



# The role of educational system as a generator of cultural memory on Bosnia and Herzegovina: How do we learn to remember

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*At the first place, we are all humans; there is no identity beyond that one.*

*To prevent the evil and violence, we should make our other identities coexist with our common humanity. We should be thought to listen to each other.*

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## Summary

This paper is focused on the reintegrative effect the cultural memory could have in the conditions of its minimal politicisation. The question is how to ensure the public visibility for alternative, sub-cultural, and extra-institutional factors which have the potential to generate more objective, depoliticised, and inclusive cultural memory. Under the conditions of ethnification of the public sphere, particularly by ethnic-based educational system, stories of victims and war survivors remain invisible to the society. The starting presumption of this research is that the public testimonies of victims of all ethnicities could provide the opportunity for creation of cultural memory which is inclusive and compassionate towards ethnically "others", where so far marginalised agents would be given a voice and the opportunity to participate in the process of constructing the cultural memory through a story-telling method. In that way, public testimonies could become a key factor in the process of depoliticisation of public discourse and therefore contribute to the restoration of social cohesion within Bosnian-Herzegovinian society. This research is focused on the issue of ethnification of cultural memory through the educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the expense of inter-ethnic trust in the society. Therefore, I will examine the main features within the current public policies related to the education in primary and secondary schools in the light of their influence on inter-ethnic tolerance among the students. I will elaborate who the actors who could mostly influence the reform in education are, in order to make it less ethnocentric and more oriented to the universal human values rather than particular ethnic interests. Finally, I will identify the main obstacles preventing the educational system to be the reintegration instrument of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian society and I will detect the possible ways to remove the respective obstacles.

## 1. Introduction

**The context of the policy problem.** Cultural memory or the culture of remembrance, as the collective perception of the past, can be inclusive – regarded as changeable process, respectful towards differences, or exclusive – regarded as definite and unquestionable interpretation of past events, aiming to give negative connotations to the ethnically “others”. The nature of cultural memory reflects the core values within society. It is assumed that dominant shared values are mainly influenced by the current socio-political relations, because the past often takes the form in accordance with the existing actualities and problems within respective society (Kattago, 2001). According to Gellner, nationalism appears when there are very persistent political strivings to identify the culture with politics in favour of national pride and national feelings (as cited in Kapo, 2012). The politicization of culture happens when the culture is reduced to one of its elements, be it religion, language, or other cultural feature (Vrcan, 2003). The manipulation with cultural memory is often the consequence of arbitrary reinterpretation of various individual experiences by different actors who are misusing individual stories in order to create the sort of collective memory compliant to their own interests (politicians, media, civil society, religious communities, or ethnic-based educational systems). In Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: B&H), the educational system appears as the principal cultivator of nationalism, because of its fragmented organisational set up, ethnically coloured curricula and textbooks. Therefore, education in B&H appears to be the perfect tool for peaceful ethnic mobilisation and indoctrination, provoking further conflicts and violence, as it had already happened in the 1990s in the territory of former Yugoslavia.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See in: *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts*. Belgrade, 1986.

The collective memory has an important role in the process of reconciliation, and the educational system is one of the key transmitters of historical knowledge and a generator of the way in which the past is perceived (Diegoli, 2007). Schools, as both educational and pedagogical institutions, have the responsibility to render the students more empathetic and tolerant, which is especially important in post-conflict societies. When there is no open and comprehensive public debate about the past, the remembrance usually remains within the family circles, provoking the situation where parallel, intimate and suppressed memories, without the chance to be spoken out and discussed publicly, become the fuel for additional suspicions, inter-ethnic distance and even hatred (Diegoli, 2007). The schools should appear as mechanisms of “undoing” these kinds of disintegrative practices and as the principal tool for social cohesion.

**The definition of policy problem.** Ethnic tensions in B&H are today more intense than a few years ago; this is particularly visible during commemorations of tragic events that happened during the war (Majstorović, 2012; Bećirović, 2012). In recent study, over 80% respondents answered that it is necessary to talk about each aspect of war in an open discussion in order to avoid various interpretations of the war events (UNDP B&H, 2011). Another recent study related to the process of reconciliation and trust building in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society (hereinafter: BH society) has shown that the majority of respondents believe the educational institutions and teachers are the most important actors in the reconciliation process and that is primarily up to them to create the conditions for inter-ethnic coexistence and confidence (Wilkes et al., 2012). Nevertheless, this research has shown that the current educational policies are not able to live up to the abovementioned public expectations. Due to the legal framework, educational policies are driven mainly by the local political interests. Numerous international obligations, especially those related to discrimination, content of textbooks, history teaching, and human rights education were never fulfilled. Administratively and ethnically fragmented primary and secondary education in B&H with its national group of subjects (hereinafter: NGS)



is far away from reflecting and promoting the coexistence, inter-ethnic trust, intercultural dialogue, and inclusive culture of remembrance. The institutional ignorance regarding the content of the NGS is highly present, although some of the ministries in the same time hold it to be necessary to conduct the revision of NGS, but there is still no political will to create a unified curriculum.<sup>2</sup> The institutional silence about the war in the 1990s creates a space for very dangerous phenomenon of the so-called hidden curricula - teachers, mostly survivors themselves and thus emotionally involved in the issues of war, are free to interpret their view of war events in the classrooms, especially in the cases when there is no history textbook at all. The extra-curriculum activities are also mostly oriented towards the glorification of one ethnic group. The common core curriculum (hereinafter: CCC), whose implementation is foreseen by the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in B&H from 2003, (hereinafter: FLPSE)<sup>3</sup> is not implemented to a sufficient extent. The ministries at state and federal level have no significant power over the educational system, due to the constitutional set up. So far, all the attempts to harmonise the curricula were not successful (except in Brčko District B&H). All these factors influence the discriminatory policies within the BH educational system (Coordination of Ministries of Education in FB&H, 2012).

**The objectives of policy study.** The disintegrative features of cultural memory in B&H raise the question in what way the cultural memory was created and what could be changed in that respect; how to find the method to make the educational system less ethnocentric and more oriented towards the development of students' cognitive and social skills in order to make them ready and willing to live in multi-ethnic society and respect those of different ethnic origins. The main objective of this research is to contribute to the "humanisation" of the perspective of the past and wars through the educational system. It aims: a) to analyse the relevant actors in the process of creation of educational policies in the light of their influence on the culture of remembrance; b) to identify the examples of good practice and/or new methods by which the educational system could contribute to empathy and solidarity towards ethnically "others", with intention to add new values to the processes of culture of remembrance that would facilitate the reintegration of BH society. Consequently, it also aims to contribute to alleviation or at least questioning of ethnocentric narratives in primary and secondary schools by introducing personal stories of ordinary people about their experiences and survival in war in the educational system, with main focus on inter-ethnic friendships during the war and other positive examples of compassion and coexistence. There are no significant researches on potential effects the individual storytelling and victims' public testimonies could have in aspect on the reintegration of B&H, especially if the victims' stories are made more visible by means of official educational system.<sup>4</sup> There is no room in the B&H public sphere to hear the stories about inter-ethnic friendships in wars and other positive examples of compassion and coexistence. The positive effects that the story telling has had within the civil society movements and organisations so far (like the Initiative for RECOM<sup>5</sup>, or the database created by Shoah Foundation)<sup>6</sup> does not necessarily mean that similar practices would be successful and implementable within the B&H educational system – thus, one of the principal roles of this research is to examine the political will for such action and primarily reconsider the needs and interests of students.

**The methodology and limitations of policy study.** In order to assess the political climate related to the policy problem, I managed to get the responses to the questionnaires from 12 government institutions in the field of education (by e-mail, by post, or personally). I conducted 19 interviews with representatives of government, CSOs, international organisations, and individuals who are involved in educational issues. In the end, I have personally conducted an

<sup>2</sup> The Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children (2002) established the *national group of subjects*: language, literature, history, geography and religious instruction; the conclusion about the stances of politicians is based on the answers from 10 ministries of education in B&H.

<sup>3</sup> The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary education in BiH (Official Gazette of BiH, No. 18/03) envisaged the common core curricula – subject contents that are mandatory and relevant for all pupils in primary and secondary schools in B&H

<sup>4</sup> Nihad Kreševljaković, executive producer of the International theatre festival MESS, historian, one of the main organizers of the project *Module of Memory* said that public hearings, in his opinion, have great reconciliatory effect, although there is no accurate statistics on that (Conference organized by Humanity in Action, Sarajevo, June 29 2012)

<sup>5</sup> The regional civil society initiative (gathering over 1800 civil society organisations in the region) for the establishment of the Regional Commission Tasked with Establishing the Facts about All Victims of War Crimes and Other Serious Human Rights Violations Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia in the period of 1991-2001.

<sup>6</sup> In 1994 Steven Spielberg established the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, with the main aim to gather and preserve video testimonies from survivors of the Holocaust

anonymous survey among 354 students who follow Croat curriculum and Federal framework curriculum. I have visited 7 schools (6 primary schools – 3 of them were the so-called “2 schools under one roof” - and one secondary school). I did not have the opportunity to visit schools in Republic of Srpska (hereinafter: RS), because I received the official statement of Minister of Education and Culture of RS Anton Kasipovic saying that I am not allowed to conduct the survey in schools located in RS territory. Regarding the secondary sources, I mainly used the existing analyses, studies, and official reports from the field of education and cultural memory.

The limitations of the study are as follows: a) it was challenging to reach the representatives of the government, probably because of the nature of the topic; b) in general, the school principals are reluctant to talk about this topic; c) school principals are mainly not allowed to give the permission to the researcher to conduct the survey without the consent of the competent ministry, which serves as an indicator of considerable politicisation of the B&H educational system.

