



# Rethinking Religious Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Emina Abrahamsdotter

## Table of Contents

### 1. Executive Summary

### 2. Introduction

- 2.1. Policy question and research methods
- 2.2. A point of departure: UNESCO pillars of education and Toledo principles
- 2.3. Key findings

### 3. Religious education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

### 4. Insights and empirical results

- 4.1. Religious education and identity
- 4.2. Religious education and the issue of choice
- 4.3. Religious education and belonging
- 4.4. The issue of Culture of Religion

### 5. Towards holistic and integrative religious education

- 5.1. Inter-religious learning

### 6. Policy options at disposal

- 6.1. Policy option 1: Confessional religious approach
- 6.2. Policy option 2: Inter-religious approach
- 6.3. Policy option 3: Anti-religious approach

### 7. Recommendations

- 7.1. Recommendations to policy makers
- 7.2. Recommendations to religious communities
- 7.3. Recommendations to parents

### 8. Bibliography

## Summary

Religious education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is of confessional nature. It has been introduced in to public schools system without public debate or parents' involvement. Still, some research indicates and religious communities argue for that huge majority of parents are supportive of confessional model of teaching religion. This research study explores in depth reasons which parents supportive of confessional religious education in primary public schools of Bosnia and Herzegovina have as well as their attitude on the subject of Culture of Religion. Current mono-religious model presents a number of challenges. Students are separated in religious education classes along religious/ethnic lines and their religious knowledge is limited to studies of their own religious tradition. Some of the students are excluded from religious education and are not provided with a meaningful alternative. Key empirical findings suggest that parents' support of the current model of religious education is related to the issue of identity, lack of meaningful alternatives and the issue of belonging. Also, all parents expressed a positive attitude towards Culture of Religion for the sake of knowledge, social inclusion and peace in the country. This study advocates for religious education based on UNESCO's four basic pillars of education and Toledo Guiding Principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools. It also discusses three policy options advocating for the model of inter-religious education in public schools which affirms and includes all students regardless of their religious background. A set of recommendations to policy makers, religious communities and parents are formulated.



**Emina Abrahamsdotter** holds a master's degree in political science from the University of Lund in Sweden and currently attends master course in Religious studies at the Center of Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies in Sarajevo. Her research themes are: ethnic conflict in Kosovo, the role of UN in intrastate conflict and gender analysis of *ahadith*. She published short articles about Islam and gender equality. She worked in the Swedish Migration Board, International Trade Union Confederation, International Center Olof Palme and is currently engaged as consultant by UNIFEM.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Policy question and research methods

Does political elite care about what parents think about religious education in publicly funded schools? Are parents provided with enough information, knowledge and debate opportunities to discuss the issue? Are they given any meaningful and reasonable alternative to the current model of mono-religious learning? In former Yugoslavia religious education was completely banned from the public school system from 1952. Then the parents had no say on this. The only religious education provided was the one organized in parish churches and mosques, education which was purely confessional. The current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is quite different. Since 1993, the middle of the ongoing war, religious education is present in the public education system. Again, parents had no say on this. Although we lack in-depth research on parental views on religious education some previous quantitative surveys carried out by *Open Society Fund Bosnia and Herzegovina* presented in their publication *Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina: What do we teach our children?* indicate that quite a high number of parents are supportive of confessional religious education in publicly funded schools. Why is this case? What perceptions do parents actually have into religious education? This policy study attempts to understand the underlying reasons behind the parental support to confessional religious education, discusses the consequences of the current model of RE and proposes some possible alternatives. Also, the interest and willingness of parents to support a non-confessional school subject as an alternative will be discussed as well. In the end the study will also present three policy options and make a set of constructive recommendations to various relevant actors such as policy decision makers, religious communities and parents for rethinking current religious education policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The information for this policy study was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Eighteen in-depth unstructured interviews or focused interviews were carried out with the parents at the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009. Unlike quantitative surveys interviews yield rich insights into people's opinions, values, attitudes and feelings (May 2001, p. 120) and give us the possibility of what Weber calls *Verstehen*. Its open-ended character can be highly revealing about what parents feel about religion in education and how they interpret the meaning and value of it. This research method and type of interview can also facilitate deeper understanding of the process by which parents came to adopt their particular position on teaching religion in the public schools, as well as to identify the sources in this process that affected their position. Through the interviews I want to view the issue at stake through "the eyes of the parents" (Bryman 2004, p. 279). As suggested by Bryman (2004, p. 280) the research question must be understood and interpreted from their own perspective. In order to understand social actions we must grasp the meaning that actors attach to their actions. In addition, Bryman emphasizes the importance of describing and understanding the context in which social action takes place

The interviews took place in Sarajevo, Mostar, Donji Vakuf, Bugojno and Banja Luka. The majority of interviews were organized in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina where religious education in the primary schools is optional, which is not the case in the Republika Srpska. The background of the interviewees, fifteen females and three males, varied from low to high level of education. All parents said they were believers. In addition, a literature review of relevant legislation, research and reports was also conducted.



## 2.2. A point of departure: UNESCO pillars of education and Toledo principles

This study discusses religious education in public schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina both in relation to modern education in general and to teaching about religions and beliefs specifically. I have departed from the idea of holistic education based on four basic pillars of education as proposed in a report published by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1996 called *Learning: The Treasure Within*, and so called *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools* which provide us with useful guidance on how to teach about religion. The four pillars of education refer to *learning to know*, *learning to do*, *learning to live together*, and *learning to be*. They are all interrelated and equally important whereas education is recognized as a lifelong and life-related process. The notion of holistic education based on these four pillars is extensively described in the following quotation:

“Some of the characteristics involved within this are: solidarity, determination, creativity, perseverance, diversity, community, risks. Holistic education looks at persons as whole beings; is process oriented, dynamic, experiential, innovative, relational, inclusive, life-giving; accepts differences, is based on a context . . . holistic education is about helping to facilitate, to equip; it is about enabling people to take control of their lives. In that holistic education has to be inter-religious, inter-confessional, inter-generational and inter-disciplinary, the methodology involved displays a dialogue oriented, qualitative approach, and an attention to process and an orientation to both the individual and the community (Schreiner 2005, p. 31).”

