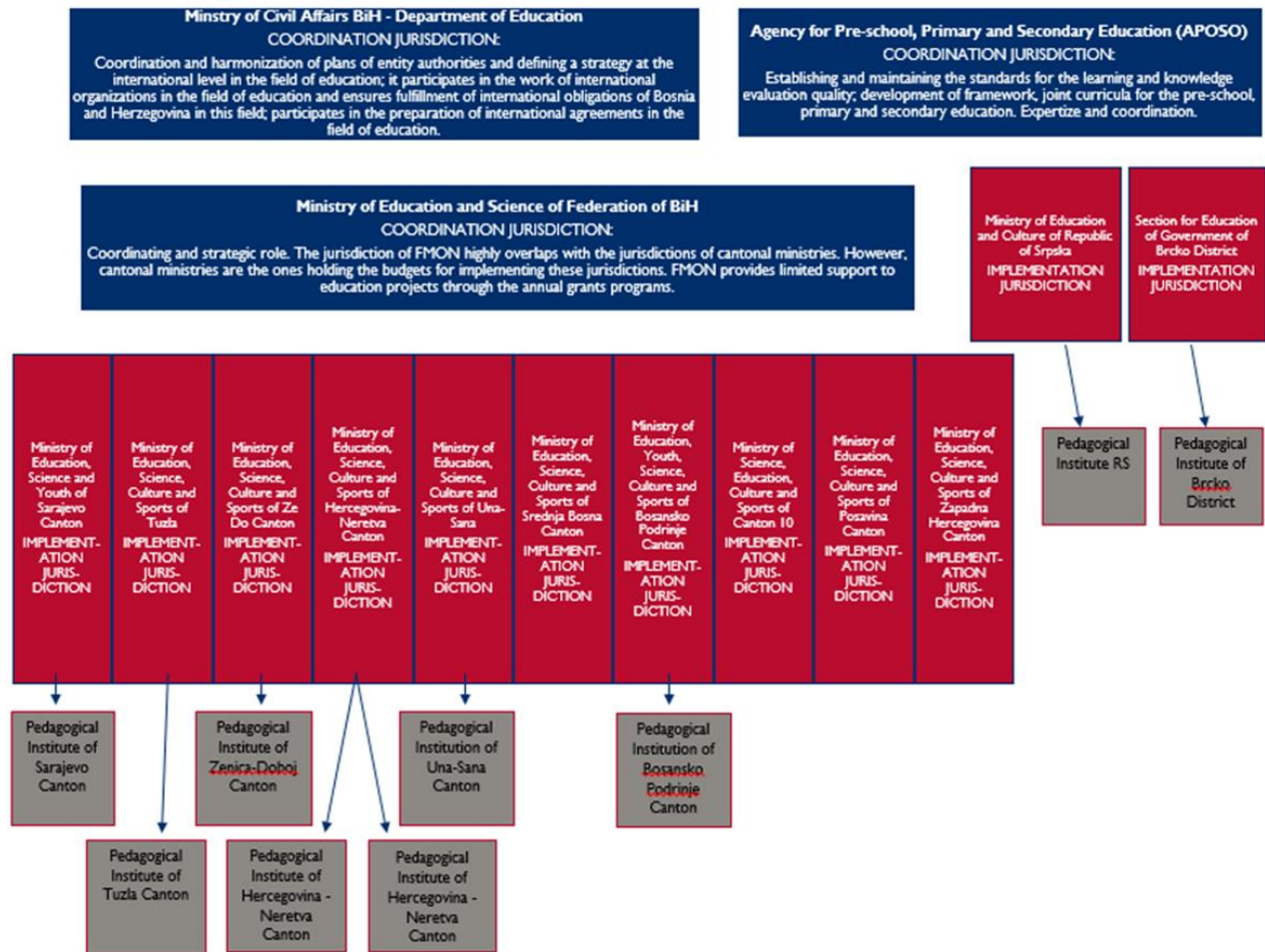
¹⁴ Ministry of Civil Affairs (2016). *Analysis of Education Reform in BiH*. Retrieved from https://www.parlament.ba/data/dokumenti/pitanja-odgovori/66814_M.Tomic_-_25_sjednica_-_Analiza_reforme_obrazovanja_u_BiH.-B.pdf

In the 2015/2016 school year, 133,268 children attended primary schools in 311 secondary schools in BiH. Of these, 210 schools are vocational, with 72 percent of high school students attending vocational high schools and 28 percent attending general high schools.¹⁵

MAP OF INSTITUTIONAL SETUP

The highly decentralized and uniquely complex education system is composed of institutions at three tiers of government, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Primary and Secondary Jurisdictions in BiH



¹⁵ Ministry of Civil Affairs (2016). *Analysis of Education Reform in BiH*. Retrieved from https://www.parlament.ba/data/dokumenti/pitanja-odgovori/66814_M.Tomic_-_25_sjednica_-_Analiza_reforme_obrazovanja_u_BiH.-B.pdf

LEGISLATIVE/STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND REFORMS

Reforms in the area of primary and secondary education were initiated by the state-level institutions in 2003, with heavy donor assistance. These included the following:

1. Adoption of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH in 2003¹⁶
2. Adoption of the 2008–2015 Strategic Directions for the Development of Education in BiH¹⁷
3. Adoption of the 2007–2013 Strategy for Development of Vocational Education and Training in BiH¹⁸
4. Adoption of the Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training in 2008¹⁹
5. Creation of the state level Agency for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education (APOSO) in 2007, the Ministers of Education Conference in BiH in 2012, and the Council for General Education in BiH in 2010
6. Development of common core learning outcomes for seven of eight subject areas in 2014 by APOSO

The key legislation governing reforms in primary and secondary education is the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, adopted by the State Parliament in 2003 to govern the principles of preschool, primary, and secondary education and upbringing, education of adults, and establishment and functioning of institutions for provision of services in education in BiH. The adoption of this Framework Law was intended as a step toward synchronizing the BiH education system with the EU system. The major change brought by this legislation was the introduction of obligatory nine-year primary education starting at the age of 6, as opposed to the previous eight-year system starting at the age of 7.20 The Framework Law specifies that secondary education shall be accessible to all, depending on the student's performance in the primary school, personal interest, and abilities, and shall be free of charge in public schools. In addition, the Framework Law stipulates that all primary and secondary schools should apply common core curricula (CCC), which should be as harmonized as possible for all subjects, aiming to unify primary and secondary education in BiH as much as possible. This law stipulates that all laws in RS, cantons, and Brcko District of BiH, as well as other regulations in the field of education, need to be harmonized with the provisions of the Framework Law. RS, BD, and cantons each have their own laws on primary education and laws on secondary education. Most cantons in FBiH and Brcko District adopted the needed primary education legislation based on the Framework Law in 2004, whereas RS adopted the needed legislation in 2008. Thus, obligatory nine-year primary education has been implemented across the country

¹⁶ Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2003). Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Retrieved from

http://www.erisee.org/downloads/library_bih/Framework%20Law%20on%20Primary%20and%20Secondary%20Educ_engl.pdf

¹⁷ Strategic Direction for the Development of Education in BiH with the Plan for Implementation, 2008-2015. BiH Council of Ministers. Retrieved from http://fmon.gov.ba/Upload/Dokumenti/93c849e5-2b36-4d2e-8cfb-54b062eac6ff_Strate%C5%A1ki%20pravci%20razvoja%20obrazovanja%20u%20Bosni%20i%20Hercegovini%20sa%20planom%20implementiranja.%202008.%E2%80%932015..pdf

¹⁸ Strategy for Development of Vocational Education and Training (2007). BiH Council of Ministers. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/epale/sites/epale/files/strategija_razvoja_strucnog_obrazovanja_i_obuke_u_bosni_i_hercegovini.doc

¹⁹ Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training (2008). Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Retrieved from http://www.mcp.gov.ba/org_jedinice/sektor_obrazovanje/dokumenti/zakoni?id=731

²⁰ Ministry of Civil Affairs (July 2016). Analysis of Education Reform in BiH. Retrieved from https://www.parlament.ba/data/dokumenti/pitanja-odgovori/66814_M.Tomic_-_25_sjednica_-_Analiza_reforme_obrazovanja_u_BiH.-B.pdf

since 2008/2009. Most cantons adopted the secondary education legislation in 2004, RS and BD in 2008, and the last two cantons (Tuzla and Gorazde) in 2011.

The Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training (VET) in BiH was adopted in 2008, specifying the goals of vocational education and training according to which the relevant educational authorities in BiH need to ensure that the needs and requirements of the labor market are harmonized with the objectives of vocational education institutions. The harmonization of the VET legislation is not completed yet, as three cantons have not adopted the laws (Herzegovina-Neretva, Srednja Bosna, and Canton 10).²¹ Collaboration between primary and secondary schools does not exist.²² The Federal Ministry of Education has initiated a process of reforming the secondary education by introducing obligatory two years of secondary education, which is now implemented in three cantons—Sarajevo, Una-Sana, and Bosansko Podrinje—but the implementation is hampered as supporting policy documents and curricula are lacking, no degree is awarded after the completion of two-year secondary education, and funding is insufficient.²³

Recent development of the common core learning outcomes by APOSO represents the initiated first steps of reform related to quality of education and mobility of students. For the first time, broad targeted learning outcomes have been developed, defined as the knowledge, skills, and competencies that each student needs to understand and be able to apply at different milestone years of schooling, and also relative to key competencies (1. linguistic and communication competence in the mother tongue, 2. linguistic and communication competence in foreign languages, 3. mathematical literacy and competence in science and technology, 4. information technology literacy, 5. learning to learn, 6. social and civic competencies, 7. self-initiative and entrepreneurial competencies, 8. cultural awareness, 9. creative and productive competencies, and 10. physical and health competencies) established by APOSO (Ministry of Civil Affairs, 2016).²⁴ So far, the learning outcome-based common core curriculum has been adopted for seven of eight subject areas: the Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian languages and foreign languages; mathematics; cross-curricular areas; social sciences and humanities; ICT; natural sciences; and arts (draft).²⁵ However, operational teaching curricula is not provided; thus, existing learning outcome-based CCC are not translated into concrete operational guidelines. The USAID/BiH ENABLE intervention is expected to work on operational curricula for the STEM area, whereas some cantons (in Zenica, Tuzla, and Sarajevo) started their own work on operationalizing the learning outcome-based CCC into concrete teaching curricula.

Strategic documents are inconsistent in the implementation period and are mostly set in too broad terms. The main document is the Strategic Directions for the Development of Education in BiH with the Implementation Plan 2008–2015. Overall goal of the Strategic Directions was to implement education standards and values of the EU and the directions were specified for each level and type of education, as

²¹ Ministry of Civil Affairs (October 2016). *Information on Implementation of the Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training*. Retrieved from

http://www.mcp.gov.ba/org_jedinice/sektor_obrazovanje/dokumenti/zakoni/default.aspx?id=7653&langTag=bs-BA.

²² Ibrahimović, N. (2015). *Primary and Secondary Education in BiH: Current Status, and Recommendations for Reforms*. Initiative for Monitoring the European Integrations of BiH. Retrieved from http://eu-monitoring.ba/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Obrazovanje_lzvjestaj_Namir_Ibrahimovic.pdf

²³ Federal Ministry of Education and Science (2015). *Information on Possibility of Introduction of Two-Year Compulsory Secondary Education in the Federation of BiH*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2m3jaZu>

²⁴ Ministry of Civil Affairs (2016). *Analysis of Education Reform in BiH*. Retrieved from https://www.parlament.ba/data/dokumenti/pitanja-odgovori/66814_M.Tomic_-_25_sjednica_-_Analiza_reforme_obrazovanja_u_BiH.-B.pdf

²⁵ The last subject area for which learning outcome-based CCC needs to be developed is physical and health education.

well as for the common cross-cutting values, including teachers' education and training, development of institutional structure for management and coordination of education sector, quality assurance, research in education, financing of education, and education statistics.

Short-term objectives for primary education defined in the Strategic Directions included the implementation of the evaluation of the nine-year compulsory education and framework curriculum application, reducing the disruption and dropouts of primary education, and the introduction of external evaluation in all primary schools. Mid-term objectives for primary education included the implementation of nine-year education in all parts of the country, the development of curricula for all grades/subjects of the nine-year primary education, and the adoption of education standards and norms, as well as the reduction in the rate of premature school dropouts. Long-term objectives for primary education included a focus on increasing enrollment and completion of primary education to 100 percent, and ensuring that all students in the lower grades of primary school learn a foreign language no later than the third grade and a second foreign language in the higher grades, no later than the seventh grade.

Short-term objectives for secondary education included the application and adoption of the enrollment plan for high schools and three-year and four-year vocational and technical schools. Mid-term objectives for secondary education included increasing enrollment in secondary education to 85 percent, increasing the enrollment share in general secondary education (high schools), and increasing the share of four-year vocational education.²⁶ Long-term objectives for secondary education included increasing enrollment in secondary education to 90 percent, increasing the enrollment share in high schools and four-year vocational schools to 80 percent, and ensuring options for the transition from three- to four-year high school; introduction of external graduation at the end of the four-year secondary education is also a long-term objective.²⁷

In late 2016, MoCA prepared the Information on Evaluation of Implementation of the 2008-2015 Strategic Directions for the Development of Education prepared²⁸. This Information was adopted by the Council of Ministers of BiH in February 2017 with the conclusion that although some results were achieved, the reform is overall lagging and its implementation is slow and uneven. The Council of Ministers expressed the needs for all initiated activities to be intensified and instructed MoCA to initiate the activities on development of a new strategic document, as well as the development of strategic documents for each government level.

In the Information on Evaluation of Implementation of the 2008-2015 Strategic Directions for the Development of Education, MoCA notes that the following strategic directions have been implemented: introduction of nine-year primary education, introduction of two foreign languages, development of pedagogical standards, and implementation of Common Core Curriculum adopted at the state-level 2003. However, it is noted that that the Common Core Curriculum modernization was necessary, which is why since 2014 APOSO has been working on development of Common Core Curricula based on Learning

²⁶ European Commission. (2016). *Progress Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2016*. Brussels: SWD. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_bosnia_and_herzegovina.pdf

However, according to the EU Progress Report for BiH 2016, the educational provision in vocational education and training (VET) does not function well, as most VET graduates do not find employment and subsequently enter higher education.

²⁷ Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH (2014). *Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Bosnia and Herzegovina*. UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002299/229929E.pdf>

²⁸ Not available online.

Outcomes. The Information notes that in a couple of cantons (Zenica-Doboj and West Herzegovina) have already developed operational teaching curricula based on the Common Core Curricula based on Learning Outcomes. In terms of the external evaluation of student achievements, RS, Tuzla Canton, and Sarajevo Canton have introduced some forms of external evaluation. Finally, objectives related to work with the talented students have not been implemented and this portion of students is neglected.