**The road map of the paper.** In the section *problem description*, I will try to find the indicators that will show why the culture of remembrance, which was generated through the current educational system in B&H, does not correspond to one of the objectives of education, as stated in the FLPSE: *developing awareness of commitment to the State of BiH*.<sup>7</sup> This study will also elaborate on the inconsistency between the current educational policies and international obligations, pertaining to the prohibition of discriminatory practices in education, especially when it comes to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (hereinafter: ECHR), which is a part of B&H legal system and which has the primacy over all other domestic laws,<sup>8</sup> as well as other relevant international conventions in the field of education that the B&H has to abide by.<sup>9</sup> In the *policy options* section, I will try to find the option that would be **feasible in short-term, at least in a form of pilot project, as well as legally based, acceptable, and accessible to all students**. In the section *recommendations and conclusions*, it will be explained to the government, international organisations and CSOs how to implement the selected policy option and how to treat and reconsider the problem detected in the *problem description* section.

<sup>7</sup> The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary education in BiH (Official Gazette of BiH, No. 18/03)

<sup>8</sup> Article II.2 of the Constitution of BiH states: “The rights and freedoms set forth in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its protocols shall apply directly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These shall have priority over all other law.”

<sup>9</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Council of Europe Post-Accession Commitments, Convention on the Rights of the Child

## 2. Problem description

In this section, I will try to describe why the following problem exists; the culture of remembrance generated through the current educational system and educational policies in B&H does not correspond to one of the objectives of education, as stated in the FLPSE: developing awareness of commitment to the State of B&H, and does not abide by the international obligation to make the education acceptable to all students. Attempting to do so, I will identify: a) why does fragmented education entail fragmented cultural memory and what effect does it have on reintegration of B&H; b) what are the factors and processes within the educational system that contribute to the fragmented cultural memory in B&H which obstructs the reintegration of the country?

### 2.1. Education and culture of remembrance as generators of reintegration/disintegration of B&H

In the theory of reconciliation, there are structural and cultural reconciliations. Structural (political, institutional) reconciliation aims to find the political and institutional framework in order



to create the minimal solutions for peaceful coexistence in a post-conflict society (Bloomfield, 2006). It is characterized by the absence of personal (direct) violence.<sup>10</sup> Cultural (social, popular) reconciliation aims to create the conditions for cooperation, compassion, and dialogue between the people who belong to the collectives that confronted each other during an armed conflict (Bloomfield, 2006). It is characterised by the absence of structural (indirect) violence.<sup>11</sup> In the case of B&H, the Dayton Peace Agreement ensured the absence of personal violence, which was certainly of the highest priority, but, in the same time, it established the preconditions for structural violence.<sup>12</sup>

I have already mentioned the study on popular opinion related to the most influential mechanism in the process of reconciliation in B&H – education. Besides that, the most of the students (255 out of 354) in 7 schools where I conducted the survey, have answered that the media incites antagonism, aggressiveness, suspicion, and distance between different ethnic groups in B&H. Also, a considerable number of students said that the parents and their war traumas are the main reason why they or their colleagues have prejudices towards ethnically “others” students, and that is also because of their parents that they cannot attend the school all together, even if they wanted to (students from 7 primary and secondary schools in B&H, personal communication, 2013). The school should be a place where the recent war events should be discussed, but not only because they matter – maybe more important is the fact that war events are misinterpreted and misused by the media and within the immediate environment of the child, so in order to relieve the children from prejudices, the school has the task of “decontamination” that should be carried out by discussing the same events and memories from war in objective and more inclusive manner, allowing each side to be heard. Moreover, the UN Resolution A/RES/60/147 specifies to post-conflict states that they have a duty to teach about the basic principles of international humanitarian law, and one of them is certainly the inadmissibility of violations against unarmed civilians, regardless of their affiliation to a particular group. Instead of that, all ethnic groups in B&H use the educational system to represent exclusively themselves as victims, without taking any responsibility for war crimes and violence (Diegoli, 2007). As noticed in one study related to the educational system in B&H, *an education system that keeps young people divided, however, thus helping to fuel prejudice and stereotypes, is a critical impediment to reconciliation* (Clark, 2010). The segregation and assimilation caused by fragmented administration of BH educational system and by different curricula divide the children along ethnic lines or assimilate some of the children who are a minority in certain area, making them feel underestimated and discriminated against. This situation renders children less tolerant towards those belonging to other ethnic groups.

The case of the former Yugoslavia shows how the cultural memory generated through the education influences the reintegration/disintegration of the country. During the World War II, a civil war, parallel to the one against the foreign occupiers, was being waged in the territory of former Yugoslavia. The decision of Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito was that the truth about the “war within the war” should not be discussed for the sake of the unity and progress of all Yugoslav peoples (Đokić, 2002). The official memory generated through the public space and through the educational system described World War II as the triumph of Yugoslav people over the foreign enemy. Since the discussion about “war within the war” was forbidden in the official discourse, it left the space for the suppressed private memories to be constantly retold in intimate social circles. Due to renewed constitutional set-up in 1974, the jurisdiction in the domain of education was transferred from federal to republican level. Since then, nationalistic rhetoric aiming towards the disintegration of Yugoslav identity has started to emerge in history

<sup>10</sup> Absence of personal (direct) violence refers to the absence of terrorism, war, assault, riot and similar. See in: Singh Grewal, Bajit. *Johan Galtung: Positive and Negative Peace*, School of Social Sciences at Auckland University of Technology, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Absence of structural (indirect) violence refers to the absence of discrimination, social injustice, poverty, apartheid and similar. See in: Singh Grewal, Johan Galtung: *Positive and Negative Peace*

<sup>12</sup> Dayton Peace Agreement established fragmented educational system in B&H, where 10 cantonal ministries of education, Ministry of education of Republic of Srpska, and the educational department within the government of Brčko District B&H have been given the competence to create educational policies in B&H that are often the result of local political and nationalistic tensions among the ethno-political elites.

textbooks, emphasizing the particular ethno-national histories at the expense of the common Yugoslav historical legacy. In the 1990s, the textbooks were “invaded” by nationalistic and separatist rhetoric. So, the ideals of ethnic nationalism in the 1990s textbooks easily replaced the ideals of socialism, due to the fact that students had no habitude to critically approach historic issues presented in schools - for them, the truth in schools was unquestionable. The education was not the direct cause of the war at the territory of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, but it was one of the factors that contributed to its emergence (Diegoli, 2007).

## **2.2. The causes of amnesia in educational system in B&H**

The factors which provoke the ethnification of education and the culture of remembrance are mainly the legal framework regarding the education in B&H, ethnocentric content of the textbooks, and the ethnocentric curricula, as well as the absence of political will to act in towards depoliticization of education, which is mainly reflected in the failure to fulfil the international obligations (OSCE B&H, 2005). Discrimination, as principal fuel of disintegration of the country and an element of structural violence in B&H, is generated and maintained through the educational system and, consequently, through the culture of remembrance, by the character of abovementioned factors.

### **2.2.1. Legal framework**

The fragmentation of the educational system has started in the Constitution of B&H. The respective legal document carries no specific provisions related to the education. Moreover, there are no provisions which would enable the protection against discrimination in education. Consequently, any law against discrimination in education cannot be backed up by the Constitution of B&H (Kapo, 2012). According to the Constitution of B&H, the jurisdiction in educational issues was conveyed to the entities. In practice, this means that the adoption of laws on education and educational policies was left to the Ministry of education of RS, 10 cantonal Ministries and the Department for education within the Government of Brčko District B&H (hereinafter: BD). According to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe – Mission to B&H (hereinafter: OSCE B&H), *within the BiH Federation, West-Herzegovina Canton, Posavina Canton, and Canton 10, as well as parts of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton and Central Bosnia Canton, all follow the curriculum developed by the Mostar Institute for School Affairs. In the latter two Cantons, there are also schools that use the curriculum issued by the BiH Federation Ministry of Education, and this curriculum is also applied in Una-Sana Canton and Bosnia-Podrinje Canton. Sarajevo Canton, Tuzla Canton, and Zenica-Doboj Canton have a different curriculum developed by the Federal Ministry of Education. The latter, like Herzegovina-Neretva Canton and Central Bosnia Canton, uses two curricula, depending on which ethnic group represents the majority. Brčko District also has its own curriculum, and the RS uses a curriculum issued by the RS Ministry of Education and Culture (as cited in Clark, 2010). These “ethnically coloured” curricula include the NGS: History, Geography, Language and Literature, Nature and Society, and Religion. NGS was established in 2002 by Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children, signed by ministries of education from both entities. This agreement was initiated by the Office of High Representative (hereinafter: OHR), in order to facilitate the return of internally displaced persons back to their local communities. BH educational authorities were obliged by this Agreement to find the long-term solutions in order to end the segregation and discrimination in schools, but so far they have not met this obligation (Sadiković, 2012). According to the recent studies, the content of the NGS incites the segregation of students and society as a whole (Trbić, 2007).*



Furthermore, the decentralisation of Federation B&H (hereinafter: FB&H) through the educational system is enhanced by the fact that the Federal Ministry of Education (hereinafter: FMON) coordinates the work of 10 cantonal ministries mainly in the issues concerning the textbook policies, but has no decisive power; it has no legal basis or administrative capacities to decide on educational issues, mostly because the cantonal ministries are entirely self-financed. Even the attempts of coordination were not successful, because the Croat ministries consider the FMON to be more oriented towards Bosniak interests than the interests of Croat population in FB&H. This attitude of Croat ministers existed in 1999 (Kapo, 2012), and it still exists. Namely, the members of the Coordination of ministries of education and science in FB&H (hereinafter: Coordination), founded in 2011, are ministers from all cantons except the ones with Croat majority. Regarding that issue, the current composition of the Coordination resulted from a fact that in their actions, the cantonal educational ministries still give the priority to national interests at the expense of effectiveness of the educational system. Federal Ministry attempts to introduce the integrated schooling system into divided schools by creating multicultural classes, and it advocates the administrative and legal unification of the schools (Advisors of the Federal Minister of Education, personal communication, 2013). These measures are foreseen by the document *Recommendations for the Elimination of the segregative and divisive structures in educational institutions in FB&H* (Coordination of Ministries of Education of FB&H, 2012). Also, this document aims to establish a more effective system of monitoring the discriminative practices in schools in potential collaboration with Ministry of Civil Affairs of B&H (hereinafter: MCP). MCP has no significant power over the cantonal educational ministries. Although the education is under its jurisdiction, it does not have the effective power or mechanisms to implement its own decisions, because the laws on education at the level of B&H have the character of framework laws, and therefore they do not provide the state level institutions with mechanisms for their effective enforcement. The illustrative example is Conference of Ministries of Education at state level, comprised of 13 ministers and the Head of the Department for education in BD, where all decisions have to be reached by consensus. After consensus is reached and decision made, if some of the ministers do not implement the said decision, MCP does not have the mechanisms to enforce the decision. It is necessary to notice that in the two mixed cantons, Central Bosnia Canton and West-Herzegovina Canton, the administration in education is strictly divided along the ethnic lines (Kapo, 2012).