An overview of the four pillars of education is presented below:

Basic pillar of education	Explanation
<b>Learning to know</b>	Learning <i>to know</i> is not about acquiring a certain amount of specific information, but it is about gaining skills to master the instruments of knowledge.
<b>Learning to do</b>	Learning <i>to do</i> refers to the development of life skills such as communication skills, ability to work in teams, problem solving skills, and conflict management skills.
<b>Learning to live together</b>	Learning <i>to live together</i> encompasses discovering other, and working towards common objectives. This means that that to be able to understand others, one must first know oneself, but in the same way, understanding others strongly contributes to one's own development.
<b>Learning to be</b>	Learning <i>to be</i> means that education should encourage individual, critical thinking and help students to form their own judgment. Only in this way will an individual be able to determine what right thing to do in specific circumstances is. This also applies for our relationship to the community.

Table 1:  
Four basic pillars of education as formulated by UNESCO<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This report is available on [http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/15\\_62.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/15_62.pdf)

On the whole, we could say that religious education does not apply any of the above presented pillars of education, or at least not to the extent required within the scope of holistic education. Learning to know is commonly reduced to acquiring information and concepts about Islam or Christianity, and frequently viewed as the prime objective. Learning to do is commonly reduced to prayers and religious rituals. Learning to live together seems not to be at focus in current religious education and, a serious issue that is highly needed. Such an approach in religious education would then actively engage in combating nationalism, racism, intolerance and ignorance, working for peace and stability. These pillars of education if applied to religious education in public schools would contribute to bringing about change “from narrow nationalism to universalism, from ethnic and cultural prejudice to tolerance, understanding and pluralism, from autocracy to democracy in its various manifestations and from a technologically divided world where high technology is the privilege of the few to a technologically united world” (Delors 1996, p. 141).

<sup>2</sup> This book is available at [http://www.osce.org/publications/odi-hr/2007/11/28314\\_993\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/publications/odi-hr/2007/11/28314_993_en.pdf)

**Table 2:**  
**Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs<sup>2</sup>**

In addition to UNESCO's four basic pillars of education I also make use of so called *Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools* developed so as “to contribute to an improved understanding of the world’s increasing religious diversity and the growing presence of religion in the public sphere. Their rationale is based on two core principles: first, that there is positive value in teaching that emphasizes respect for *everyone’s* right to freedom of religion and belief, and second, that teaching about religions and beliefs can reduce harmful misunderstanding and stereotypes” (Toledo guiding principles 2007, p. 2). The Toledo Guiding Principles are based on the following overall conclusions:

1.	Knowledge about religion and beliefs can reinforce appreciation of the importance of respect for everyone’s right to freedom of religion or belief, foster democratic citizenship, promote understanding of societal diversity and, at the same time, enhance social cohesion.
2.	Knowledge about religions and beliefs has the valuable potential of reducing conflicts that are based on lack of understanding for other’s beliefs and of encouraging respect for their right.
3.	Knowledge about religions and beliefs is an essential part of a quality education. It is required to understand much of history, literature, and art, and can be helpful in broadening one’s cultural horizons and in deepening one’s insight into complexities of past and present.
4.	Teaching about religions and beliefs is most effective when combined with efforts to instill respect for the rights of others, even when there is disagreement about religions or beliefs. The right to freedom of religion or belief is a universal right and carries with it an obligation to protect the rights of others, including respect for dignity of all human beings.
5.	An individual’s personal religious (or non-religious) belief does not provide sufficient reason to exclude that person from teaching about religions and beliefs. The most important considerations in this regard relate to professional expertise, as well as to basic attitudes towards or commitment to human rights in general and freedom of religion or belief in particular.
6.	Reasonable adaptations of policies in response to distinctive religious needs may be required to avoid violation of rights to freedom of religion or belief. Even when not strictly required as a matter of law, such adaptations and flexibility contribute to the building of a climate of tolerance and mutual respect.
7.	Where compulsory courses involving teaching about religions and beliefs are sufficiently neutral and objective, requiring participation in such courses as such does not violate the freedom of religion and belief (although states are free to allow partial or total opt-outs in these settings).



## 2.3. Key findings

Parents support confessional religious education in publically funded schools for a number of reasons. In the course of the discussion key reasons were identified and are outlined in the table below:

Reasons for supporting RE as formulated by parents	The formulation of the problem at hand
Parents want their children to develop an identity in religion. Some of the parents linked their painful war experiences to the lack of sufficiently strong religious identity that now must be reinforced. The support is also explained by the fact that religion was marginalized in the former Yugoslavia.	Religious education is an issue of identity.
Parents think that there is no meaningful alternative subject to religious education. They also support RE because other religious groups do, and because the majority of students attend. In addition they are not provided with sufficient information about the confessional vs. non-confessional approach of teaching about religion.	Religious education is an issue of choice (or lack of choice).
Parents want to foster the feeling of belonging to the community, and to transfer their tradition to the children. Parent wish also to advance their child's knowledge about their own faith. They believe that religious education in the public education system gives RE authority and legitimacy.	Religious education is an issue of belonging.
Parents believe religious education will improve moral values with their child and the society in general.	Religious education is a morality issue.

The key findings suggest that underlying reasons for supporting religious education in public schools are predominantly linked to the issue of identity and belonging, but also to the lack of any meaningful alternatives. The striking finding with the interviewees with low level of education was the severe lack of knowledge about religion in general, its meaning and functions. Even the knowledge about their own religion was often superficial and usually restricted to prayers and common religious rituals. Such ignorance limits the ability of a person to understand and reflect upon advantages and disadvantages of current model of religious education. This suggests the need of more informed public debate at the local level close to the parents. Another dominant finding observed was fear, particularly with the interviewees with Moslem background, based on the past experiences, usually related to the recent war. Many interviewees clarified their standpoint referring to the loss of a dear person, property and personal experience of violence. They also expressed a fear for future and believe that letting their children attend confessional religious education will help them preserve their specific religious and ethnic identity. Parents with Catholic background drew my attention to the issue of pressure exercised by the local representatives of the Catholic Church. Parents with Orthodox background living in Republika Srpska expressed a strong dissatisfaction with the fact that religious education there is compulsory for all Orthodox children.

**Table 1:**  
**Key findings identified in the course of interviews**

Two additional findings are significant to mention. One of them was related to the fact that all interviewed parents were open and positive to their children learning about other religions and together with students of all confessional or non-confessional backgrounds. This was not expected as there is a common conviction that believing parents do not support non-confessional teaching of religion. Many of the parents recognized also the risks of the current model of mono-religious teaching in terms of peace, stability and integration of the country. Another important and related finding was that the majority of the parents send their children for religious education organized in the religious communities as they find the knowledge acquired about their own religion in public schools insufficient. This creates a paradox in which the amount of religious education provided in public schools today, on which religious communities insist and passionately fight for, does not fully meet the expectations of the believing parents.