At the level of secondary education, general education did not see much reform, similar to the primary education. Common Core Curricula based on Learning Outcomes has mostly been developed. External evaluation after general secondary education has only been introduced in Tuzla Canton. Strategies for reform of general secondary education have not been adopted. Secondary Vocational Education and Training (VET) saw most reforms, as a result of strong support of EU projects. Coordinating advisory body for vocational education has not been formed. Sixteen vocation standards in the priority areas for employability have been developed, as well as training standards, and 77 module-based teaching curricula for 77 VET areas. However, only 52% VET students in BiH are though using these module-based teaching curricula

Out of cross-cutting objectives within the Strategic Directions, the Information outlines that the legislation on student standards was adopted only in RS, while legislation of textbook policies has not been harmonized, with the exception of partial internal harmonization in the seven cantons within FBiH. Although Strategic Directions envisaged being a basis for development of specific strategies of the responsible lower-level government level, only RS, and Sarajevo and Posavina Canton adopted Education Strategies. MoCA notes that awareness of need to develop high-quality concrete strategic plans is not present in all education ministries. Strategies for initial education and continued professional development of teachers have not been developed. Furthermore, pedagogical institutes and education inspections have not been restructured to focus pedagogical institutes to support quality assurance and education inspections to participate in quality management through integrated evaluation of education institutions. Within the area of modernization of teaching and learning, Strategic Directions included development and implementation of the student-focused methodology that develops critical thinking, team work, problem solving, and application of knowledge. MoCA notes that this methodology is partially introduced in the first four years of primary education only. Research in the field of education did not improve and the planned establishment of centers for research and development in education has not been implemented. Strategic Directions also envisaged harmonization of textbook legislation, however this has not been implemented. The only BiH-wide harmonized textbooks are for informatics (supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency) and democracy and human rights (supported by CIVITAS). The problem of lack of education statistics has only been addressed, with the key data still missing, and the envisaged comparative analysis of data in BiH and in EU has not been prepared.). Detailed student-level data only exists in RS and three cantons in FBiH (Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Srednja Bosna), as implemented within the Education Management System Project, but is underutilized. Finally, in terms of financing, financing based on number of students, establishment of the system of monitoring against EU benchmarks, and restructuring of the budgets to allow more capital investments have not been implemented.

MoCA concludes the Information on Evaluation of Implementation of the 2008-2015 Strategic Directions for the Development of Education stating that there is delay in implementation of the Directions and that the approach of reform activities has not been sufficiently systematic, missing concrete long-run strategic development plans for education based on real sector needs, innovative technologies, and EU standards.

It is further concluded that the jointly agreed reform processes are separately taken by 12 responsible administrative levels instead of being synchronized and coordinated as planned.

The 2007-2013 Strategy on Vocational Education and Training in BiH was adopted in 2007 to provide the framework for the harmonization of VET with the EU and increase the employability and mobility of students by accommodating the constant labor market changes due to rapid technology advancement. The Strategy presents the analysis of the VET sector in BiH at the time, and delivers series of recommendations in different areas of the VET, namely: creating better linkages between the VET and the labor market; creating the national education quality framework in line with the European one (EQF); improvement of VET management; ensuring the quality of VET, including developing the modular approach to the curricula; adjusting the relation between general education content and vocational and practical content, in order to enable increased level of practical teaching and knowledge; promoting inclusion of socially marginalized groups; strengthening the institutional capacity of VET institutions; and reforming the legislation in the area, including adopting the laws on VET and APOSO and different rules and regulations regulating profiles and salaries of teachers; clearly define the conditions for the practical training; schools regulations, etc.²⁹

The major objective of increasing practical knowledge is only partially implemented, as in majority of cases the practice is organized in the schools' workshops, with only a few positive examples (such as in Gorazde Canton, where the employers express the needs for the interns, who later become employees of the companies), due to lack of funding needed for good quality practical vocational education³⁰. Some limited progress has been achieved in creation of three-party councils with the representatives of employers, trade unions and authorities, envisaged as a coordination bodies linking the VET and labor market.

The 2016–2021 Strategy of Education Development of Republic of Srpska was recently adopted, with broad defined often unmeasurable objectives, largely similar to the objectives of the Strategic Directions for the Development of Education in BiH. Goals for primary education include (1) all children to be included in the nine-year primary education, (2) increase in the quality of primary education and upbringing, (3) improvement in working conditions in schools and modernization of the teaching process in primary education, (4) strengthening of the upbringing role of primary schools, and (5) alignment of the schools' network with the demographic, economic, and social changes in the society. Goals for secondary education include (1) increase in the quality of secondary (general and arts) education and upbringing, (2) increase of the quality of secondary vocational education and upbringing, (3) developing vocation standards based on competencies and learning goals, (4) establishing a qualification framework for vocation education, (5) linking vocation education and the labor market, (6) strengthening the information system regarding profession choice–professional orientation, and (7) support of inclusion in secondary education.

FBiH does not have an education strategy, and neither do all cantons.

²⁹ Strategija razvoja strucnog obrazovanja i treninga BiH 2007-2013 http://fmon.gov.ba/Upload/Dokumenti/9c01ff86-8c29-47c8-8adc-62a467bc5102_Strategija%20razvoja%20stru%C4%8Dnog%20obrazovanja%20i%20obuke%20u%20BiH%20za%20period%202007.-2013.%20godine.pdf

³⁰ Ministry of Civil Affairs (2016). *Analysis of Education Reform in BiH*. Retrieved from https://www.parlament.ba/data/dokumenti/pitanja-odgovori/66814_M.Tomic_-_25_sjednica_-_Analiza_reforme_obrazovanja_u_BiH.-B.pdf

In terms of the most recent strategic planning, according to the Education for All 2015 National Review, prepared by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH in 2014 for UNESCO's World Education Forum, MoCA identifies the following general priorities for the future:

- To develop an inclusive education system that will eliminate the barriers to access and ensure equal participation of all children in preschool, primary, and secondary education and provide specially designed programs of activities necessary to address the issues of specific groups (in particular, Roma and persons with disabilities).
- To provide better links between education and the labor market through the establishment of quality dialogue among relevant social partners (e.g., educational institutions, employers, employment services) when developing and innovating curricula and creating educational policy in secondary schools and higher education institutions.
- To develop an education statistics system in accordance with EUROSTAT and strengthen statistical institutions in BiH to produce statistical data comparable to and in line with the EU standards.
- To reform the financing of the education system to ensure effective education.

In the IPA II Indicative Strategy Paper for BiH,³¹ the European Commission assessed that capacity and governance structures are still insufficient, with little policy coordination and hampered by the complex constitutional setup; standards for quality are not systematically applied; school management, teachers, and trainers need significant professional developments and better standards; comprehensive educational policies and practices that would address social inequality and inclusive education do not exist; and school infrastructure is inadequate and deteriorated.

CHALLENGES

Main challenges can be grouped into five broad areas, noting that these are intertwined in practice and that the political obstacles related to coordination, and strategic planning in particular, affect all other areas.

I. INSUFFICIENT POLICY COORDINATION AND VAGUE STRATEGIC PLANNING

In practice, the legislative framework, standards, and strategic directions have not been fully implemented in their parts pertaining to the quality of education and weaknesses persist across the education system. Existing strategic objectives are usually set broadly and at a high level and are, in most cases, not translated into concrete operational guidelines and/or not implemented due to political obstacles. Coordination, which is an absolute necessity in such a decentralized and complex system, is still insufficient due to political obstacles and fundamental disagreement on whether the education system should and can be harmonized, as the existing coordination mechanisms are underused, including the state-level institutions, Conference of Ministers of Education of BiH, and Council for General Education in BiH.