Since the MCP was tasked to supervise to implementation of FLPSE implementation, the questionnaires on the implementation of the FLPSE and on the alignment of the cantonal/entity/BD laws with the said law have been sent to 13 ministries of education. The results were presented in the document *Information on the implementation of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education*. The problem in this respect is the Central Bosnia Canton, which still did not adopt the law on primary and secondary education in line with the FLPSE. Ministries in other administrative units explicitly affirm the full compliance of laws with the FLPSE, except the West-Herzegovina Canton and Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. The cantons/entity/BD were asked if their laws ensure education in line with universal values of democratic society. All of them declaratively confirmed that these values are respected and protected through educational system, but a few of them mentioned in what way these values are realised and what are the activities conducted in this direction (Una-Sana Canton and Sarajevo Canton gave some concrete information) (Ministry of Civil Affairs of B&H, 2012). When it comes to potential discriminatory practices in schools we cannot be sure whether discrimination and democratic values exist or not based only on the statements of ministries, because they do not provide any additional or more precise information on concrete mechanisms and measures for the protection from discrimination, as well as no clear assurance in the existence of democratic values in schools.

As seen so far, the state level legal framework generates two different discriminatory problems: the dominant model of assimilation (children who belong to a minority have no choice but to learn from the curricula used by ethnic majorities in schools, so the ethnic particularity of minority disappears) and the model of separation/segregation along ethnic lines amongst children in one school ("two schools under one roof") (Coordination of Ministries of Education in FB&H, 2012). Model of mono-ethnic education generates discrimination in majority of schools in B&H. This model determines which curricula will be used in accordance with the ethnical majority in the given school. In that way, children who belong to the minority groups are marginalized and discriminated against, because the curricula in B&H schools do not take into account the needs of an individual, but only comply with the needs of an ethnic group that is in majority at certain territory. In places where ethnic groups are equal in number, they will negotiate about potential solutions, in places where one of the groups is dominant, that group will impose its solutions, and it is the typical case of discrimination in BH educational system (Veličković, 2012). For example, Croats or Serbs are minorities in Sarajevo and they are automatically discriminated against in Sarajevo schools because of the curricula in use and the content of textbooks, especially from the national group of subjects (Bećirović A., personal communication, 2012). Where there are no mono-ethnic schools, there is the other form of segregation: "two schools under one roof".

In cantons with "mixed" population there is a phenomenon of "two schools under one roof", where Bosniak and Croat students are taught in accordance with their national curricula, but within a single school building (Diegoli, 2007). This practice was launched by the decision of OHR and the first school of that kind was established in 2001 for practical and educational reasons. The aim was to encourage the internally displaced persons who did not want their children to attend the classes with the children from the other ethnic groups to return to their local communities. However, later on it became a political issue and the striking example of segregation in B&H school system. In these schools it is often forbidden to Croat and Bosniak students to communicate among themselves, or they have been purposely physically divided. However, the main problem is not the construction of the school building and the practices of physical division, but ethnically divided curricula. In Zenica-Doboj Canton the administrative unification of "two schools under one roof" was carried out, but it is not enough while curricula remain the same as before (Bećirović A., personal communication, 2012). There are 54 schools of this type, and they exist in Central Bosnia Canton, West-Herzegovina Canton and Zenica-Doboj Canton (Clark, 2010). According to the Strategy of development of education in B&H with the action plan for its implementation 2008-2015, adopted by the Council of Ministers of B&H, two specific goals were the elimination of the practice "two school under one roof" and the elimination of offensive content in textbooks within NGS. These goals were supposed to be implemented by 2010; so far, they have not been realised. Only in BD children attend the classes together, even when it comes to some subjects within NGS (Sadiković, 2012). Therefore, the fragmented educational system, established by the Constitution of B&H, directly breaches the B&H Law on Prohibition of Discrimination (hereinafter: LPD) by provoking assimilation and segregation through the very existence of NGS and ethnocentric textbooks.<sup>13</sup> State level Working group, formed by the Conference of Ministries of Education in B&H in order to analyse the problem of assimilation and segregation in schools, stated that the discriminatory practices could be ended only if the potential solution would manage to reconcile the principle of non-discrimination with the right to be educated in mother tongue.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, there is a certain dilemma how to end the assimilation without introducing any segregation policies – and does the NGS and even the existence of "two schools under one roof" seem as "necessary evil" in the conditions of prevalence of

<sup>13</sup> *Discrimination, in terms of this Law, shall be every different treatment including every exclusion, limitation or preference based on real or assumed features towards any person or a group of persons on grounds of their race, skin colour, language, religion, ethnic affiliation, national or social origin (...) Prohibition of discrimination shall be applied to all public bodies, all natural and legal persons, in public and private sector, in all spheres, especially: employment, membership in professional organisations, education...* "BiH Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, BiH Official Gazette No. 59/09, published on 28 July 2009, Entered into force on 5 August 2009

<sup>14</sup> The report of the Working group for analysis of the phenomenon „two schools under one roof“, April 2009. See in: Brkić, Milenko & Marko-Antonio Brkić. *Two schools under one roof: from segregation to co-education*





curricula of one ethnic group in certain school. Certainly, this situation does not contribute to the fulfilment of duties set out in the FLPSE and international conventions, especially when it comes to the acceptability of education to all students.

### 2.2.2. Political will

The non-existence of political will to resolve the abovementioned problems is particularly reflected in the failure of B&H and its administrative units to fulfil the international obligations set out in international conventions ratified by B&H and contained in the Constitution of B&H. The Constitution of B&H is the main cause of the fragmented educational system, but, in the same time, according to the Constitution, *each Entity shall provide all necessary assistance to the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to enable it to honour the international obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Constitution of B&H). Certainly, one of the priority obligations is to comply with the provisions listed in ECHR (which has the primacy over domestic laws), especially with those related to the prohibition of discrimination, which states that *no one shall be discriminated against by any public authority on any ground* (Protocol No.12 to ECHR). Also, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (hereinafter: ICESCR) guarantees the acceptability of education for all – saying that both the curricula and the content of textbooks must be relevant and culturally appropriate to all students and their parents, without using any indoctrination that might be against the convictions of students and their parents. The very existence of assimilation and “two schools under one roof” phenomenon makes it impossible to fulfil these obligations, although B&H stated in its Council of Europe Post-Accession Commitments that a reform would be conducted and discriminatory practices eliminated from the educational system.<sup>15</sup> The General comment on the implementation of the rights in education set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter: CRC) reads that *“the child’s right to education is not only a matter of access, but also of content”*, and sets out that Article 29(1) *underlines the individual and subjective right to a specific quality of education . . . Thus, the curriculum must be of direct relevance to the child’s social, cultural, environmental and economic context* (OSCE B&H, 2005). When asked by FMON in 2012 to comply with international obligations and find a solution for ending the discriminatory practices in education, educational authorities remained silent and gave no answer to the recommendations given by Coordination (Coordination of Ministries of Education of FB&H, 2012). In its recommendations, Coordination recognised not only the „two schools under one roof” problem, but also the inadmissibility of assimilation, which is more frequent, and issued recommendations for gradual elimination of these practices. European Commission on Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) also stated that *schools are reported to be mono-ethnic, with pupils and teachers speaking only one language and using one alphabet depending on the ethnic and political affiliation of the local authorities* (ECRI, 2005). Also, the ministries are yet to abide by their obligation from *Interim Agreement* and find long-term solutions for elimination of ethnically based divisions in education. The indifference of state institutions to react regarding the implementation of FLPSE was quite visible during one occasion when the international community (OHR) had to intervene to harmonize the Central Bosnia Canton laws in education with the FLSE. Normally, this should have been done by the Council of Ministries, in accordance with the Article 60 of the FLPSE, but the respective government body failed to react (OSCE B&H, 2005). This happened in 2004, and no intervention regarding the implementation of FLPSE by the Council of Ministers took place since then (Representatives of the OSCE B&H, personal communication, 2013). This case represents the indifference of the state, but also the power of international community (hereinafter: IC) to put pressure on domestic educational authorities to fulfil their obligations,

especially in a case when the minister of education of Central Bosnia Canton was removed in 2005 because of his refusal to implement the law. In order to justify his decision, the High Representative described the educational policies as the key point for sustainable peace and European integration (Coordination of Ministries of Education in FB&H, 2012).

The schools fail to efficiently implement the CCC whose implementation is foreseen by the FLPSE.<sup>16</sup> CCC means that a certain percentage of content of each of the subjects within all curricula is the same for all students. This proportion is smaller in the NGS compared to the other subjects, where CCC covers the entire subjects. So the CCC represents an attempt to harmonise different curricula at least to some extent. According to the FLPSE, one of the aims of the CCC is to develop awareness of commitment to the State of B&H. The cantons with Bosniak majority mainly implement the CCC. Contrary to them, there is no sufficient implementation of CCC in schools with Croat majority and in RS (Diegoli, 2007). According to the responses from the Agency for preschool, primary and secondary education in B&H (hereinafter: Agency), a body tasked to develop the CCC, the objective of CCC is to make sure that the students are getting familiar with the students from other ethnic groups and enable students' cooperation and their mobility across B&H. The Agency claims that the educational system has a great impact on students' perception of the past events and that the state, pedagogues and teachers have both moral and legal duty to direct the culture of remembrance towards inclusive and tolerant course. Agency assures that the content of CCC contributes to the awareness of the commitment to B&H but on the other hand, the Agency emphasizes that the NGS influences the implementation of the CCC (Agency, personal communication, 2013). Some of respondents claim that the CCC did not live up to its task and did not contribute to the "de-ethnification" of the respective issue in practice (Veličković, N., personal communication, 2013). Although the CCC is implemented to the highest level in the schools in BD (according to the Agency's reports), the representative of the Department of Education of BD believes that the CCC did not significantly contribute to the commitment to the state of B&H and the positive feelings of collectiveness, mostly because of the fact that the textbooks covering CCC are from different publishers (Nestorović, R., personal communication, 2013). At the moment, Agency works on new and modernized model of CCC, which would put the interest and the competences of the child in the spotlight of the educational system, where the focus would not be on the content as much as on the fulfilment of expected results in terms of development of child competences and cognitive skills (Agency, personal communication, 2013).