### 3. Religious education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

As early as 1991 state, authorities and religious communities initiated a design of religious education in public schools for all confessions in the country. This initiative resulted into a *“Plan and Program of religious education for the Islamic, Orthodox, Catholic, Jewish and Adventist religion”* in 1994. Religious education as a school subject was then introduced in public schools during the war by law of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a law that was then carried over in 1996 to the post-Dayton constitutional structures. Religious education is regulated by the *Law on freedom of religion and the legal position of churches and religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina* adopted in 2004. The law stipulates all children’s right to religious education and stresses the responsibility and right of religious communities to implement religious education within the public education system. Its Art 4 says:

(...) Everyone shall have the right to religious education, which shall be provided solely by persons appointed so to do by an official representative of his Church or religious community, whether in religious institutions or in public and private pre-school institutions, primary schools and higher education (...).

In addition, there is the *Framework Law on primary and secondary education* which is valid for the whole country, as well as educational law in all cantons. In the texts of these laws religious education is given high priority, and the articles related to RE tend to come at the top of the law, together with the articles regulating languages at school. In the light of this study it is useful to quote Article 9 from the *Framework Law* which reads: *“Schools shall promote and protect religious freedom, tolerance and dialogue in BiH”*. The provisions of these two laws might be difficult to harmonize and implement in the reality.

In the current system public schools are obliged to offer religious education to students belonging to a specific religious tradition based on normative theology and with a confessional approach. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina this school subject is optional-obligatory, which means that parents have the opportunity to choose and once they give their consent their child must attend confessional RE for the rest of the primary school education. In the Republika Srpska the RE is obligatory for all students throughout primary education and neither parents nor students have choice. Churches and religious communities have great impact on the RE and they are the ones responsible for designing curriculum as well as for appointing teachers. The subject usually amounts for one lesson per week, but in a few cantons public schools pro-





vide two lessons per week. The Bosnian legislation gives opportunity for similar arrangements in other subjects as an alternative to religious education. This, however, is frequently difficult to implement in the reality, mainly due to the lack of sincere will of the school management to provide students with meaningful alternatives to confessional religious education. In addition, it is important noting that in both entities the function of school inspections is carried out by the ministries alone or the ministries through the Pedagogical departments (Pedagoški zavod). This political influence on the executive power of the political system is definitely not a part of good governmental practices which foresees a separation of politics and public services in the best interest of all (Funkcionalni pregled javne uprave sektora obrazovanja u BiH 2005, p. 9). The legislative framework and the political influence on the schools through inspections are important so as to understand the context in which parents' make their decisions.

Religious education in publically funded schools may be organized according to a variety of models<sup>3</sup>. Sometimes is the organization of religious education the exclusive responsibility of state authorities, sometimes of religious communities, and sometimes they share responsibility for religious education according to the so called collaborative model. However, the most common divide lies between confessional and non-confessional model of religious teaching. Their major characteristics are presented in the table below.

<sup>3</sup> For detailed comparative overview see "Religija i školovanje u otvorenom društvu", p. 42 – 48.

Confessional religious education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims at shaping religious identity of believers</li> <li>• Teaches for religion</li> <li>• The content is specific to one religious tradition based on normative theology</li> <li>• Targets only students who belong to that particular religious community</li> <li>• Includes religious rituals, prayers, symbols etc.</li> <li>• Usually optional</li> <li>• Organized and implemented by religious communities</li> </ul>
Non-confessional religious education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily aims to transmit knowledge and values</li> <li>• Teaches about religion</li> <li>• The content is based on more objective scientific knowledge</li> <li>• Usually compulsory for all children</li> <li>• Does not include rituals, prayers, symbols etc.</li> <li>• Organized and implemented by state authorities</li> </ul>

In addition, international community, together with the Bosnian educational authorities, organized the introduction of a course titled *Culture of Religion* as a pilot project in some public schools throughout the country. This subject has a non-confessional approach and teaches all students about beliefs and practices of the major religions present in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The implementation of this pilot project began in 2004, but its beginning can be traced back to the *Conference of the Ministers of Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina* held in 2000. At this conference the entity Ministers of Education committed themselves to a number of key education reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They stated that education **"should be used to bring (communities) together and live in tolerance with one another."** It was confirmed that cultural and linguistic heritage of all peoples in the country must be acknowledged and honored, while at the same time fostering **"intercultural understanding and communication"**. One concrete way of doing this would be to include "teaching about all major religions practiced in Bosnia and Herzegovina." (OSCE Status Report on the pilot course of Culture of Religion, 2007)<sup>4</sup>.

**Table 3:**  
**Major differences between confessional and non-confessional approach in religious education**

<sup>4</sup> This report is available at <http://www.oscebih.org/documents/9906-eng.pdf>

The implementation of the pilot project varied greatly across the country. The subject of *Culture of Religion* is organized as alternative, supplement or extra-curricular activity. In Republika Srpska the subject is mandatory supplement to religious education and offered in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school. 13 schools are currently teaching religious education. In the Federation the situation on this issue varies. The predominantly Croat cantons have refused to participate in this pilot project as the Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not supported it. In a few other cantons, primarily Tuzla and Sarajevo, *Culture of Religion* is taught.

#### **4. Insights and empirical results**

The main question asked to the interviewees was "What are your reasons for supporting confessional religious education in publicly funded schools?" When asked this question the difference in reaction was observed between the interviewees with low and high level of education. Interviewees with low level of education expressed a great deal of surprise at getting such a kind of question. At the beginning they did not have any clear position on this issue. Simply, allowing children to attend confessional religious education in public schools has been taken for granted and no serious reflection has been dedicated to this matter. Highly educated interviewees had a more clear position on the issue. The analysis of the qualitative interviews revealed that the main reasons for supporting confessional religious teaching in public schools were related to identity, belonging, morality and the lack of alternative and choice.

##### **4.1. Religious education and identity**

Religious identification with a specific religious orientation is one of the strongest identity markers with the peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was observed in all my interviews. All interviewees were deeply rooted in their families' religion and had seemingly stable and unquestioned religious identity. This was visible in the statements such as "*because we are Muslims*", "*because Christian faith is our heritage*", "*because I want my children to know who they are*" and "*because I am who I am*", as the major reason for supporting confessional religious education in public schools. In this study I use the term identity as a sociological concept representing primarily a link between the individual and a specific category of group of people. It is based on assumed sameness implying differences from others. Identity is therefore the process of classification and the process of associating oneself with someone or something (Duijzings 2000, p. 18).