³¹ European Commission (2014). *Indicative Strategy Paper for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014-2017)*. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/news/annexe_acte_autonome_nlw_part1v1.pdf

In the absence of countrywide strategies, the European Union's IPA II assistance was restricted to the period 2014–17, as compared to the full period for IPA II 2014–20 and to the narrow group of sectors. Education is included within one of those sectors—the sector of education, employment, and social policies; however, it is approached within this sector from a perspective strictly connected to the labor market, focusing most on the higher education and VET (and not to primary and secondary education in a broader sense). Thus, within the planning of EU IPA II assistance, in which statewide strategies are required for assistance, sectoral planning document for education, social policies, and employment was drafted by the Directorate for European Integrations of BiH (in coordination with all relevant institutions from all government levels) and submitted to the EC in 2016 by the Council of Ministers of BiH. This sectoral planning document is currently being finalized to incorporate the EC's comments. The priority in terms of education reforms in the draft document is given to reform of vocational education (introduction of a quality assurance system) and higher education (development of study programs based on a set of learning outcomes) to improve the match between education and the labor market. Based on this, it is not expected that the EC assistance will focus on primary and general secondary education, although the EC's 2014–2017 Indicative Strategic Paper for BiH identified a general need for assistance in progressing education reform, including to ensure the capacity building in the education sector in order to improve the governance structure and policy coordination, the development of qualifications frameworks at all levels of education, assistance in the development of curricula for primary and secondary education, and assistance to inclusive education and modernization of school infrastructure.³²

Another example of lack of political will for coordination is the process of creation of the new VET strategy initiated recently by MoCA (as the previous 2007-2013 has expired), in the Ministry of Education of RS has not nominated their representatives into the working group, which is the obstacle for the process continuation³³.

These general issues in coordination and strategic planning pervade each of the following specific challenges.

2. LOW QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATION AND LACK OF SYSTEMATIC M&E

Improvement of education quality is listed as a priority in all strategic documents in BiH; however, in practice, the traditional approach to teaching and perception of quality prevails, placing emphasis on structural dimensions rather than process and outcome dimensions. Most of the challenges related to quality of education that existed when the 2008–2015 Strategic Directions for the Development of Education in BiH were developed still exist and hamper the quality of education. These challenges include lack of a system of external evaluations, lack of measurement of teacher performance, inflexible teaching programs, learning content burdened with the irrelevant facts and insufficiently in line with life and development of science and technology, and lack of applied methods focused on a child/student and

³² The 2018–2020 Indicative Strategic Paper for BiH is currently being drafted.

³³ Ministry of Civil Affairs (2016). *Analysis of Education Reform in BiH*. Retrieved from https://www.parlament.ba/data/dokumenti/pitanja-odgovori/66814_M.Tomic_-_25_sjednica_-_Analiza_reforme_obrazovanja_u_BiH.-B.pdf

development of critical thinking. This indicates that the concept of quality, as understood by some actors within the education system, might not fully align with international definitions of quality.³⁴

There is no systematic monitoring of the quality of education in BiH. Reliable and comprehensive statistics in education at all levels is lacking, and data collection is not adequately supported, especially in terms of learning outcome data. The scarcity of available data indicates a low quality of education. The only international research in which BiH participated, the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS),³⁵ showed that BiH students scored below the global average in mathematic achievements (with BiH scoring 456 in comparison to the global average of 500) and also scoring lower than the other countries from this region that participated in this research (Slovenia and Serbia). TIMSS results showed that a mere 1 percent of BiH students scored above the advanced TIMSS mathematics benchmark (global average was 2%), and only 10% of BiH students scored above the high benchmark (global average was 15%). Almost one quarter of BiH students (23%) did not reach the lowest benchmark (APOS0, 2009; according to Brankovic et al., 2016³⁶). The analysis of TIMSS mathematics results in three cognitive domains (knowledge, application, and reasoning) shows that BiH students lag behind global averages in all three, with BiH students scoring highest in the lowest level of cognitive domain (knowledge) and lowest in the highest level of cognitive domain (reasoning). Analysis of the results on specific test items shows that when BiH students were faced with problem-solving tasks that required them to first understand the problem and then use the mathematical model to solve it, they either scored significantly worse than completing the straightforward tasks or did not even attempt to solve the problem. Finally, out of four content domains (Numbers, Geometry, Algebra, and Data and Probability), BiH students scored lowest on Data and Probability, indicating low statistical literacy. According to the Analysis of the Educational Reforms in BiH, the preparatory activities by APOS0 are under way to have students from BiH participate in the 2018 PISA.³⁷

There is no collaboration between primary and secondary schools to ensure that, in addition to his or her primary school grades, a student brings the appropriate skills and work needed for secondary school.³⁸

In regard to linking education policy planning and employment, the 2015 World Bank report³⁹ notes the necessity of changes to increase the employability of BiH citizens at all levels of education. Those with primary education or less represent 41 percent of the population, only 17 percent of the employed and 20 percent of the unemployed, whereas 60 percent of the inactive population has this level of education. This may be due to a lack of skilled jobs available or to a mismatch between the skills available and those required by employers. Whereas high youth unemployment in BiH is due partly to low economic growth

³⁴ World Bank (2015). *Rebalancing Bosnia and Herzegovina: Asystematic Country Diagnostic*. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/910521467992511665/pdf/101009-SCD-PI51812-SecM2015-0318-IFC-SecM2015-0159-MIGA-SecM2015-0106-Box393245B-OUO-9.pdf>

³⁵ Mullis, I.V.S., Martin, M.O., Robitaille, D.F., and Foy, P. (2009). *TIMSS Advanced 2008 International Report: Findings from IEA's Study of Achievement in Advanced Mathematics and Physics in the Final Year of Secondary School*. Retrieved from http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/timss_advanced/ir.html#pdf_list

³⁶ Brankovic, N., Husremovic, Dz., Zecevic, I., Vukotic, N. (2016). *Brief Assessment of Basic Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo: MEASURE-BiH. Retrieved from <http://www.measurebih.com/uimages/Basic%20Education%20Assessment.pdf>

³⁷ Ministry of Civil Affairs (2016). *Analysis of Education Reform in BiH*. Retrieved from https://www.parlament.ba/data/dokumenti/pitanja-odgovori/66814_M.Tomic_-_25_sjednica_-_Analiza_reforme_obrazovanja_u_BiH.-B.pdf

³⁸ Ibrahimović, N. (2015). *Primary and Secondary Education in BiH: Current Status, and Recommendations for Reforms. Initiative for Monitoring the European Integrations of BiH*. Retrieved from http://eu-monitoring.ba/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Obrazovanje_lzviestaj_Namir_Ibrahimovic.pdf

³⁹ World Bank (2015). *Rebalancing Bosnia and Herzegovina: Asystematic Country Diagnostic*. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/910521467992511665/pdf/101009-SCD-PI51812-SecM2015-0318-IFC-SecM2015-0159-MIGA-SecM2015-0106-Box393245B-OUO-9.pdf>

and low rates of job creation, available courses and school curricula are not linked to labor market needs, resulting in low relevance of skills, including “lack of necessary skills: communication, computer literacy, fluency in foreign languages, managerial and leadership skills.” These perceptions, combined with the insights that those with a very low level of education tend to drop out of the labor market altogether, suggest that improved skill levels—in line with the requirements of the private sector—could help to lower inactivity and unemployment rates in BiH.