Minister of education of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton believes that the CCC does not contribute to the awareness of the commitment to B&H, because of the strong influence of hidden curriculum in schools.<sup>17</sup> In his opinion, the educational system in this canton has the tendency to contribute to the awareness of the commitment to B&H, but in practice, it is not actualised, because the social reality in the canton largely influences the character of attitude towards B&H. Textbooks contain enough information about common cultural heritage, but the revision of textbooks is necessary as the first step towards the depoliticization of educational system. He holds that the revision is not enough (probably because of the hidden curricula) and that further informal education of students about the interethnic solidarity is needed. He believes that the activities of civil society organisations (hereinafter: CSOs) in schools could help in aspect of depoliticization of education (Hadziomerovic, Z., personal communication, 2012).

When asked about the influence of textbook policy on the awareness to the commitment to B&H, minister of education of RS also responded that awareness depends on the teacher's attitude towards RS and B&H, because the teacher's opinion affects students' opinion. Therefore, the hid-

<sup>16</sup> The CCC consists of all the curricula and syllabi of all subjects of primary and general secondary education of BiH that have as broad and agreed common core as possible (FLPSE).

<sup>17</sup> Hidden curriculum consists of orders and regulations from schools, physical and psychological environment, and non-official or implied messages that the administrators or teachers convey to students. See in: Yuksel, Sedat. *Kohlberg and Hidden Curriculum in Moral Education: An Opportunity for Students' Acquisition of Moral Values in the New Turkish Primary Education Curriculum*. Retrieved on March 13, 2013, from <http://202.116.45.198/xxjy/xxjy2/content/wenjian/ckwx/yj/8/1.pdf>



den curriculum is a problem in RS as well. Minister said that the NGS in RS, along with the subject Democracy and Human Rights and cooperation programmes, contributes to the awareness of the commitment to B&H. Also, he believes that the issues pertaining to common cultural heritage are present in the existing curriculum in RS. Furthermore, he claims that the ethnic distance caused by NGS exists, justifying the ethnic distance with the provisions of the *Interim Agreement*. When asked for an opinion related to personal story telling of survivors who had positive experiences with persons belonging to other ethnic communities during the war, minister said that the stories of survivors with focus on collectiveness and unity rather than divisions could be a starting point for a discussion and development of critical thinking, but not the basis for definite attitude and objective perception about war events. Also, minister supports the CSOs activities in schools, if they are aligned with the needs of students and teachers. Minister believes that it is necessary to carry out an analysis of all curricula in B&H in order to identify the level of their ethnocentric character and try to create a common platform and optimal solution for depoliticization of the B&H educational system (Ministry of education of RS, personal communication, 2012).

In BD, the IC imposed the solution in order to eliminate “two schools under one roof”. Still, there is the NGS, but students spend 90% of the time in school in multicultural classes, and they even attend some lectures within the NGS together. The subjects within this group are aligned as much as possible by the implementation of CCC, more than in any other administrative unit in B&H, and the principles of multi linguistic classes and interculturalism are in place (Brkić). After integration of schools in BD, ethnic distance among students decreased dramatically, but the majority of school children continue to spend their free time mostly with those who belong to their ethnic group. Pedagogical Institute monitors the potential presence of hidden curriculum in schools, so far in a successful manner (by checking students’ notebooks, teachers’ materials for classes etc.). BD does not support any kind of discussions about war in classrooms or classes about the common cultural heritage – the students should be able to critically rethink the content of existing textbooks, discuss it, and draw their own conclusions (Nestorović, R., personal communication, 2013).

Ministry of Education of Bosnia-Podrinje Canton holds that there is no contribution to the sentiment of commitment to the B&H generated through the educational system, since the education in B&H is fragmented and the students have to go from one place to another in order to attend the classes together with their ethnic group. Also, the existing curricula do not reflect the common cultural heritage of all B&H peoples to a sufficient extent. The only positive change could happen by adapting the education to the needs of the market, as well as through youth exchange, regional and inter-ethnic camps, and sport competitions. (Bosnia-Podrinje Canton participates in organizing several youth camps every year). Minister expressed the readiness for launching pilot projects in schools which would present the students with positive examples of inter-ethnic friendship and solidarity during the recent war in B&H, as well as examples of unity and cohabitation of all peoples of former Yugoslavia before the war, in order to show them that different ethnicity is not the reason for antagonism and suspicion, and particularly not for aggression and war. Minister pointed out that there were many positive examples of inter-ethnic solidarity during the war, but they were completely neglected by the media (Adžem, Dž., personal communication, 2013).

In Sarajevo Canton, Ministry of Education is also ready for inclusion of personal stories and experiences about solidarity and friendship during the war into the informal curricula, within the classes on media culture. Minister welcomed all stories that would foster the collectiveness

of all peoples in B&H, their interaction, mutual understanding, and dialogue. He believes that their introduction to informal curricula is feasible and useful, because they could contribute to more objective perception of the past. He holds that these types of stories could contribute to the sentiment of the commitment to the B&H. Besides that, cooperation with CSOs and introduction of classes that would de-politicize the educational system within the existing subjects, along with training of teachers could be a feasible solution as well. Youth exchange programmes and collaboration between schools could also contribute to the reintegration of the B&H society. The class about common cultural heritage is an idea of great importance and should be taken into consideration (Marjanović, D., personal communication, 2013). So far, there were no cases of hidden curriculum in schools and the Pedagogical Institute in Sarajevo Canton so far has no data related to the segregation in schools. Extracurricular activities and competitions are one of the ways used in Sarajevo Canton to promote the sentiment of commitment to B&H (Borovina, D., personal communication, 2013.).

In Tuzla Canton the teachers have the autonomy to present and interpret the historical events from the 1990s related to the war in the territory of Former Yugoslavia, because these issues are not elaborated sufficiently in the textbooks. However, they have the problems in finding relevant historical sources. Regarding the stories of survivors, minister believes that they are not the best way to represent the past in objective manner. There are already lectures about common cultural heritage. Referring to the depoliticization of the education in B&H, she claims that a firm determination for creation of social cohesion should exist in each part of the country; the discrimination in one part of the country cannot be completely eliminated while “two schools under one roof” still exist in the other part. She supports the idea of cooperation among schools (Avdibašić-Vukadinović, N., personal communication, 2013.).

In Una-Sana Canton the Ministry holds that it is not enough to have the appropriate curriculum and implement the CCC in order to contribute to the commitment to B&H. It is necessary to have a consistent state policy in that aspect. The curricula are not modernised and they are mostly based on mere reproduction of knowledge, rather than development of cognitive competences and skills, and this is one of the obstacles to having the sentiment of commitment to B&H. The classes on common cultural heritage and cooperation between schools are good methods for reintegrative attempts. Regarding the stories of survivors, if organized, these classes should be completely adapted to the age and maturity of children. The hidden curricula exist in schools in Una-Sana Canton, the same as they exist anywhere else, because the school officials and teachers have their own attitude towards past and present in a certain social environment, which usually cannot be excluded from the teaching process. It is very hard to identify the hidden curriculum and it requires the research of teachers’ attitude and opinion in relation with the war in 1990s (Ministry of Education of Una-Sana Canton, personal communication, 2013).

In Zenica-Doboj Canton, the laws on education are not only harmonized with the FLPSE, but some by-laws and various guidelines were adopted as well, thanks to the support of the OSCE B&H. They explicitly promote the best interest of the child and prohibit segregation. In minister’s opinion, the educational system in Zenica-Doboj Canton contributes to the commitment to B&H through the existing curricula, introduction of alternative subjects (Culture in community, Ethics etc.), and through various extracurricular activities in schools. Trainings for teachers and monitoring of school activities are in place. The practice “two schools under one roof” was abandoned – schools were administratively and legally unified. The Rulebook on acceptable



school symbols and names is being consistently respected. The Handbook on the Training of the School Councils was drafted in order to render schools more democratic (Trifunović, Z., personal communication, 2013.).

When asked if there are sanctions for teachers who incite discrimination and segregation among students, MCP responded that the competent ministries should be asked about that, although the Article 56 of the FLPSE binds MCP to supervise the implementation of the FLPSE, and whose Articles 4, 10, and 35 refer to the prohibition of discrimination against students by school staff. According to the MCP, it should be reconsidered who would conduct the monitoring and in what way, because the supervisory body in this respect does not exist. Also, when asked if a body with a mandate to monitor the potential occurrence of discriminatory practices in schools, as foreseen in the Article 10 of the FLPSE, was established by the educational authorities, MCP answered that the local authorities should be asked about this (Ministry of Civil Affairs in B&H, personal communication, 2013).

The human right education (hereinafter: HRE) in primary and secondary schools in B&H exists as the part of formal curricula in the form of the subject Democracy and Human Rights. The indicator of low level of monitoring, policy evaluation, and implementation of HRE by the ministries of education represents a fact that their duty to report on the implementation of the HRE in schools is simply ignored - no single report in that respect has been submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (Trkulja, 2011).