In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina religious identities most commonly overlap with ethnic identities. Thus, a Catholic is at the same time a Croat, a Moslem is a Bosniak and an Orthodox Christian is a Serb. Such a categorization gives the impression of single uncontested identities. Such a clear-cut division that strictly follows religious affiliation is a heritage from the Ottoman Empire (Lweis 1968, p. 14-15). One may speak of American Muslims or Arab Christians but a Muslim Serb or Bosniak Catholic or Orthodox Croat is an absurdity and a contradiction in terms. This historical background, as well as the current identity politics, excludes any possibility towards an ethnic melting-pot in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, As Duijzings would suggest, deeper analysis discloses plurality of identities telling us that individual identities are always multi-layered, i.e. every person maintains a variety of identities and belongs to several categories and groups of people at the same time.





Below follows extracts from the conducted interviews. Filip and Bozica are parents of four children and live in Bugojno, a Moslem-Catholic town in central Bosnia. Their two boys attend confessional RE in the local public school and both parents support it. The mother says the main reason for the support lies in her conviction that **“the one who does not respects one’s own religion, will not respect the religion of others”**<sup>5</sup>. This implies at least two things. Firstly, it is a necessary precondition to know one’s own religious identity in order to be able to show respect towards the other religious identities. More explicitly, “we have to educate toward identity, then communication with and understanding of the other can take place” (Streib 2001, p. 138). Secondly, to comply with the religious norms, values and attitudes of one’s own family or community seems to be a crucial point in the positive interaction with the other. In other words, the mother’s statement assumes that first goes identity and then communication. This can be interpreted as a wish to foster tolerance towards the other and different in the society. However, I do not think that this is the primary purpose of the mother’s statement. I am more inclined to understand her expression as a secure way of protecting and preserving her specific Catholic-Croat identity. This approach summarized in her statement controls not only her children’s choice of their religious identity but also the content of their identity. Thus, there is little space left to test and develop new forms of religious identities and belongings. Fillip, the father in the family, supports confessional RE **“because I am what I am and I want my child to know that”**<sup>6</sup>. This statement is also related to the issue of identity through which he expresses his clear conviction that his own religious identity must be preserved being transferred to his children. His statement reveals a number of assumptions. First, he assumes that there is an “I” which reflects the natural state of his being. Second, this “I” suggests the existence of one single identity. Finally, his “selfhood” must be transferred to his children and confessional religious education is one way to do this.

---

<sup>5</sup> ko ne poštuje svoje ne poštuje ni tuđe

---

<sup>6</sup> “zato što sam ja to što jesam i što volim da moje dijete zna to”

Mirela, a mother from Mostar, expresses the same attitude when she says: **“the one that appreciates one’s own religion will appreciate the religion of the others”**<sup>7</sup> “I practice my faith”, she says, and goes on explaining her spiritual experience of following the Way of Cross few days earlier. She is convinced that practicing faith gives people kindness and respect towards each other. Thus, for her, religious experience is not only the issue of identity, it is also an issue of transformation and outcome towards higher morals of human beings. “That people (believers) will do no harm”, she says, underlying that children will not learn anything bad in RE classes. In similar way, Almira from Donji Vakuf supports RE because “(they) are Moslems and belong to Islamic faith” and because she wants her child “to know that (they) are Moslems”<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup> ko drži do svoje vjere drži i do tuđe

Most interviewed parents perceive religious identity as something important but unchangeable and static. It seems to be a closed and unquestioned issue. However, “identity should not be regarded as a noun, but a verb, because it describes a process. Identity is always in the process of development, it is never finished, and always fragmentary (Streib 2001, p. 139). Furthermore, one cannot speak about single identities but rather of plural identity, a plural self. Thus, identity “is based on the encounter with the Other”, it is understanding oneself as another” (Streib 2001, p. 139). Understanding the other and different is the key issues in the Bosnian political and social context. Thus, inter-religious encounter must be at center here and this encounter characterized by curiosity, openness and mutual respect must be reflected in the religious education. So, RE classes must take into the consideration the plurality in which all live, as well as our multiple identities.

---

<sup>8</sup> „jer smo Muslimani, jer smo islamske vjeroispovjesti, da se zna da smo muslimani”

“Children live in an ideological multiform and pluralistic environment, where they have to learn to understand themselves in the socio-emotional sense and where they have to find their own place. . . . The emphasis no longer lies primarily in the transfer, but in the need for meaning and the development of personal identity (Kuindersma/Valster 2007, p. 123).

The research shows that children living in multi-cultural milieu can move unselfconsciously from one culture to another forming “particular complexes of partial identifications with members of their own religious and ethnic groups and other groups, but this (is) not threatening to their integrity as persons” (Jacksons, p. 19). A research work with Hindu young people also shows that “being Hindu” was a central aspect of their identity, but also that multiple influences combined with this formed a new synthesis of identity. Similarly, another study of Pakistani Muslim children living in Oslo reveals a set of cultural and social identities with the children, which came about through an interpretation process in which they developed their selfhood and what researcher Sisel Österberg calls “integrated plural identity” (Jacksons 2005, p. 19). The politics of identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina aims at creating separate and single identities between the three major religious and ethnic groups so as to achieve specific political and social goals. Decentralized education structures are in its function, and the idea of separate and isolated religious identities are political priority rather than a common understanding of citizenship (Skeie 2001, p. 246-247). Confessional religious education, which is based on the idea of separation and deliberate isolation from alternative views, is an effective means of realizing such identity politics. As put by Todd Gitlin “Nothing secures a faith better than institutionalization, even a bad institutionalization (Gitlin 1998, p. 164).” There is no doubt that confessional religious education in public schools is one of the ways of institutionalizing identity politics based on nationalism and ethnic and religious separatism. We could even argue that religious education in public schools today has replaced Marxism, not only in its moral authority but also as a way of controlling the development of religious and ethnic identities. This prevents a deeper understanding of the relationship between religion and identity, and how these two concepts are related to the social context in which we live. One of its primary aims seems to be the maintenance of social cohesion based on nationalism, the imagined idea of common roots, as expressed by Benedict Anderson.