The 2016 EU Progress Report for BiH lists the need to improve the quality of education as one of the three main priorities for BiH’s capacity to cope with the competitive pressures and market forces in the EU. Within the assessment of application of European standards in education, the 2016 EU Progress Report for BiH assesses that BiH is at an early stage and that the immediate focus of BiH should be on strengthening the capacity of state-level education agencies to develop EU standards and increase the level of quality assurance in education, and on establishing an effective coordination mechanism in FBiH to improve cooperation between bodies responsible for quality assurance across the country. In particular, despite noting progress in APOSO’s adoption of the common core curricula for several areas, overall coordination on quality assurance is assessed as weak at the level of preschool, primary, and secondary education, whereas implementation of the action plan for implementing the “baseline qualifications framework” has not started yet because of the lack of a state-level intersectorial commission responsible for implementing the action plan.⁴⁰

At the primary education level, cosmetic transformation of primary education from an eight-year to a nine-year system is the largest implemented reform. An assessment of the teaching program and curriculum for the nine-year primary education was conducted by Sarajevo Canton in 2011.⁴¹ The assessment concluded that the new nine-year curriculum essentially retained all the elements of the traditional program and the eight-year primary schooling; the curriculum does not stand as a unique document, but rather as a collection of syllabi; the topics are repeated and overlapped within the same or more subjects throughout several grades or the entire education cycle; the language of the curriculum is administrative, formal, and confusing; the concept of the curriculum does not encourage problem solving or profound examination of the topics; and the curriculum is characterized by extensiveness and superficial approach to subject matters, requiring that children shift from one topic onto another without deeper analysis. It is noted that instead of expected abandonment of the outdated learning concept based on focusing on content and an almost exclusively frontal method of teaching, and instead accepting teaching/learning based on gaining process skills for the 21st century (such as critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and communications, digital literacy, and citizenship), “analysis of the current curriculum for primary school shows that the reform only formally introduced primary education lasting 9 years divided into three-year cycles. However, other than that no essential changes have been made, as the new curriculum has kept all the elements of traditional one, including focusing on the content, strictly divided into the separate subject, without integrated structure and defined learning goals for three-year cycles that are in line to developmental characteristics of the children of that age.” The key recommendation of this analysis is to create a unique framework curriculum for the nine-year primary education, and a set of subject syllabi based on this curriculum, to integrate all the learning goals, unify the structure, clearly define the process and the methods of teaching and learning, and so on.

⁴⁰ European Commission. (2016). *Progress Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2016*. Brussels: SWD. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_bosnia_and_herzegovina.pdf

⁴¹ The Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Sarajevo Canton (2011). *Analysis of the Curriculum for Nine Year Primary Education*. Sarajevo. Retrieved from <http://www.skolegijum.ba/static/pdf/4ecb75813e897.pdf>

3. UNEVEN AND INEFFECTIVE TEACHERS' EDUCATION WITH INSUFFICIENT FOCUS ON PPDM

Several recent assessments (Brankovic, et al., 2016;⁴² Ibrahimovic, 2015;⁴³ Dragnic, 2013⁴⁴) identify problems in both pre-service and in-service teacher's education, in both primary and secondary education, including lack of system of teachers' professional improvement and advancement.

The current situation regarding the initial education of preschool, primary, and secondary school teachers and their continuous professional development (CPD) is uneven in different parts of the country, with insufficient focus on competencies in pedagogy, psychology, didactics, and teaching methods. Initial education is under the jurisdiction of entities and cantons, and there is no uniform system of quality control for teacher training programs, largely because university courses and study programs have yet to be accredited in the country. This is one of the weakest points in the education system overall, particularly in regard to primary education. Initial education is provided by teaching faculties; faculties of philosophy, science, and mathematics; and art academies. The curricula are designed by the core department, and the faculty determine curricular content. Because of this autonomy, curricular content varies greatly. The continuing professional education of teachers is also at a low level. Cantonal (RS and BD) pedagogical institutions are in charge of in-service professional teachers' development. However, a number of serious budget cuts have been implemented at various governmental levels over the past decade, with professional education being hit particularly hard. All the cantonal ministries mentioned that the current situation in professional development for primary-level teachers is far from satisfactory. Some efforts have been made by NGOs such as CEI Step by Step; however, these activities could not bridge the full gap created by the nonexistence of a functional and continuing system for professional development of teachers. The British Council is currently implementing the EU-funded project for development of a qualifications framework for general education. This project has three components, the third of which, "Education and Professional Development of Teachers," is in its final phase of implementation. The aim of this component is to develop standards for the teaching profession at preschool, primary, and secondary school levels that will be comparable to those in the European Union. The final document will form the basis for improving the initial and continuing education of teachers. However, the full implementation of standards will require curricular reforms in initial teacher education at universities. Without reform in initial teacher education, the effects of the implementation of standards will be limited (Brankovic et al., 2016).

The USAID/BiH ENABLE intervention is expected to work on PPDM standards and operational guidelines for teacher study programs.

4. RELATIVELY HIGH TOTAL SPENDING DUE TO DECENTRALIZATION AND HIGH ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS COUPLED WITH INSUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND UNEVEN TEACHER SALARIES NOT TIED TO PERFORMANCE

Stakeholders in general agree that when it comes to the quality of education in BiH, the main limiting factor is financial. Teachers' wages are unequal across the country, are not tied to performance, and are

⁴² Brankovic, N., Husremovic, Dz., Zecevic, I., Vukotic, N. (2016). *Brief Assessment of Basic Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo: MEASURE-BiH. Retrieved from <http://www.measurebih.com/uiimages/Basic%20Education%20Assessment.pdf>

⁴³ Ibrahimović, N. (2015). *Primary and Secondary Education in BiH: Current Status, and Recommendations for Reforms*. Initiative for Monitoring the European Integrations of BiH. Retrieved from http://eu-monitoring.ba/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Obrazovanje_Izvjestaj_Namir_Ibrahimovic.pdf

⁴⁴ Dragnic, L. (2013). *Quality and Costs of Education in BiH*. Open Society Fund. Retrieved from http://www.skolegijum.ba/static/biblioteka/5460dfd554a6_03KvalitetitroskoviobrazovanjauBiH.pdf

generally perceived as low, yet essentially the entire budget for education goes to payment of wages, with no real capital investment.

The 2016 EU Progress Report for BiH notes that spending on overall education is low, as is spending on research and development. Despite spending a relatively high 5 percent of GDP on education, BiH's education outcomes are among the weakest in the region, probably resulting from the high administrative costs of a highly decentralized system and the lack of common standards for various levels of education and teacher training and performance evaluation.

According to available research, the portion of the education budget aimed at the quality and development of educational process is extremely limited. Most of the funding is spent on the salaries of the teachers.⁴⁵ That means that almost no money is left for the improvements in the education process, regardless of whether they are for teacher training, teaching materials and supplies, or investments into equipment (ICT and digital) that would bring innovation to the educational process.