OSCE B&H reported that the implementation of the Criteria on School Names, Symbols and Manifestations (adopted in 2004), which the respective governmental bodies in the field of education have a duty to conduct, is unsatisfactory. The issues that cause particular concern are the ones that mostly affect the culture of remembrance, like organised events commemorating the war, which involve primary school students. OSCE B&H has also prepared *Guidelines for Textbook Writing and Evaluation of History Textbooks for Primary and Secondary Schools in BiH. The OSCE Guidelines asked for introduction of interactive methods in history teaching, which would foster the critical thinking and imply to multi-perspective and inclusiveness*. However, their implementation is not satisfactory (Karge, 2008).

One example that serves to illustrate the ignorance of the state apparatus in the case of transparent textbook policies is certainly the recent situation related to the procedure of selecting the literature textbook for 2013, coordinated by FMON. The textbook *Svezame, otvori se* got very high grades during the procedure of reviewing by 4 out of five reviewers, not to mention the positive reactions of children to the content of the textbook. Although the majority of reviewers gave very positive evaluations, one negative evaluation prevailed. The arguments against the textbook were, among other things, that the textbook exceedingly motivates the students to critical thinking, or that the textbook exaggerates in promoting diversity of BH society and the right to diversity and equality of all individuals and social groups. It remains unclear how a single opinion with this type of arguments prevailed over four dissenting opinions. It is up to the ministries of education to make the final decision on the textbook, but, since they are usually no experts in that matter, they mostly rely upon the opinion of the reviewers (who are chosen by respective ministries of education). The textbook which promotes antinationalism, modernity, and diversity was denied its educational and pedagogical value. The textbook filled with illustrations of Islamic culture, while the illustrations of Serb or Croat culture were left out, was the final choice of reviewers and the government. Any suggestions for public debate about this issue were avoided by FMON (Veličković N., 2012).

According to some CSOs representatives, in its attempt to conduct the “reconciliatory interventionism” and find the solution for the discriminatory practices in education, the IC is quite detached from the cultural context of B&H and it continues to impose values and practices. In their opinion, bottom-up approach in the process of reform in education has no alternative. However, it needs a huge support from the IC, which becomes more oriented towards the official carriers of political power than towards the citizens (Representative of Nansen Dialogue Centre in Sarajevo, personal communication, 2012). The IC should intervene into the issues of discrimination and segregation in the BH educational system in more determined manner. There is no other option for the solution to this problem, but the IC avoids putting the pressure on BH politicians because the IC participated in the initiation of segregative solutions and by more prominent intervention in the educational policies the IC would indirectly admit its own mistake (Bećirović A., personal communication, 2012). Regarding the potential reforms, no ministry stressed the importance of elimination of the textbooks within NGS and its replacement with unified textbooks, although they were asked about it. Some of the ministries rejected the idea of survivors’ testimonies within the informal curricula in schools (BD, Tuzla Canton), Zenica-Doboj Canton did not discuss this idea, some ministries are undetermined (Una-Sana Canton, RS), and some are open to the idea of pilot project (Bosnian-Podrinje Canton and Sarajevo Canton). Almost all ministries claimed or indicated the existence of the potential problem of hidden curricula in schools. Only the Ministry of Education of RS has established the body for monitoring the potential discriminatory practices in schools, foreseen in the Article 10 of the FLPSE. The others mainly rely upon the monitoring done by Pedagogical Institutes or by school inspectors.

### **2.2.3. The content of textbooks**

The General comment on the implementation of the rights in education set out in the CRC says that the content of education is equally important as the access to education and that the quality of education must be adjusted to the specific needs of the child. Also, the General comment of ICESCR regarding the education underlines not only non-discriminatory accessibility, but also the acceptability of education, which again relates to the content of education. Discriminatory practices are not only visible when it comes to the organisational and institutional set-up of schools; for example, “two schools under one roof” are a direct consequence of the existence of several curricula and ethnically oriented textbooks, unacceptable to the ethnically “others”, because of their often offensive content with regard to ethnic differences. The representatives of OSCE B&H stated that it is a striking fact that a vast majority of schools in B&H are mono-ethnic, and thus insensible to the others. Therefore, these school systems assimilate the ethnically others, and the main causes of this problem lie in the existence of ethnically oriented curricula. This sort of curricula, textbooks, and the general atmosphere in schools create the preconditions for hidden curriculum and reinterpretations of the textbook’s content in accordance with teacher’s views and personal experience (Representatives of the OSCE B&H, personal communication, 2013).

According to the recent research in the field of textbook analysis, NGS has both disintegrative and ethnocentric character and does not contribute to the awareness of the commitment to B&H. Quite the opposite; it deepens ethnic divisions in BH society by emphasizing the culture and tradition of one ethnic group, very often in implicit manner. NGS does not provide the students with the opportunity to become familiar with the culture, history, and tradition of other ethnicities. Analysed textbooks foster the sentiment of the commitment only to other countries or some parts of B&H, but not to the B&H as a whole. Multiculturalism is presented



as a problem, rather than a potential and enrichment, which creates the image of impossibility of different ethnic groups to coexist in the same territory. Textbooks often glorify one ethnic group by using the images of victimisation and heroism, and by creating negative perception of the “others”. Textbooks do not motivate students to think critically and question their content. The images of martyrdom are particularly problematic: the readiness to give one’s own life for the sake of patrimony is presented as the ultimate virtue. Although nationalism is not equally represented in Bosnian, Serb and Croat curricula, in general, the NGS generates the inter-ethnic antagonisms (Trbić, 2007.).

History textbooks are not in compliance with the provisions of the FLPSE. There are some positive examples about the common historical merits of all B&H constituent peoples, but the textbooks are mainly pervaded by the purposeful failure to stimulate the sense of belonging to B&H. They contain entire lessons about the persons and events irrelative to B&H. The emphasis on culture, tradition, and history of one ethnic group, while “the others” are disregarded, represents the principal parameter of the incompliance with the FLPSE. These practices are most frequent in Croat curriculum and not that frequent in Bosniak curriculum. The Serb curriculum is characterized by the images of Serbian people being endangered and victimised (Trbić, 2007.) According to the survey conducted among students, 213 out of 354 respondents think that the history textbooks should focus more on the historical events from the common past of all B&H peoples, because most of them focus on own ethnic groups or the history of the world (students from 7 primary and secondary schools in B&H, personal communication, 2013). However, one of the greatest problems in history teaching in B&H is that the history curricula avoid the topic of the 1990s war (Diegoli, 2007). The period of life from age 14 to 16 is the most important for the development of collective memory and culture of remembrance. The failure of the history curriculum to elaborate on the war events in 1990s leaves room for the teachers to promote their version of the story, which certainly affects the students (Sadiković, 2012). When asked about the need to introduce the topic about war events of the 1990s into the history curricula, 53% out of total of 184 history teachers included in the survey answered positively, and 29,5% negatively. Those who answered positively said that this thematic area should be focused on topics such as consequences of the war and devastation of cultural and historical monuments. The most sensitive topics are the World War II and the war of the 1990s. Additionally, the same research shows that the OSCE *Guidelines* have not been consistently implemented in history teaching and that the history is focused mainly on just one ethnic group, especially in Serb and Croat history textbooks (Karge, 2008). Even the phenomenon of “detitoisation” is the product of nationalistic histories – the degradation and simplification of the figure of Josip Broz Tito in the history textbooks throughout the former Yugoslavia in order to “nationalise” his historical legacy and diminish the sense of connectedness with other Yugoslav peoples (Pavelić, 2012).

Here are some examples from the recently mentioned study of ethnically coloured content in history textbooks aiming to glorify and victimize one ethnic group, and latently “demonize” the others:

*What is the aim of history as a science? What are the tasks of history lectures? Why were the traces of history destroyed during the war? Explain by using an example from the Patriotic war in Croatia* (Croat history textbook – fostering the sense of belonging to another state)

*Those Croats who stayed in B&H were exposed to the worst repressions. Considering that, it is not surprising that the part of Croats converted to Islam or Orthodox Christianity and that even*

*more Croats left B&H. Actually, it is a miracle that Croats even exist in B&H nowadays. (Croat history textbook – the accent is on self-victimization of own ethnic group and discrimination against others)*

*Contrary to the other national movements, Bosniak national movement has never had the idea about the creation of a big state. Why? What do you think? (Bosniak history textbook – the emphasis on the martyrdom of B&H)*

*It can be concluded that the Bosnian Muslims suffered the most in relation to the rest of the population in the World War II (8, 1%). Bosnian Muslims are people against whom a horrific genocide was committed. The genocide against Muslims was covered up silently. It was forbidden to talk about it, the same as the Bosnian Muslim victims were undervalued in comparison with victims and tragedy of other Yugoslav peoples. (Bosniak history textbook - the emphasis on the martyrdom of Bosnian Muslims)*

*After the establishment of Banovina of Croatia, the demands to create Slovenian state unit and an autonomous district Bosnia and Herzegovina have followed. The Decree was drafted in order to unify Banovina Vrbaska, Drinska, Dunavska, Moravska, Zetska and Vardarska into one banovina named Serbian land. Unfortunately, this Decree was never implemented. (Serb history textbook – inadequate and suggestive presentation of political options)*

*World War I was unjust and offensive. Only Serbia, Montenegro, and Belgium waged a just and defensive war. (Serb history textbook – the martyrdom of Serbia) (Trbić, 2007.)*

I will also underline some examples in history textbooks for ninth grade in the Federal framework curriculum which are also ethno-centric and carry the images of glorification and martyrdom of Bosniaks. Bearing in mind the recent decision that there is no possibility for schools to choose among several textbooks for ninth grade, students of ethnicities other than Bosniak in schools which implement Federal framework curriculum are obliged to learn from textbooks chosen by reviewers. So, according to the new educational policy for ninth grade, only one textbook is available and, in my opinion, discriminatory oriented in some parts:

*Bosniaks were exceptionally brave, devoted, and confident soldiers, even their appearance at the forward line made the enemies fearful (...) Bosniaks were real soldiers. The tsar gave them the order to join the army and go to the battlefield, and they dutifully went to war, as if they were going to the field (...) How does the author describe Bosniak soldiers? In your opinion, what was the reason for courage of Bosniaks? (Šabotić, 2012)*

Besides this example, in some parts of the textbook one could find a description of the conspiracies against Bosnian Muslims. In the part where the recent war of the 1990s is described (*War and post-war period in B&H*), only the data and pictures about Bosniak Muslim victims can be found. In one part *the ethnic cleansing of non-Serb population* is mentioned, but the data about Croat and Serb victims of war is left out (Šabotić, 2012).