#### **4.2. Religious education and the issue of choice**

The issue of choice related to RE is highly problematic. Empirical data suggest that parents do not always have a choice in the real meaning of the word. A real choice presupposes the possibility to choose between at least two equally good options. Most commonly, the choice stands between confessional RE and nothing. The previously conducted research (Popov/Ofstad 2006, p. 96) on this issue suggests that students who do not attend religious education are disadvantaged in comparison to the students who do so although the law stipulates quite opposite position. As mentioned earlier, in Republika Srpska religious education is obligatory for Orthodox Christian students throughout the primary school. In the Federation of BiH the subject is optional-obligatory, which means that once a parent give her or his consent the student must attend till the end of the primary education. This policy research shows that parents’ choice is strictly restricted in several ways. The following four problems related to the issue of choice have been identified:

- Students are not provided with an alternative to RE;
- Parents are not provided with information about RE;
- Parents have no influence over the subject of RE;
- Consciously or unconsciously, parents feel pressure from their social environment when opting for RE.



Parents in the RS are not given any possibility to choose, and all interviewed parents protested against such an approach, although they supported confessional RE in public schools. In the Federation almost all parents said they had to sign a paper so as to give their permission for the child to attend, one of them could not recall if she signed or not and one parent said she never signed anything. As one of the parents, a professional teacher, recalls:

*"He (the parent) gets a form that needs to be filled in and signed. You can imagine how difficult it must be for a parent who does not have prior experience (with the RE) and who has no opportunity to discuss the issue. All parents take the form and sign it in silence, without even asking the child . . . This is not fair to parents. And the most parents ask themselves the main question: "Will my child be alone if I do not consent to RE?"*

Another parent expressed her concern about pressure exercised by religious communities:

*"They (religious communities) support divisions, interfere in politics and social developments. Attending religious education is conditioned with the confirmation in the Church. It is not sufficient to go to the Church, but also to attend religious education and I think that is a pressure."*

All of parents said they were never offered any other alternative subject by the school. How, then, can we speak about choice. This aspect of being given possibility to choose is quite formal and meaningless. How can we speak about choice if students are not given at least one additional meaningful alternative? Parents also said the school never publically debated the advantages and disadvantages of having confessional religious education in comparison, for example, to the subject of Culture of Religion. The majority of parents did not even know the difference between the two school subjects.

These research findings are particularly interesting in the light of the above discussed four pillar of holistic education. Being a part of continuing process as well as a process of becoming holistic, education is interplay between power and empowerment. Thus holistic education is about enabling people to control their lives, in that holistic religious education has to be inter-religious, inter-confessional, inter-generational and inter-disciplinary directed at dialog and qualitative approach serving both individual and the community (Schreiner/Banev/Oxley 2005, Op. 31).

Therefore:

*". . . If one object is to be chosen instead of another, it is important to know how the one differs from the other and why the one is to be preferred to the other as a constituent in the complete pattern of the learner's experience and character. Second, . . . the plan of study can best contribute to the person's growth if it is governed by the goal of wholeness for the human being".*

The context of religious education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is plurality. This must be taken into consideration when discussing the issue of religious education in the public school system. In this context of religious plurality one might have expect that human beings would desire to opt for an option that would give them the most knowledge and information about other religious traditions. However, sometimes humans act not just to maximize their benefits, but rather to gain something or to avoid penalties. These rewards and penalties are embedded in

the social environment. As I gathered more information the interviewees drew my attention to the importance of group pressure and the idea of others in their environment also supporting confessional religious education. One of them expressed this notion in the following way: *"I want my child to go as all other children go"*. This is one of the main reasons as it was confirmed by many of the parents on several occasions. This clearly shows that existing identity of one religious/ethnic group in Bosnia and Herzegovina is constructed in relation to other two religious/ethnic groups. The interviewees also mentioned that their decision to support religious education in schools is connected to their assumption that *"they (persons belonging to other confessions) also attend the confessional religious education"*. In other words, the logic "we do it because they do it" is an underlying rationale for their decision to support confessional religious education. This is best expressed in the following two statements:

*"Since the Bosniaks learn about their own religion I have nothing against that my child goes with his own people. Let everybody learn and act according to their own (religious) law<sup>9</sup>."*  
A mother from Bugojno.

*"In the Republika Srpska each child attends religious education, and if they do so why would we not do it."*  
A father from Sarajevo.

<sup>9</sup> Kao što Bosnjaci uče o svojoj vjeri nisam protiv da moje dijete ide sa svojim narodom neka svako uči po svom zakonu.

### 4.3. Religious education and belonging

Parents also support RE because they want to foster feelings of belonging and to transfer their own traditions and values to their children. Their answers suggest the importance of the community as they wish to support the community into the school system. The answers could be also understood as their wish to keep the linkage to their tradition and their past, something that might create a feeling of continuity and security (Phenix 1964, p. 5). As all the interviewees are believers and come originally from religious families we can see that the preferences they hold were acquired through socialization and their own personal past experiences. This socialization process continues and its elements are passed on to their own children. Although they were all in support of confessional religious education in public schools they could not explain why it was necessary to have confessional religious education in public school rather than in religious community. Their support was in a way counter to the fact they freely sent their children for additional religious faith-based education in the local mosques and churches in the weekends. When asked why they answered that religious education provided in public schools is sufficient to gain thorough and needed knowledge about one's own religious beliefs, rituals and practices.

### 4.4. Confessional religious education or Culture of Religion

Interviewed parents were asked about their position in relation to the subject of Culture of Religion. Surprisingly, or not, an overwhelming majority of parents were positive about all children attending RE classes where they would learn about all religions. Some of the parents referred to the fact that there have never been any kind of debate on this issue and that schools never organized any information meetings or discussion about this. On this a parent expresses her view:

*"The process of choosing between the two alternatives (confessional RE and Culture of Religion) would go gradually. Before everybody would attend RE classes, but today that is changing. I think parents would approach this issue carefully so as to see what it is about."*



*Time is needed for everything. In Croatia they are already discussing to introduce an alternative. Here we never had any debate and I think it is a big mistake that parents are not provided with the opportunity to express their opinion and to influence it"*

Below are a few interesting comments by parents related to Culture of Religion:

*"I would need to take a look at the curriculum before making up my mind, but if it is about respecting and learning about all religions and acquiring common knowledge needed for life, than I would accept it for my child"*

*"I have never heard about Culture of Religion. I would not mind if he (the child) attends but not in parallel with religious education as that would be too many school subjects. If I had to choose I would think about it. One advantage would be that all children would be in the class and not running in the corridors. I do not have enough information to make a decision; I have never been involved in any debate."*

*"Schools do not organize alternative activities for children not attending RE classes, and the schools are always trying to escape . . . Social inclusion is important, that all children are included."*

*". . . It would not be bad to learn about other religions . . . you never know where he (the child) can end up . . . it is positive to have knowledge."*

*"I would support it (culture of religion). So that children know and learn, the school is a place for learning, isn't it. . . . I would support it for the sake of knowledge, and that he (the child) has religious education in his own religious community, and for the sake of peace in the country."*

*". . . It (Culture of Religion) is a good thing, look, if you want multiethnic Bosnia than that is important. I would be the happiest person if the children knew everything."*

What parents are saying is that they need to know more, to be informed so that they can make proper decision. As it is now they are neither informed nor provided with any alternative. Also, the parents want all children in the same class and are open and positive towards their children acquiring knowledge about all religions. The parents understand the wider context of the country in terms of peace and integration and they see a connection between these social processes and confessional religious education.