The following recommendations are based on the models of other countries with more efficient systems of education and the research of World Bank in BiH regarding different distribution of the available funding that could significantly improve the current situation in the education:

- To limit the rising of the teachers' salaries, which would create funding for capital investments in education
- To introduce performance based selection and paysalaries to attract and keep the best teachers in the process
- To base the school's funding on the number of students.
- To create an unique ICT system for education management, providing measurement of the efficacy and effectiveness of schools, which is the first step toward fairer redistribution of the education budget (World Bank, 2012; according to Dragnic, 2013)

5. CONTINUED STRUGGLE WITH IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education in primary and secondary schools is stipulated as a legal obligation, which includes the possibility of access for all categories of children with special needs, with respect to the objective abilities of the participants in education. The legislation includes the principle of non-discrimination based on race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, or national or social origin, and establishes an obligation for inclusive education. However, in practice, BiH struggles to implement these regulations.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

For children with special needs, the legislation regulates a wide range of rights in terms of discrimination in relation to other students, so such children are provided with the education according to their individual needs and adapted to their abilities and skills. Expert mobile teams are established and the public call for

⁴⁵ Dragnic, L. (2013). *Quality and Costs of Education in BiH*. Open Society Fund. Retrieved from http://www.skolegijum.ba/static/biblioteka/5460dfd554a6_03KvalitetitroskoviobrazovanjauBiH.pdf

the enrollment in the first grade of secondary school provides for the right of direct enrollment of students with special needs in secondary schools.⁴⁶

However, in spite of this supportive legal framework, the research on the implementation of these positive measures shows that there is a long way in front of BiH education system, before it became truly inclusive. The research conducted by Pro-MENTE, within the Project of Support to Inclusive Policy Development of Secondary Education of Children with Disabilities (implemented by DUGA), points to numerous inconsistencies within the legislative framework regulating the education of children with disabilities that are very often not in line with the international legislation that BiH has committed to. It also shows weak implementation of the inclusive practices in schools all over BiH, discussing many difficulties that the children, the teachers, and the schools are facing. Some of the most important impediments to the inclusion of secondary education in BiH are:⁴⁷

- Poor vertical and horizontal communication between educational institutions
- Small number of pupils with disabilities registered (with official ID documents)
- The lack of individually adjusted curricula for children with specific types of disabilities
- Insufficient teacher training
- Low level of expertise and expert support to teachers
- Schools poorly equipped with adjusted didactic materials for the work with children with specific educational needs

The same problems were identified in other research focusing not only on secondary education, but also on primary and preschool education, done by the Open Society Fund in BiH within the Program of Support to Education (2013). In addition to the inadequacies of teachers' competences (prevailing teachers' self-assessment confirmed in this research), the analysis elaborates on the problem of categorization of different types of special education needs, as well as of the children who potentially have those needs. Not having a unified system of categorizations impedes the development of individually adjusted curricula, which prevents the children from receiving proper education.⁴⁸

ROMA CHILDREN AND CHILDREN FROM THE LOWEST INCOME GROUPS

A number of additional activities have been implemented to include children from economically and socially disadvantaged groups in the education system (especially Roma children, children from remote and isolated areas, and children from socially and economically disadvantaged families). In practice, children with disabilities, Roma children, and children from socially disadvantaged families are provided with textbooks and school supplies in accordance with the budget available and in partnership with donors. School activities are also organized in relation to education of children to accept diversity, as well as for the prevention of all forms of violence involving children.

⁴⁶Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH (2014). *Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Bosnia and Herzegovina*. UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002299/229929E.pdf>

⁴⁷DUGA and MDG Achievement Fund. (2013). *Presence of Measures and Principles of Inclusive Education in Educational Practice and Policies of Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Pro-MENTE. Retrieved from <http://www.monkstk.ba/attachments/article/115/Izvjestaj%20Latinica%20FINAL.pdf>

⁴⁸Open Society Fund. (2013). *From Segregation to Inclusion: Is the Education of Children and Youth with Special Needs in BiH Inclusive?*. Education Support Program. Retrieved from http://www.osfbih.org.ba/images/Prog_docs/ED/Inkluzivno_obrazovanje_u_BiH.pdf

Still, according to the recent research in BiH, two of five Roma children have never been enrolled in school. There are two prevailing reasons for this: some of the children's births haven't been registered at all, and for others, parents are reporting that they refuse to place their children in school because of the stigma and discrimination they say their children are exposed to.⁴⁹

Children from the lowest income groups have lower enrollment rates and lower educational attainment. For example, a 2015 World Bank reports notes that in upper secondary education, 92 percent of children from the richest quintile had access to secondary education, compared with 84 percent of the poorest quintile, while the children from the Roma community are particularly disadvantaged, with only 57 percent of the poorest income group attend primary schools.⁵⁰

ETHNICITY-BASED DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOLS

The separation of children within the school facilities along ethnic lines, along with the existence of “two schools under one roof,” constitute a de facto ethnic-based segregation, and discrimination in public schools remains a serious issue of concern. From the perspective of the respect for human rights, these circumstances continue to hamper access to quality education and do not foster the development of an inclusive, multicultural, and tolerant society. A ruling of the Municipal Court of Mostar regarding the “two schools under one roof” topic, issued on April 27, 2012, ordered the Ministry of Education to “establish single, integrated, multi-cultural [schools] by September 1, 2012 with a unified curriculum fully observing the children's right to education in the mother tongue.” For organizing the education system along ethnic lines, the court found two schools in the Stolac and Čapljina municipalities (Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, FBiH) in violation of the law prohibiting discrimination. The implementation of the 2012 ruling is proving to be highly problematic and politically disputed, and it has not been implemented to date (Ivankovic, 2017;51 Tolomelli, 201552).

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Very little information on public perceptions of primary and secondary education is available. Analysis of public perception is complicated by the fact that, in most cases, citizens have nothing to compare BiH education with.

⁴⁹ Unicef. (2013). *The situation of Roma children and families in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/bih/ba/roma_families-bh-final.pdf

⁵⁰ World Bank (2015). *Rebalancing Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Systematic Country Diagnostic*. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/910521467992511665/pdf/101009-SCD-PI51812-SecM2015-0318-IFC-SecM2015-0159-MIGA-SecM2015-0106-Box393245B-OUO-9.pdf>

⁵¹ Ivanković, A. (2013). *Continued Discrimination through Judicial Services: Logical acrobatics and absurdities of the second instance Court Decision in the Case of Two Schools under One Roof*. Sarajevo: Analitika. Retrieved from http://www.skolegijum.ba/static/biblioteka/5460fd1abe082_01AnalizadrugostepenesudskeodllukeupredmetuDvijekolepodjednimkrovom.pdf

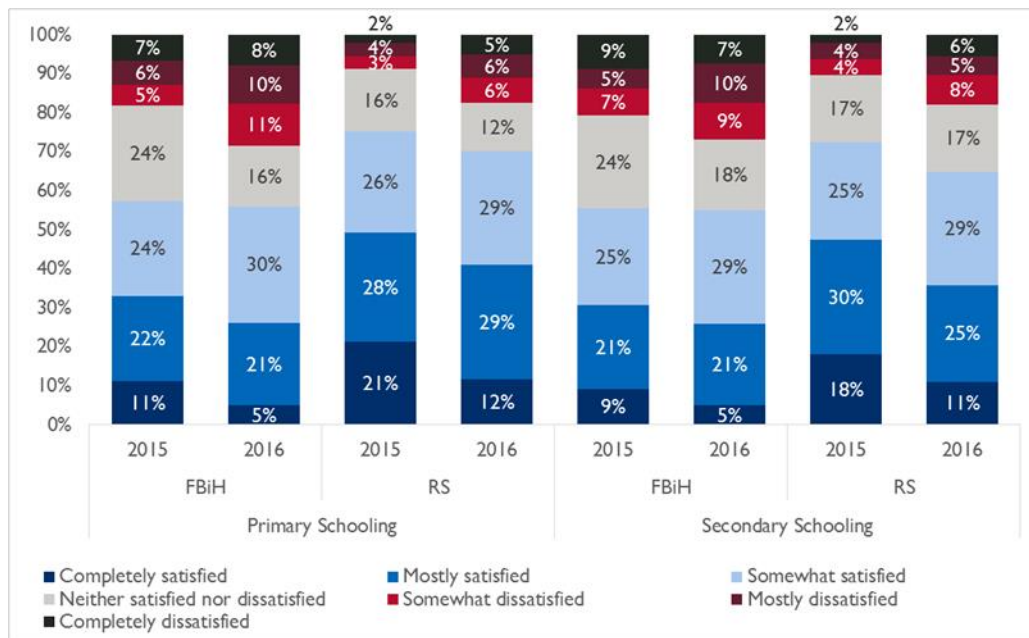
⁵² Tolomelli, A. (2015). *Two Schools under One Roof—The Role of Education in the Reconciliation Process in BiH*. University of Bologna: Journal of Theories and Research in Education 10,1. Special Issue. Religion, Conflict and Education

Based on MEASURE-BiH's National Survey of Citizens' Perception (NSCP-BiH)⁵³ of 3,000 representative households, 61 percent of BiH citizens (compared to 64% in 2015) expressed some degree of satisfaction (completely, mostly, or somewhat satisfied) with primary education, with 25 percent stating that they are not satisfied with primary education.⁵⁴ The satisfaction with primary schooling is somewhat higher in RS (70%) compared to FBiH (56%), as shown in Figure 2.