Regarding the school subject Democracy and Human Rights, its content should reflect the definition of the HRE contained in the *United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011)* which implies that HRE should contribute to the prevention of human rights violations. This subject could be seen as the “corrector” of nationalism generated through the





NGS. Nevertheless, the content of textbooks for the subject Democracy and Human Rights does not meet these requirements. Moreover, it is not aligned with the provision set out in the FLPSE, which says that the human rights should be the guiding principle in education. The textbook does not give the perception of human rights as indivisible and equal; it disregards the mechanisms for the protection of human rights and pays no attention to economic and social rights. Additionally, even the new textbook from 2007 is not satisfactory enough, because it mainly promotes human rights as a political principle. It does not contain any example of human rights abuses in B&H or in the world (Trkulja, 2011).

Any nationalism strives for legitimacy – the legitimacy cannot be easily proven by historical facts. History is a science, and historians are responsible for the accuracy of the facts. That is why patriotism finds its place in literature – when a reader is emotionally involved, he/she tends to adopt the attitude and inner feeling of the writer as his/her own. The writers are free to use artistic freedom to reinterpret the past events. Serbs and Croats are more straightforward in using literature to promote nationalism, while Bosniak nationalism is more diplomatic, and disguised in tolerance –there is a significant number of Croat and Serb writers in Bosniak literature textbooks, but their texts and poems are ideologically neutral and do not incite debates about patriotism. Only texts and poems written by Bosniak writers trigger discussion about patriotism and topics suitable to Bosniak nationalism (Veličković N., personal communication, 2013). This is especially visible in the Federal framework curriculum ninth-grade literature textbook: texts about patriotism and parts of historical dramas (or roman) are written mostly by Bosniak writers, and Cyrillic is used in only 10 texts (out of 51) (Verlašević, 2012). In the opinion of one of the respondents, nationalism is not spread only by NGS, but especially through the extracurricular activities and school events. Change of the educational system mostly depends on teachers – they should stop interpreting the content in line with their own convictions and leave the space to students to critically rethink the content of textbooks (Ibrahimović, N., personal communication, 2012). Language is used more as a tool of national representation than as a tool for art and communication. Patriotism is the central concept in literature textbooks. Textbooks create a picture of ethnically different “enemy” through the metaphors of heroism and martyrdom.<sup>18</sup> Literature textbooks have a tendency to overestimate “our” culture and tradition and underestimate “theirs”, as well as to stimulate a feeling that “our” identity and culture are constantly in danger. This is mostly a characteristic of Croat textbooks. The images of “constantly endangered” people and patrimony are frequent in Serb textbooks as well, while in Bosniak textbooks they also exist, but to a lesser extent (Trbić, 2007).

These are some examples from the previously mentioned study concerning the ethnocentric content of language and literature textbooks:

*Only the Serbian literary language is to be learned in schools* (Serb language and literature textbook – emphasis exclusively on the mother tongue).

*When Turks enslaved the Serb country, St. Sava has become the embodiment of the national spirit of Serb people* (Serb language and literature textbook – St. Sava perceived as the essence of Serb people and culture, but it should not have been placed in the literature textbook)

*For what the Bosniaks are so exceptionally guilty? In what way Sokolovic [the writer] thinks about his countrymen [Bosniaks]?* (Bosniak language and literature textbook – only Bosniaks are considered as countrymen; Bosniaks considered as victims)

<sup>18</sup> The Croatian textbooks introduce the texts about Dubrovnik and Vukovar and the Serbs, Turks and Hungarians are described as the enemies. Serb textbooks present the Turks, Albanians, Germans, and Catholics as the enemies. There is no feeling of belonging to B&H expressed in the textbooks – their content is oriented to Serbia and Croatia, while Bosniak textbooks devoted two thirds of the content to non-Bosniak authors. See in: Veličković, Nenad (2012). Školokrečina: nacionalizam u bošnjačkim, hrvatskim i srpskim čitankama. *Školegijum: dvolist za pravednije obrazovanje*, 4. Retrieved on January 12, 2013, from [http://www.soros.org.ba/images/Prog\\_docs/ED/Skolegijum/skolegijum-4.pdf](http://www.soros.org.ba/images/Prog_docs/ED/Skolegijum/skolegijum-4.pdf) (pp.87.)

*In their ethno genesis, Bosnian Slaves, later on Bosniaks or Bosniaks Muslims, as the middle South-Slavic people, have almost never mixed with other peoples, which is not the case with other South Slaves, whose ethno genesis has a significant portion of non-Slavic element: Greeks, Albanians, Cincars, Romans, and others in the east, and Germans, Italians, Hungarians, Czechs, and others in the west. (Bosniak language literature textbook/orthography - conveys inappropriate political message).*

*The name of my country is Croatia* (Croatian language and literature textbook).

*I love all Croatian rivers* (Croatian language and literature textbook) (Trbić, 2007).

Obviously, political pressure is everywhere. For example, parents send their children to schools which operate under the principle “two schools under one roof” because they are afraid of losing their jobs. Children attend those schools because they are afraid for their future career and job search. School principals are afraid of losing their position if they allow students from different ethnicities to interact (Bećirović, A., personal communication, 2012). All problems elaborated in this section indicate the lack of political will to take the responsibility for the indoctrinatory practices in schools and act towards eliminating them. The only possible answer to this situation is interculturalism. It implies both interaction and dialogue among those who belong to different cultures. These relations and interactions assume the existence of mutual willingness for contact and communication. Its starting point is multiculturalism, as a sense of consciousness about the existence of a wide diversity of cultures and languages (Kapo, 2012). The narratives generated within the educational system determine children’s perceptions. Implementation and normalisation of interculturalism in B&H society would create chances for cultural reconciliation and overcoming of structural violence present in BH schools and curricula.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> For example, in one research conducted among BH students in BD, where there are no separated schools, 8.2% of respondents hold that each ethnic group should have their own school. In Banja Luka, Sarajevo and Mostar, 22% of respondents are for the ethnically separated schools, and in smaller towns even 69.8% of respondents are for that solution. See in: Kapo, Midhat (2012). *Nacionalizam i obrazovanje: studija slučaja Bosna i Hercegovina*. Sarajevo: Open Society Fund B&H (p.178.)

### 3. Policy options

At the very beginning of this section, I will firstly enumerate the legal documents I am going to rely on during the discussion on policy options:

1. CRC: as mentioned, CRC regulates the content of the curricula, which should be culturally relevant and adapted to individual needs, as well as oriented towards the development of tolerance and promotion of human rights, child’s competences, talents, and skills. On the other hand, CRC promotes the right of the child to participate in the society and the right of the child to be heard and to have his/her attitudes given due weight in accordance with her/his maturity. In terms of education, this right means the following: *In all educational environments, including educational programmes in the early years, the active role of children in a participatory learning environment needs to be promoted. Teaching and learning must take into account the life conditions and prospects of the children. For this reason, education authorities have to include children’s and their parents’ views in the planning of curricula and school programmes* (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009). It will be the guiding principle of the justification of policy options.

2. ICESCR: not only that the education has to be accessible at a non-discriminatory basis, but it also needs to be acceptable to all, which means that the children must not be discriminated against in terms of the content of education; the content should be culturally relevant and appropriate to every child (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1999).



3. ECHR: as already stated, *no one shall be discriminated against by any public authority on any ground* (protocol No.12 to the ECHR, 2000). As mentioned before, ECHR has the primacy over all domestic laws, guaranteed by Constitution of B&H.

4. FLPSE: I will focus on Articles 3 and 43, which specify the obligation of educational authorities to develop awareness of commitment to the State of B&H as one of the aims of education, Article 3, which also specifies the obligation of educational authorities to develop awareness of commitment to one's own cultural identity, and Article 4, which prohibits discrimination and prescribes equal rights to appropriate education.

5. LPD, which prohibits discrimination (exclusion, limitation or preference) on any grounds in educational system (among the rest).

6. Constitution of B&H, because it prescribes the duty of all cantons/entities to abide by ECHR and to help the state fulfil its international obligations.

7. Constitution of FB&H and Constitution of RS, because these documents prescribe that Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian are official languages, and Latin and Cyrillic are official scripts. Besides legal grounds and equal access to acceptable educational forms, when choosing the optimal policy option, I will also take into consideration the following criteria: will of students, political will, and the estimated time necessary to realise the given policy option.

### **3.1. Policy option 1: current policy - national group of subjects**

The existence of the NGS is the main reason why the children are divided along the ethnic lines in schools ("two schools under one roof") or completely marginalized and assimilated if they are a minority, which poses the question what of the two is the "lesser evil": to attend the classes in accordance with own ethnical predetermination, or to be discriminated against by textbooks that could offend the child who does not belong to the ethnical majority in the given school. And if there are enough pupils belonging to an ethnic minority to be able to hold separate classes from the national group of subjects, this would again represent a division based at predetermined characteristics which in a long run teaches children to make life choices primarily on the basis of one's group belonging. As long as suggestive and offensive, ethnocentrically oriented and intolerant content exists in the textbooks within the NGS, children are discriminated against in various ways. Evidently, the political will for this option exist. Nevertheless, according to the *Interim Agreement*, the government has a duty to eliminate NGS and find a long-term solution. NGS has no legal basis to be the solution, because it is in violation of all abovementioned international instruments and domestic laws by its discriminatory character in terms of content of textbooks, accessibility, and acceptability of education, which consequently provokes the structural and social segregation and assimilation in schools as follows: 1) structural segregation ("two schools under one roof") and 2) assimilation, and constantly confronts these two, by distracting the attention from the core and the main cause of the problem (textbook content) to the confrontation of segregation and assimilation, so the problem seems unsolvable, but the NGS is the problem itself.