## **5. Towards holistic and integrative religious education**

The starting point of this study is that religion is an important school subject to learn about and to critically discuss. Politics and schools must not be "religiously blind" as is the case in France and Turkey. At the same time it is vital not to create more damage than use. In this respect it is important to pay attention to how religion is taught. Teaching religion from a purely confessional perspective presents a number of challenges in the Bosnian context characterized by plurality of beliefs and lifestyles as well as the experiences of recent conflict. Confessional religious education is exclusionist in its nature as it targets only those pupils that belong to one of

the major religious groups and its practical and pedagogical organization is the privilege of the churches and religious communities. This form of religious education does not ensure required sensitivity, intellectual rigor and fairness, and commonly encourages a narrow view of complex and fascinating social phenomenon such as religion. It also reinforces traditionalism and common stereotypical views of the other religious communities. Its primary aim is to transmit knowledge about the religious doctrinal truths as well as associated values and morals. There is no transformation of knowledge and the acknowledgment of and learning about the diverse, plural and rich worldwide human religiosity is strictly restricted.

Confessional religious education might be also seen as an extension of conflict based in confessional inequality, intolerance, exclusion and separation and/or segregation of school children. Understood rightly this claim is certainly important. In the Bosnian post-war context such an approach to religious education makes it more difficult to overcome differences and prevent conflict. As religion constitutes an important and fundamental element of people's identity here religion must never be neglected or marginalized. Such an approach would only create feeling of alienation and resistance. But, we cannot dismiss research and open discussions about the consequences that the current model of teaching religion has for the future of the Bosnian society – research and discussion which is lacking today. The big challenge lies in finding a model of religious teaching that respects the range of religious sensibilities in the country.

### **5.1. Inter-religious learning**

In the above presented discussion we have seen how Bosnian politics have chosen to meet the current challenges of multiethnicity, integration and peace-building. But what do parents think of Culture of Religion? When asked whether they would support an inter-confessional religious education all the parents answered positively. In the course of discussion related to the advantages and disadvantages of having more holistic religious education rather than dogmatic and one-sided approach to the subject certain key concerns were identified with the parents. All the interviewed parents were of the opinion that inclusive approach in teaching religious education in a pluralistic society would increase knowledge, foster democracy, peace and co-existence and reduce religious/ethnic conflict and segregation. The lack of knowledge and encounter leads often to misunderstandings as formulated by a parent from Mostar.

*"It is more than obvious that children do not know anything about other religions and I believe this is not good. Why? Because we live in a multiethnic and multiconfessional system and children need to be raised to understand that our differences are beautiful. Children need to acquire more knowledge. For instance, swore about God. When asked about it he said I did not mean God, but Allah. Is it not sad that a child who has 70 classes of religious education does not know that God is the same as Allah?"*

The main concern for introducing Culture of Religion comes from religious communities. Their common argument is that teachers cannot teach religion unless they are committed to a specific belief. As suggested by *Toledo Guiding Principles* it is possible for teachers to openly teach and express their own secular or religious beliefs and commitments to pupils as long as it is done in an open and transparent way. If a teacher intends to favor her or his own religious standing at cost of all others, presenting it as the only truth of knowing religious matters then we have a serious problem in the education system. If a teacher, on the other hand, explains her/his own views acknowledging at the same time that others hold different views then we have good education.





Some of the parents expressed their concern about the consequences of the current model of religious education both for the individual and the society:

*"When I was a child I went to the Church . . . we went there with love, we had fellowship, and religious communities were much more active . . . today we have too much of it. After my child has received all the sacraments he stopped going to the Church, I could not force him to go because he did not want to, and nothing attracted him there."*

And:

*"I think that it (religious education) creates walls in negative sense"*

Another view expressed was:

*"We are separated by names and our ethnicity, and I do not think that it (religious education) separates us in real sense. There is a choice given, it is not question of separation. I would be disturbed if somebody forced to attend."*

Above quotations reflect the current challenges in the society. There are walls and divisions among peoples and also recognition and acceptance of that as we can see in the last quotation. This must be dealt with in a way that is reflected in the Bosnian education system, particularly in religious education. Religious education must serve as a way to eliminate divisions and strengthen integration and mutual respect and understanding.

## **6. Policy for religious education in a pluralistic society**

All relevant stakeholders need to reconsider carefully the current model of religious education benchmarked against modern education. We all like having schools which are open and welcoming with an atmosphere of positive feelings such as tolerance, understanding, dialog and co-existence. We also like our children to develop critical, analytical and interpretive skills so as assist them in their personal and professional growth. Finally, we expect our public school system to foster integration, peace and stability. However, if we look at the current confessional model of religious education we see that we are actually heading towards the opposite direction. The question at stake here is which model of religious education is the most suitable one for the circumstances of Bosnia and Herzegovina today. There is no open and transparent debate about the issue and religious communities present strong opposition to any changes of the current model. At the moment it seems that policy makers are not willing to (re)consider the problem. Still, the issue of building up unity, and creating a society characterized by mutual trust, security and stability is crucial. Parents play an important role in this process. They must be engaged in the discussion and their perception of the issue must be respected.

Defenders of traditionalism wish to keep confessional religious education in publicly funded community schools, in which children are educated or instructed in their own religion with the aim of nurturing faith and strengthening morality. Such attitudes usually seek to identify specific religious tradition, Islam, Catholicism or Orthodoxy, with particular views of culture, and very often with ethnicity. With such an approach religion can easily be used to serve the ethnic or nationalistic purposes. It can also be a very effective tool for constructing and reinforcing differences between people in a negative and hostile way.