Around 60 percent of the citizens reported satisfaction with secondary schooling (compared to 62% in 2015), whereas 24 percent state that they are not satisfied with secondary education. The satisfaction level is 10 percent higher in RS than in FBiH, as shown in Figure 2.

The results of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's (EBRD's) Life in Transition III survey,⁵⁵ conducted in 2016 in 29 transition countries, including BiH (on a sample of 1,499 respondents in BiH), showed similar satisfaction levels, with 70 percent being satisfied with primary and secondary education and 63 percent being satisfied with vocational education.

Figure 2. Satisfaction with Primary and Secondary Education



When asked to rank ten general functions of government from 1 to 10 according to their priority for development, BiH citizens ranked education as the fifth priority, behind the economy, health care, public order and safety, and social protection, as shown in Figure 3. Only 5 percent of the citizens stated that education should be the first development priority in the country, and the opinions are similar in the two entities.

⁵³ See <http://measurebih.com/national-survey-of-citizens-perceptions> for more information on National Survey of Citizens Perceptions 2015. The National Survey of Citizens Perceptions 2016 is currently being drafted.

⁵⁴ Respondents who did not directly use the services of primary or secondary education are excluded from the analysis.

⁵⁵ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2016). *Life in Transition Survey*. Retrieved from <http://www.ebrd.com/documents/oc/e/pdf-life-in-transition-iii.pdf>

Figure 3. Development Priorities

Development Challenges	First Priority	Average Rank
Economic affairs	59%	2.12
Health	12%	3.81
Public order and safety	8%	4.98
Social protection	5%	4.85
Education	5%	5.14
Defense	3%	7.14
Environmental protection	3%	6.21
Housing and community amenities	2%	6.52
General public services	2%	6.29
Recreation, culture, and religion	1%	7.94
TOTAL	100.00%	

When given the choice of eight sectors in which BiH authorities should invest resources as a priority for social and employment issues, BiH citizens ranked education as the fourth priority, behind industrial development, agriculture, and small and medium enterprise development (Figure 4). The same results are shown in the Regional Cooperation Council’s 2016 Balkan Barometer survey⁵⁶ of 1,000 BiH citizens, in which social infrastructure was also assessed as the fourth priority, behind the aforementioned priorities. FBiH citizens identified social infrastructure as the first investment priority more frequently (24%) than the RS citizens (15%).

Figure 4. BiH Investment Priorities

Investment priorities	First Priority	Combined First and Second Priority
Industrial development	33%	54%
Agriculture	21%	43%
Small and medium enterprise development	19%	39%
Social infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals	9%	21%
Energy sector	7%	15%
Transport infrastructure	5%	10%
Science and technology	4%	11%
Tourism	2%	7%
TOTAL	100.00%	

FBiH and RS citizens disagreed when asked whether education should be in the jurisdiction of the state-level government, as shown in Figure 5. Three of four (77%) FBiH citizens think that education should be governed by the state, compared with only 28 percent of RS citizens. The opinions are similar when it comes to establishment of a ministry of education at the state level (see Figure 5): 58 percent of FBiH

⁵⁶ Regional Cooperation Council (2016). *Balkan Barometer 2016*. Retrieved from http://www.rcc.int/seeds/files/RCC_BalkanBarometer_PublicOpinion_2016.pdf

citizens believe that this ministry should be established, compared with only 27 percent of RS citizens (Figure 6).

Figure 5. Attitudes and Possibility of State-Level Government Jurisdiction over Education

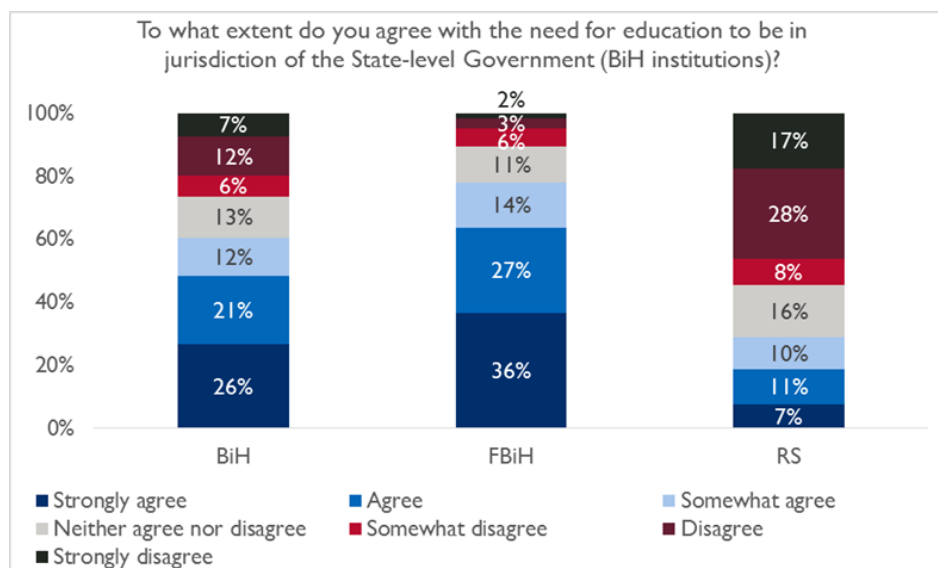
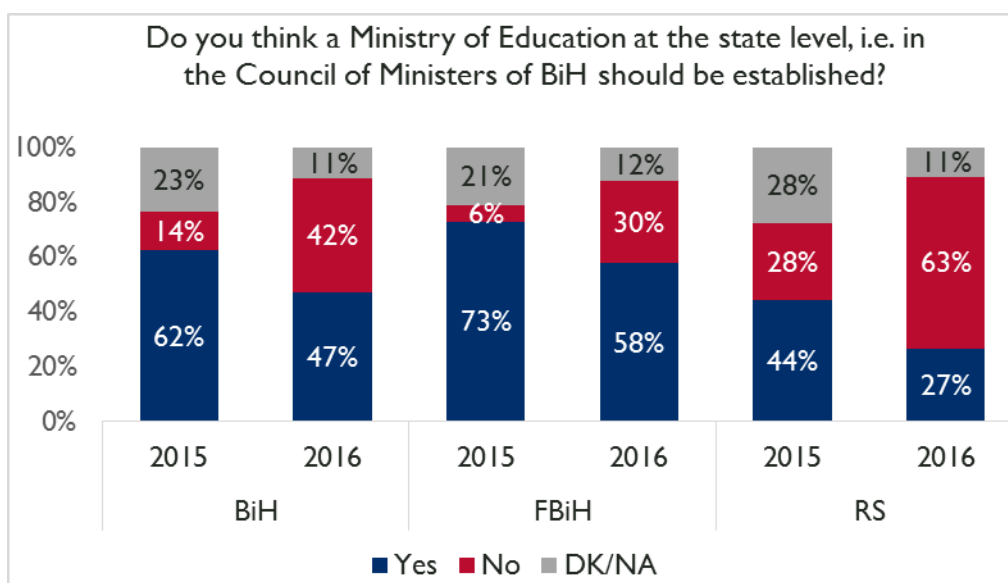