One study analysed the opinions and attitudes of students and their parents regarding the national group of subjects. They are not satisfied with the current content of the textbooks within the NGS, stating that textbooks should focus primarily on B&H, and then on each of B&H

peoples and the neighbouring countries. In their opinion, textbooks should contain different perspectives and approaches to one single event, in order to foster an open debate on the past. The parents and students who belong to an ethnic minority in a certain area of B&H were mostly against the NGS, which supports my claims about discriminatory effects of this type of educational policy (Trbić, 2007).

### **3.2. Policy option 2: Elimination of the national group of subjects and creation of single textbooks for all as the way to end the segregation and assimilation in schools**

The effects of NGS are such that they perpetuate the discriminatory practices of assimilation and segregation in schools. How to effectively put an end to the practice „two schools under one roof“, if there are no textbooks appropriate for all children? Administratively, the model of BD could be the interim solution, but if the textbooks within the NGS remain as they are, it is hard to expect the situation would significantly change.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> As Ranko Nestorovic (Department of the Education of BD B&H ), stated in a personal interview (March 1, 2013), BD B&H educational model alleviated ethnic tensions in schools, but when they are not in school, the children are mainly in contact with the children from their ethnic group.

Regarding the history textbooks, the OSCE B&H implements the project *History for Future – Reconciliation through Education*. The aim of the project is to develop students' cognitive skills and the capacity for critical thinking and discussing the events from the past from different perspectives. Of course, it requires additional and very intensive trainings with the teachers, because they are the key point in this project. The reconciliatory effect of the history teaching is to be achieved using new, interactive, and more engaging methods of teaching. If the history curricula would be changed and based on the outcomes of the learning process, cognitive skills, and ability of critical thinking, the teacher would lead the child towards understanding of "others", and it would alleviate the effects of ethno-centric NGS (Representatives of the OSCE B&H, personal communication, 2013).

As already mentioned, the Agency has been working on the modernisation of CCC, which would be based on the outcomes of the learning process. If efficiently implemented, and if the evaluation of teachers' work at the basis of students' outcomes would be done, it could motivate the teachers to be more focused on the development of students' skills and competences, emotional and social intelligence, and their ability to discuss issues and provide arguments instead of being focused on the ethno-centric narratives in the textbooks. It is one of the ways to alleviate nationalistic narratives generated through the NGS.<sup>21</sup> In Sarajevo Canton, new curricula will be adopted, and they will also be based on the outcomes of learning process and the interests of the child as an individual and not the national interests (Veličković, N., personal communication, 2013).

<sup>21</sup> Concretely, when it comes to language and literature, one of the outcomes for curricula would be: the ability of student to respond to a different point of view, express own opinions supported by arguments, and change own attitude in the light of proofs and arguments; to understand; to analyse certain perspective or cultural experience described in the text which takes place in some other society or state, by understanding the cultural identity. See in: UNICEF u B&H: *Ishodi učenja za jezik* (Nactr), 2012.

When it comes to "two schools under one roof", the interim solution could be the administrative reunification of the classes in a way that children in multicultural classes attend all subjects together, except the NGS, and have the right to use their own mother tongue. When it comes to the children who are in a situation to be potentially assimilated, they are still in the state of potential assimilation and marginalisation, until the complete elimination of NGS and creation of universal textbooks acceptable to all children. So, the first step should be to assign independent international and domestic experts to remove the potentially offensive, ethnocentric, and suggestive parts in the textbooks. The second step would be to set up a similar independent expert body that will create the textbooks in the subjects of literature, geography, history, and nature and society which would be based more on the outcomes and the results that were achieved and reflected in cognitive, emotional, and social skills and critical thinking abilities than on the reproductive knowledge. Project History for the future and



*Svezame, otvori se*, offer optimal solutions in this respect.<sup>22</sup> The classes should be organized in all three official languages and both official scripts, in accordance with the Constitution of FB&H and Constitution of RS, and the right of the child to use its mother tongue at all times during the class must be completely guaranteed. Also, language competitions in orthography and expression in official languages different from one's own could be organized in order to motivate students to become familiar with all languages in use. In this manner, the school system could be integrated and children could finally attend the classes together. Most of the student respondents expressed their desire to be together in integrated schools, or at least to cooperate with schools from other parts of B&H on regular basis. Here is their reaction to the following comment of one student from primary school: *Children from the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina spent time together and became one big family. Everyone was looking forward to every next meeting and wanted to get to know each other better. Besides friendships, we managed to make Bosnia and Herzegovina become an inseparable whole once again through this project. We, the children, managed to do that, and we hope the adults will follow our example and try to make Bosnia and Herzegovina become one country. And I hope that every person will have their own rights regardless of nationality, religion, and financial status.*<sup>23</sup>

Students were asked if they consider the comment positive or negative and do they think that their schools should contribute to the goals stated in the comment. 304 out of 354 students evaluated this comment as positive and agreed that their schools should contribute to the cooperation with other schools in B&H. So a child from "two schools under one roof" said: *Here, we have our school and school in other part of the town. Our religions are different and it would be nice for us to become friends and see what they learn as they can see what we learn.* The other comments: *children in B&H are divided, but it should not happen; all of us should spend time together, regardless of religion and nationality; we should get to know each other, regardless of religion; we shouldn't be divided and attend different classes; it is necessary to eliminate "2 schools under one roof", because that creates even more nationalism amongst young people; in our school the children are divided on apples and oranges, I think that this is not ok and that we are all the same; I think the best solution is for schools to become unified, regardless of religion or nationality.* Most of the children who would like to meet the children of other ethnicities and to go to school with them are aware that this is not the policy of their schools, especially not of their government. Only 8 respondents evaluated the comment as negative. Also, according to the survey conducted in schools, 243 out of 354 students expressed their interest to participate in the selection of textbooks (students from 7 primary and secondary schools in B&H, personal communication, 2013).

As seen from this short evaluation, most of the interviewed children are willing to attend classes together with the children of other ethnicities, and they often blame schools, government or even parents for the present segregation in schools. So I believe that this solution could contribute to the de-ethnification of education: it is legally grounded and anti-discriminatory, it is supported by students' willingness to attend the classes together, but there is no political will to realize this idea, thus it can be considered only as a long-term solution. Nevertheless, re-considering this option would hopefully trigger a debate about inadmissibility of NGS in school system in B&H, since NGS has the perpetuating effect in terms of assimilation and segregation.

### 3.3. Policy option 3: personal stories as the generator of cultural memory in schools

I argue for this option as an interim solution or a temporary activity which is feasible in short run and could be efficient even in one school or within a local community. It refers to informal

<sup>22</sup> *Svezame, otvori se* was a great example of a textbook which has the aim to establish constructive and argument-based discussion, stimulate the child to rethink different concepts, and not promote patriotism through language and literature. Therefore, this textbook included the texts in each of three constituent peoples' languages, as well as both scripts. In the current political climate, it is not surprising that this kind of textbook was not accepted, even without any strong argument, although it abides by constitutional provision that there are 3 official languages and 2 official scripts, since the schools are the official institution. The vast majority of children expressed their interest in the textbook *Svezame, otvori se*, and provided detailed and strong arguments for their attitude, unlike some of the reviewers.

<sup>23</sup> Comment was used in survey conducted for the purposes of this research: Education for Peace Evaluation Report: Joint Project: Education for Peace Institute of the Balkans and Japan International Cooperation Agency. November 2005.

school curricula and it does not require a lot of efforts or financial support by the ministries. Although informal, it can still be considered as a public policy option, because of the fact that the educational system in B&H is politicized to such an extent that the CSOs or researchers are denied from access to schools (in most of cases) without an explicit consent from respective ministry, regardless of the opinion of school principal or pedagogue.

Once we described this option as a public policy (which is to be realized as a form of informal education), due to the fact that its realisation depends on ministries consent, I will explain the main argument for the advocacy of this particular option. The aim of this study is to induce the concept of character education,<sup>24</sup> focused on social and emotional learning, into the ethnically fragmented B&H educational system, in order to combat the ethnocentric approach to life and society, generated by the school system in B&H, and promote the core human values. There is one good practice with respect to testimony based lessons in primary and secondary schools, organised and conducted by the Shoah Foundation.<sup>25</sup> The testimonies of Holocaust survivors were presented to the children around the world in an interesting, modern and interactive manner, acceptable to children. Together with teachers, representatives of Shoah Foundation created testimony centred lessons. There is a special programme *I Witness Video Challenge*, which enables the students to create their own documentary based on testimonies of survivors. When listening to personal stories of survivors, students engage emotionally and identify with them, so it contributes to development of empathy and it also combats prejudices. It is important experience for students; it allows them to find out what kind of effect one certain historical event has had on individual lives and communities. One research has shown that students become up to 30% less prone to stereotyping after hearing the testimonies (Szonyi, A., personal communication, 2013). According to the representatives of OSCE B&H, personal stories of survivors are invisible to the wider public, so it would be useful to present the students in schools with personal stories of people who went through the war, in order to help the students better understand the context of conflict and start to think in critical manner about its causes and consequences (Representatives of the OSCE B&H, personal communication, 2013).