The current model of teaching religion in which exclusionist, reductionist and doctrinal approach to religion in the public schools is applied reflects a deeper crisis in the ethnically divided Bosnian society. This crisis refers to the mutual distrust, and the feeling of insecurity. At many times religion seems to be a refuge taken to find security and belonging. At the same time religion has proven to contain values and practices which have been destructive to human life and development as we have witnessed in the past two decades in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In general, we could say that “education means caring enough to draw forth the greatness that is within each unique person” (Schreiner, p. 81). This ambition must be equally mirrored in religious education, which must be life-affirming and peace-building response to the current challenges facing Bosnian citizens. Along with education in general, religious education must cherish diversity and encourage variety of perspectives, methods, applications and practices. We have to find ways to transcend differences and move into direction that offers inclusive and human resolution to the problems related to the current model of religious education.

How, then, can we find good and feasible solution to our problem? The following three policy options have been considered, with their expected outcomes:

Policy options	Expected outcomes
<p><i>1. Confessional approach – Status quo</i>  <i>Faith-based religious education taught in the publicly funded schools to students and organized by religious communities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assimilate and discriminate religious minorities and atheists;</li> <li>• It gives priority to identity politics rather than a common understanding of citizenship;</li> <li>• It is dogmatic, exclusivist and reductionist;</li> <li>• Focused on learning <i>to know</i> and learning <i>to do</i> in a narrow sense;</li> <li>• May not be open enough to “new” religious groups and perspectives.</li> <li>• May encourage nationalistic and exclusive ethnic identities;</li> <li>• Transmits knowledge;</li> </ul>
<p><i>2. Inter-religious approach</i>  <i>Inter-confessional religious education taught to all students and about all religions with focus on change of perspective.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learns about religion and from religion;</li> <li>• Based on scholarship rather than on normative theology;</li> <li>• Inclusive and holistic;</li> <li>• Cherish religious diversity and plurality;</li> <li>• Encourages critical and independent thinking;</li> <li>• Focused on transformation rather than transmission of knowledge;</li> </ul>
<p><i>3. Anti-religious approach</i>  <i>Public schools offer no structured religious education</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignorance about religion will deepen;</li> <li>• Resistance and opposition will occur;</li> <li>• Encourages sense of threatened identity and insecurity;</li> <li>• Develops antagonism towards state.</li> </ul>

**6.1. Policy option 1 – Confessional religious approach**

Confessional religious education is one of the major disintegrative forces in the Bosnian public education system, and one of the primary mechanisms of boundary maintenance between religiously different groups of people. The current model of religious education is strongly supported by all major religious communities and usually backed up by nationalistic political parties in power, which (re)produce dominant public discourse of simplified and single identities. The analysis of the content of textbooks in the national group of subjects concludes, including religious education, that they are focused on their own ethnic group and not inclined to multicultural society. This supports segregation in schools and the society as whole. It is amazing to see how all three major religious communities unite together in their defense of religious education in public schools. No wonder this is the case as “School is the chief arena of socialization besides family. It is crucial to a community’s cultural reproduction (Kuburic/Moe, p. 1). As a result, such identity politics ignores, discourages and makes us blind for other types of identification and social affiliation. The importance of providing space for other identities



to flourish can be hardly overemphasized, as these also provide an opportunity to encourage identities (local, regional, class etc) based on non-ethnic/non-religious criteria. This is not to claim that religious and/or ethnic identities are not important, and should be suppressed. On the contrary, as this policy study has showed religious identity is very important to parents and this must be respected. This policy option means keeping *status quo* and is not recommended as it supports division and counters integration and security in public school system.

## 6.2. Policy option 2 – Inter-religious approach

Public schools must be is a safe place where all students should be affirmed, regardless of their religious or secular backgrounds. All religious or non-religious beliefs must be taken seriously and regarded with respect. Dialog and mutual respect and understanding must be central when teaching about religion. This policy option is the recommended and preferred option. It refers to the model of inter-confessional religious teaching based on UNESCO:s basic pillars of education and Toledo Guiding Principles in which religious affiliation as well as non-affiliation are equally respected. Such an approach is not only learning about religion, it is also learning from religion and its richness of wisdom, narratives, language, metaphors, history, persons, spirituality etc. It is also a change of perspective. The main advantage of such an approach lies in its holistic and inclusive nature, which would contribute to more integration and prevent assimilation or separation. This option is recommended for the sake of religious beliefs and spirituality itself as well. As formulated by a Jewish rabbi:

*“Spirituality is like a bird: if you hold it too tightly, it chokes; if you hold it to loosely, it flies away. Fundamental to spirituality is the absence of force.”*

The term spirituality refers to religious, but also to morality, beauty, sensibility and devotion. It reflects “the inner landscape of our lives” (Schreiner, p. 111). Today, students are overtly coerced into attending religious education. There is a risk that students might, as an undesired and unintended subsequent effect of compulsory religious education, develop distaste for religious matters.

## 6.3. Policy option 3 – Anti-religious approach

In the former Yugoslavia religion was marginalized and banned from public schools system. Such an approach suppressed diversified religious identities creating a feeling of their inferiority in relation to the predominant national Yugoslav identity. Religion must not be ignored nor neglected. Many scholars predicted that religion would go away as the result of economic and scientific progress. Not only that this did not happen but religion came back to public sphere with much greater force than could be ever imagined.

An outline concept for introducing a new policy solution is listed below:

What to do	How to do it
Initiate a public debate on the issue of introducing Culture of Religion and explain the advantages of such an approach to religious education	Develop an information campaign: write articles in media, organize workshop sessions for the parents in the schools, create a webpage about this issue with the possibilities of discussion, etc.
Initiate changes in legislation so as to make Culture of Religion compulsory school subject in 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> grade of primary school	Initiate advocacy campaign which would target policy decisions makers such as MPs, senior public servants etc. through lobbying
Initiate a dialog on the issue with religious communities	Organize workshop sessions with religious representatives so as to explain the position and find some other solutions for them such as obliging the state to provide public funds for confessional RE in churches and religious communities.

- The information campaign is necessary so as to fill knowledge and information gap. It is necessary to initiate public debates, preferably at local level, so as to critically discuss about different models of teaching religion.
- At the moment, Culture of Religion is present in public schools, mainly high schools, as a pilot project. In order to make the subject obligatory for all students the current legislation needs to be changed. This requires the organization of a legislative advocacy campaign in order to gain the needed support among the politicians in the parliaments.
- It is important to keep the dialog open with the Churches and religious communities so as to gain their enduring support. In my view religious communities play an important role in the society and as such can be important actors in strengthening believers and solidarity and peace between people. As confessional religious education constitutes an important part of transferring beliefs and preserving religious traditions and rituals I think it is important to support religious communities with public funds for their work related to religious education that would be organized in their own milieu.