Figure 6. Attitudes on Possibility of Establishment of the Ministry of Education at the State Level

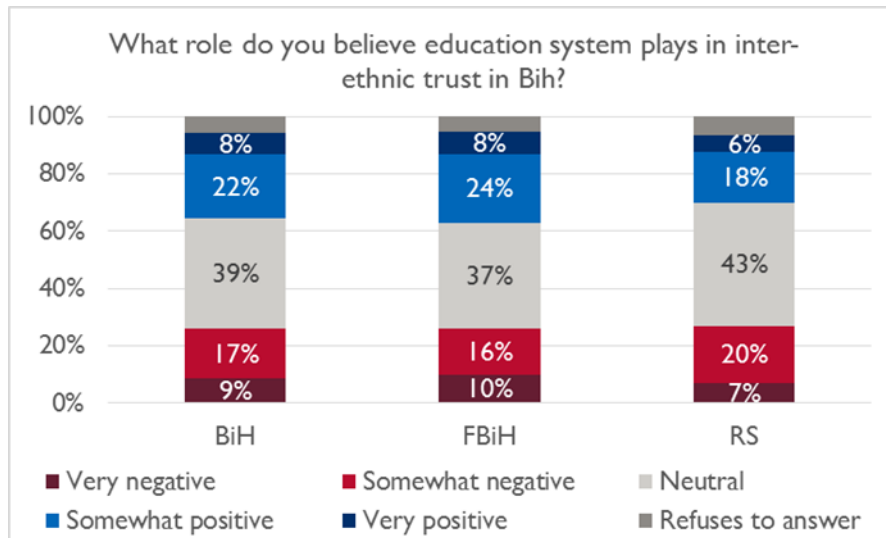


When asked if they had ever given money, gifts, services, or the like to public servants to get better treatment, 7 percent of BiH citizens admitted giving bribes to professors and 3 percent gave bribes to teachers. Youth were more likely to admit giving bribes to teachers and professors, compared to adults; 10 percent of the youth mentioned giving bribes to professors, compared to 6 percent of adults, and 5 percent admitted bribing teachers, compared to 3 percent of adults.

RCC's 2016 Balkan Barometer⁵⁷ also assessed the bribery among the public servants. However, this survey assessed respondents' perceptions, not their experiences with bribery. When asked whether they believed that different civil servants are taking bribes or abusing their positions and power for personal gain, only 3 percent of BiH citizens stated that people working in the education sector are involved in such behaviors.

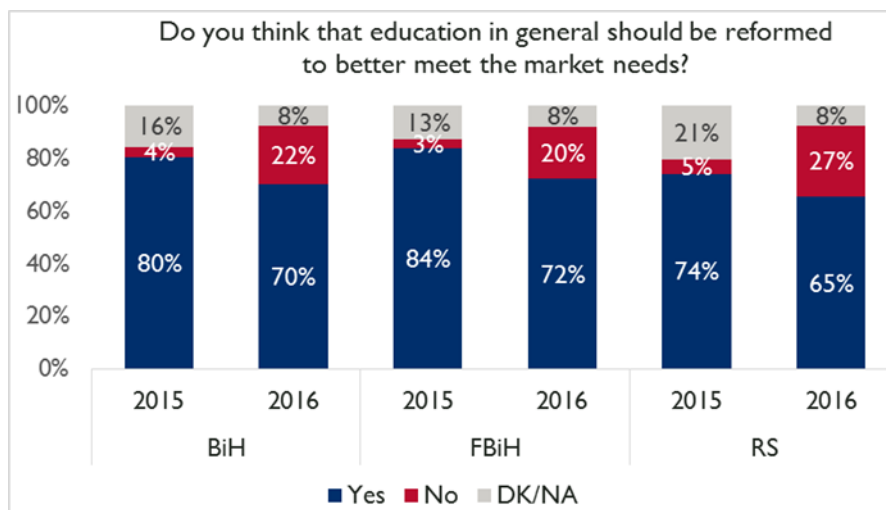
Overall, 30 percent of BiH citizens within the 2016 NSCP-BiH stated that education plays a positive role in inter-ethnic trust in BiH (Figure 8). This opinion was stated more often by FBiH citizens (32%), compared with RS citizens (24%).

Figure 7. Perceived Role of Education System in Inter-Ethnic Trust



According to the 2016 NSCP-BiH, most BiH citizens (70%) believe that education should be reformed to better meet market needs (Figure 9). This opinion is expressed somewhat more often by FBiH citizens than by RS citizens.

Figure 8. Attitudes on Harmonization of Education with Market Demands



⁵⁷ Regional Cooperation Council (2016). *Balkan Barometer 2016*. Retrieved from http://www.rcc.int/seeds/files/RCC_BalkanBarometer_PublicOpinion_2016.pdf

RCC's 2016 Balkan Barometer⁵⁸ included questions on importance of education for getting a job and getting ahead in life. BiH citizens believe that education is important for getting a job, but that personal connections are more important. Slightly less than a quarter of BiH citizens (24%) believe that qualifications and education are the most important for finding a job. However, the majority (55%) stated that personal contacts are the most important. Analyzing why some of their household members cannot find a job, 11 percent believed that inadequate or irrelevant education was the reason, whereas 69 percent stated lack of jobs, followed by lack of personal connections (56%), age discrimination (23%), and insufficient work experience (20%). One of five citizens (19%) would like the country to join the EU because it would mean more freedom to study and/or work in the EU.

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) survey respondents assessed which of the following factors is most important for getting ahead in life: having a good education, working hard, knowing the right people, being lucky, belonging to a wealthy family, or some other factor. Good education and hard work were perceived as more important than connections to get ahead in life. Almost a quarter of BiH citizens (23%) believed that having a good education is the most important for getting ahead in life, and somewhat more of them believed that it is important to work hard (26%). However, 22 percent stated that knowing the right people is the most important. The survey respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree that the skills they learned in the education system met the needs of their jobs. The majority of BiH citizens (63%) agreed with this statement, whereas 21 percent expressed disagreement.

Respondents in the RCC survey were also asked to state whether they agree or disagree with the statement that the government should provide affirmative measures—that is, promote the opportunities for equal access to persons with disabilities, displaced persons, refugees, and Roma and other ethnic minorities. More than 80 percent of the respondents agreed that the government should promote opportunities for equal access to education for each of these groups.

EBRD's 2016 Life in Transition Report surveyed 1,499 households in BiH, asking which of the following should be the priorities for the government spending: education, health care, pensions, assistance to the poor, public infrastructure, housing, or environment. Slightly more than a quarter of the respondents (28%) thought that education should be the top priority for extra government spending, whereas other factors were mentioned less often. When asked whether they would be willing to give part of their income or pay more taxes to improve public education, the majority of respondents (76%) stated they would be willing to pay more taxes to improve the quality of public education. Overall, 76 percent of female respondents agreed with the statement that it is important that their daughters achieve university education.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Regional Cooperation Council (2016). *Balkan Barometer 2016*. Retrieved from http://www.rcc.int/seeds/files/RCC_BalkanBarometer_PublicOpinion_2016.pdf

⁵⁹ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2016). *Life in Transition Survey*. Retrieved from <http://www.ebrd.com/documents/ocf/pdf-life-in-transition-iii.pdf>

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION
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