The survey I have conducted among the school children in primary and secondary schools in B&H contained the citations from the book *Djetinjstvo u ratu [Childhood in War]* (Halilović, 2012), which represents the collection of short testimonies of war survivors from B&H of all nationalities who were children when the war in B&H broke out in the 1990s. The testimonies selected for the survey were mainly about friendship, scarcity, solidarity, love, and little things that made children happy during the war. The interviewed children in B&H schools gave very emotional and honest comments on what they read about the childhood in war. Out of 172 students who follow Croat curriculum 136 answered the question; 129 reacted emotionally and showed deep empathy in their comments. Most of them expressed the interest to hear some of those stories during organized classes in their schools. Out of 182 students who follow Federal framework curriculum, 105 provided the answer and reacted emotionally and empathetic. Most of them said that they would like to hear more stories in schools. 222 students expressed their interest to hear more about the positive examples of inter-ethnic friendships and solidarity during the war in schools (out of 354 of them). The Croat students were deeply touched by the friendship in wars. In their comments and impressions they mostly repeated that friendships in wars were more honest and stronger, that the people were closer, and that they are positively surprised by finding out that religion and nationality were not always important during the war times. They were fascinated by the unity of children and by their struggle to survive, in the same time blaming the schools, government, and even parents because they

<sup>24</sup> *Character education is teaching children about basic human values, including honesty, kindness, generosity, courage, freedom, equality, and respect. The goal is to raise the children to become morally responsible, self-disciplined citizens.* See in: W. Berkowitz, M., and C. Bier, M. (2005.) *What Works in Character Education? A research driven guide for educators*, retrieved March 15, 2013, from [http://www.rucharacter.org/file/practitioners\\_518.pdf](http://www.rucharacter.org/file/practitioners_518.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> As mentioned in the beginning, 1994 Steven Spielberg established the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, with the main aim to gather and preserve video testimonies from survivors of the Holocaust, Retrieved March 15, 2013, from <http://sfi.usc.edu/>



are divided. Many of them expressed self-criticism because people were much better before and they needed basic things to be happy, unlike today's children. Children who follow Federal framework curriculum had the similar reactions, but they have not been that surprised by the fact that inter-ethnic friendships existed during the war. Here are some reactions from the children that follow Federal framework curriculum: *I would like to hear these stories in schools, because maybe then we would understand that we should live in unity and next to each other; stories about unity left the strongest impression on me; there was no difference between the victims in war, everyone only wanted to stay alive and everyone wanted the never to repeat again; it is very sad and terrifying that the children lost their families and friends just because of three different religions; we should organise these classes in order to hear about the horror of war and prevent the war from ever happening again...* Children who follow Croat curricula responded: *The stories of love and friendship regardless of the nationality left the strongest impression on me; if we hear those stories, maybe we would respect each other more, maybe we would respect friendship more; they bring us up to hate each other, generations and generations are lost because of hatred; after I have read this, I have changed my mind, we should all get to know each other better, no one has ever told me that it is important to have friends in war regardless of their religion...I would love to hear these stories, because I would probably change my mind and started to love the others; it would be a great idea to hear those stories, because it would raise our awareness to appreciate our childhood and life that was given to us; there was no difference between the children in that time, all of them were friends and all of them shared everything with each other...Yes, I would love to hear these stories...*

This is only one small part of the answers from questionnaires. Hopefully, with the help of CSOs and with the support from the IC, the classes about friendship, solidarity, and survival in war could be organised in order to present the children with a human interest story from the most terrible periods and awake the sentiment of empathy and solidarity, and give them more realistic picture of the society, which is often hidden behind prejudices and stereotypes generated by the B&H education and the public sphere in general. According to the CRC, the children have the right to participate in the planning and creation of curricula, so I firmly hold that their views should be taken into account by the government, IC, and CSOs, as well as scholars and researchers in this area. This activity/option obviously has the power to alleviate discriminatory feelings, practices and attitudes, as well as to create the culture of remembrance from the stories of individuals from all ethnic groups.

#### **4. Conclusions and recommendations**

Given the very nature of the topic of this policy paper, the recommendations will be focused not only on the implementation of informal testimony-based lessons, but would hopefully trigger a public debate and motivate the government to re-think the current educational system and its discriminatory character and find feasible and long-term solutions with the help of IC, CSOs and experts in this area. Recommendations are as follows:

- To the ministries of education, particularly to the ministries that have already supported the idea of informal story-telling classes about inter-ethnic friendships and solidarity in war: to allow the pilot project to be conducted in primary and secondary schools. The screening of a documentary about the survival in war could be a part of informal curriculum in schools, accompanied by a discussion between the children and survivors,

with intense involvement of pedagogues throughout the entire project. It is important to evaluate the ethnic distance among children before and after the pilot project – if the project turns out to be successful, engage in promotion of the project's importance and success through the media and try to persuade the other ministries of education to allow the project to be conducted; acquaint the school section with where the topics about inter-ethnic solidarity and friendship can be elaborated through various art forms (drama, film, music, poetry, etc.).

- To the IC and CSOs: if at least one ministry of education gives its consent, engage in financing and implementing the informal story-telling classes in schools by filming and screening a documentary about survival and inter-ethnic friendships in war or in some other appropriate way, in cooperation with representatives of CSOs who had similar experience and who might be interested to help in the realisation of the pilot project.
- To the IC and ministries of education: to establish a team of experts that would remove the offensive and inappropriate content from NGS from textbooks, in accordance with specific goals listed in the Strategy of development of education in B&H with the Action plan for its implementation 2008-2015.
- To the IC and ministries of education: in order to depoliticise the education, CSOs and researchers should be allowed free access to schools based only on a permit from school board, pedagogue and school principal, without the need to contact the respective ministry just to be allowed to conduct a survey.
- To the ministries of education: if the future curriculum would be based on the outcomes and cognitive skills of students (according to the information received from the Agency), the evaluation of teachers and their methods in relation with the planned and achieved outcomes regarding the students' acquired skills and capacities should also be conducted, in order to avoid the arbitrary behaviour of teachers and potential appearance of hidden curriculum.
- To the ministries of education: to establish a body described in Article 10 of FLPSE
- To the ministries of education: to take into account the opinions and attitudes of children when deciding on textbooks, curricula, and organisational set up of schools, in accordance with the right stated in General comment of CRC: right of the child to be heard and to participate in the curriculum making.
- To Constitutional Court of B&H: to reconsider: if Constitution of B&H states that *each Entity shall provide all necessary assistance to the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to enable it to honour the international obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, did the educational authorities of cantons and entities (considering their discriminatory practices in education – segregation and assimilation) breach the Constitution?
- To Constitutional Court of RS and Constitutional Court of FB&H: to reconsider: bearing in mind that previous researches pointed out that it is problematic to reconcile the principle of non-discrimination with the right to be educated on mother tongue, if the Constitutions of entities prescribe that there are three official languages and two official scripts, is it a breach of Constitutions of entities if the schools do not use all three languages and both scripts in lectures and textbooks, since the school is not a private (in most cases), but public institution?
- To OSCE B&H: to introduce personal stories of survivors in the project History for the Future – Reconciliation through Education.
- To the IC and CSOs: to finance excursions for children living in remote, poor villages, who attend "two schools under one roof", provided that all the children go together, in order to ease the ethnic distance among them.





- To CSOs and researchers: at the basis of this research and previous analysis and studies, to engage in launching new researches in this area and start a public debate/campaign about the necessity to end the practice of NGS in order to effectively eliminate segregation and assimilation in schools and create preconditions for European integration. It would be useful if researchers and experts involved in educational issues would analyse the presence of hidden curriculum in schools. Also, it is important to have the civil society advocate for informal, testimony based classes in schools, related to inter-ethnic friendship and solidarity in the previous war, considering the will of children to hear these stories and considering the positive effect that these stories have on them in terms of overcoming ethnic barriers, as this study has shown.

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## Appendix 1

### **List of institutions who responded to the questionnaire (in written form or in interview):**

Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education  
Federal Ministry of Education  
Ministry of Civil Affairs of B&H  
Department of Education of Brčko district B&H  
Ministry of Education of Republic of Srpska  
Ministry of Education of Sarajevo Canton  
Ministry of Education of Bosnia-Podrinje Canton  
Ministry of Education of Una-Sana Canton  
Ministry of Education of Tuzla Canton  
Ministry of Education of Zenica-Doboj Canton  
Ministry of Education of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton  
Pedagogical Institute Sarajevo

### **List of interviewed persons (via e-mail, or in person):**

Advisors of Federal Minister of Education  
Adžem, Dževad, minister of education in Bosnia-Podrinje Canton  
Bećirović, Aida, manager of the Schuler Helfen Leben Foundation's B&H office  
Bogunić, Zineta, primary school "Čengić Vila 1", Sarajevo, director  
Ćemalović, Elvira, University "Džemal Bijedić" in Mostar, university professor  
Gorjanc-Prelević, Tea, Coalition for RECOM  
Ibrahimović, Namir, language and literature teacher  
Lasić, Mile, Faculty of Philosophy in Mostar, university professor  
Mahmić, Samir, B&H High School Students Association  
Moll, Nicolas, historian  
Popov-Momčinović, Zlatiborka, Faculty of Philosophy in East Sarajevo, activist  
Representatives of OSCE Mission to B&H, sector for education  
Savija-Valha, Nebojša, Nansen Dialogue Center Sarajevo  
Sobhani-Izadinia, Naghmeh, Education for Peace Balkans (Canada), director  
Šmok, Martin, USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education, (California), senior international program consultant  
Szonyi, Andrea, USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education (California), senior international training consultant  
Tomić, Stanislav, Gymnasium "Petar Kočić", Zvornik, teacher  
Trbić, Dženana, Open Society Fund B&H  
Veličković, Nenad, Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo, university professor

### **Surveys:**

354 students who follow Croat or Federal framework curriculum in 7 schools that I visited (6 primary schools and 1 secondary school) responded to anonymous questionnaires. 25 high school students have responded to anonymous questionnaires via e-mail.





**Edina Đurković**, graduated from First Gymnasium in Sarajevo and from Faculty of Law at the University of Sarajevo. From 2011, she holds the European Regional Master's Degree in Democracy and Human Rights in South East Europe. She worked in the consultant company Djikic Consulting Services. After she finished the master programme in human rights, she also worked as the associate at Humanitarian Law Centre and as the director and one of the founders of the non-governmental organisation Transitional justice, accountability and remembrance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, actively cooperating with non-governmental organisations from B&H and from the region and helping in process of advocacy for the establishment of Regional commission for establishing the facts about war crimes and other gross violations of human rights committed on the territory of the Former Yugoslavia in the period from 1991-2001 (RECOM). In 2012, she obtained the scholarship from French Government for master studies in law at one of the universities in France. Considering the research and professional work, the domains she is most interested in are the mechanisms of transitional justice and international criminal law, as well as research in the domain of political culture and religious nationalism.



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