### **7. Recommendations**

As the data collected through qualitative interviews suggests, parents consider their religious identity very important. Still, this does not necessarily mean that they are exclusively supportive of a confessional model of religious teaching in the public schools and are closed to an alternative way of teaching about religion. The majority of the parents interviewed are open to inter-religious education for all. This tells us that we might not take for granted that parents support confessional religious education just because they are believers. The collected data also shows that observant believers send their children to religious education organized in religious communities in the weekends as they find what is provided in the schools quite insufficient. As the recommended policy options, the introduction of inter-religious learning, concerns mainly three main actors i.e. policy makers, religious communities and parents a set of recommendations is formulated to each of them:

#### **7.1. Recommendations to policy makers**

- (Re)consider the current confessional model of teaching religion in the light of holistic and inclusive religious education based on the pillars of modern teaching as recommended by UNESCO and in accordance with so called Toledo Guiding Principles;
- When (re)considering the issue of confessional religious education in the publically funded schools take into the account the integration and stability of the country. The future development of the country will highly depend on the quality of public education system;
- Support religious communities with public funds for confessional religious education organized in and provided by religious communities with the caveat that they do not promote hatred or hostility.
- If supporting non-confessional religious education, as recommended in this policy study, involve religious communities along with other relevant actors and experts in the creation of syllabi and textbooks so as to ensure required religious sensitivity.

#### **7.2. Recommendations to religious communities**

- Support the introduction of non-confessional religious education in the publicly funded schools based on UNESCO 's four basic pillars of education and Toledo Guiding Principles;



- Strengthen and invest in religious education in your own communities so as provide high-quality services to the students;
- Take responsibility for the social processes in the country and support peace, integration and stability through inclusive and holistic education system;
- Demand public funds for religious education in your communities.

### 7.3. Recommendations to parents

- Join a parent association in your local community or get organized if there is none. Put religious education on the agenda of the association. Initiate discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the current model RE in your local school.
- When taking a decision about RE classes for your child, take into account the issues of peace, stability and integration of the country.
- Demand that your school management create space for discussion on the issue of RE in your child's school so as to get more knowledge and information.
- Demand from the school management to give you the opportunity to influence the content of RE.
- Give your support to those policy makers who are ready to introduce inter-religious learning in all public schools and for all students and who are committed to provide public funds to religious education organized in religious communities.

## 8. Bibliography

### Primary Sources

#### Focused interviews

The identity of interviewees will not be disclosed for the reason of confidentiality.

### Secondary Sources

#### Books

Bryman, Alan (2004). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: University Press.

Duijzings, Ger (2000). *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gitlin, Todd (1998). "From Universality to Difference: Notes on the Fragmentation of the Idea of Left." Craig Calhoun Ed. *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd.

Jackson, Robert (2005). *Rethinking Religious Education and Plurality: Issues in diversity and pedagogy*. London and New York: Routledge Falmer.

Jackson, Robert (1997). *Religious Education in Interpretive Approach*. London: Hodder and Stoughton Education.

Lweis, Bernard (1968). *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. Oxford.

Kuburić, Zorica, Moe, Christian. (2006). *Religion and Pluralism in Education: Comparative Approaches in the Western Balkans*. Novi Sad in cooperation with the Kotor Network.

Lederach, John Paul (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press

ODIHR Advisory Council of experts on freedom of religion or belief (2007). *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching About Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools*. Warsaw: Sungraf.

Open Society Fund for Bosnia and Herzegovina, (2007), *Obrazovanje u Bosni i Hercegovini: Čemu učimo djecu? Analiza sadržaja udžbenika nacionalne grupe predmeta*. Sarajevo: CPU.

Open Society Fund for Bosnia and Herzegovina, (2007), *Obrazovanje u Bosni i Hercegovini: Čemu učimo djecu? Istraživanje stavova roditelja i učenika o vrijednostima u nastavnim planovima i programima i udžbenicima*. Sarajevo: CPU.

Open Society Fund for Bosnia and Herzegovina, „*Religija i školovanje u otvorenom drušvu: Okvir za informirani dijalog*”. Sarajevo: CPU.

May, Tim (2001). *Social Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Schreiner, Peter, Banev, Esther, Oxley Simon (2005). *Holistic Education Resource Book: Learning and Teaching in Ecumenical Context*. Münster: Wasmann Verlag, GmbH.

Schreiner, Peter, Kraft, Friedhelm, Wright, Andrew (2007). *Good Practices in Religious Education in Europe: Examples and Perspectives of Primary Schools*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.

Popov, Zlatiborka, Ofstad, Anne Mette, Ofstad. (2006). *Religious Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Religion in Pluralism in Education: Comparative Approaches in the Western Balkans*. Novi Sad in cooperation with the Kotor Network.

Skeie, Gier. (2001). *Citizenship, Identity Politics and Religious Education in Towards Religious Competence: Diversity as a Challenge for Education in Europe*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.

### Reports

Delors, Jacques (1996). *Learning: The Treasure Within: Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Cards program Evropske Unije za Bosnu i Hercegovinu (2005). *Funkcionalni predled sektora obrazovanja u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (2007). *Towards Inter-religious Understanding in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Status Report on the Pilot Course Culture of Religion*.

### Articles

Charles J. Russo (2000). Religion and education in Bosnia: Integration not segregation? *European Journal for Law Education and Policy*, 4: 121-129.





## Legal Acts

Framework Law on primary and secondary education. *Official Gazette* 18/03.

Law on freedom of religion and the legal position of churches and religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. <http://www.aso.zsi.at/attach/LegposreliginSEE.pdf>



Open  
Society Fund  
Bosnia & Herzegovina

A "Policy Development Fellowship Program" has been launched by the Open Society Fund BiH in early 2004 with the aim to improve BiH policy research and dialogue and to contribute to the development of a sound policy-making culture based on informative and empirically grounded policy options.

The program provides an opportunity for selected fellows to collaborate with the Open Society Fund in conducting policy research and writing a policy study with the support of mentors and trainers during the whole process. Forty eight fellowships have been granted in three cycles since the starting of the Program.

All policy studies are available at [www.soros.org.ba](http://www.soros.org.ba)