

**Slipping Through The Cracks:
School Enrolment and Completion in
Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**A Status Report
by
The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	7
THE ACTION PLAN	7
WHAT SYSTEM IS THERE?	8
WHERE DO THE NUMBERS COME FROM?	9
WHEN CHILDREN DO NOT APPEAR	10
WHEN CHILDREN DROP OUT	11
WHAT DO THE LAWS SAY?	11
COORDINATING AND COMMUNICATING	12
CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS	12
GIRLS AND BOYS AT RISK	13
ROMA	14
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	15
CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES	16
CHILDREN WHO DROP OUT	16
CHILDREN IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM	16
CURRICULUM MAKES A DIFFERENCE TOO	17
NON-COMPULSORY EDUCATION	18
WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	18
MAKING A DIFFERENCE	21
CONCLUSIONS	25
RECOMMENDATIONS	25
APPENDIX A	27

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bosnia and Herzegovina has nearly the highest proportion, 42 percent, in Europe of citizens with a low level of education or no education¹. This places a considerable burden on a country in need of a well-educated populace if it is to develop. In May 2006, at the urging of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Ministers of Education, seeking to lighten this burden, signed an action plan on universal school enrolment and completion. Unfortunately, Bosnia and Herzegovina today still has several thousand children, somewhere between four and six percent (or more) of its school-age population, who are even now not attending primary school.

Enrolment and attendance problems are often readily overcome not by sweeping and expensive bureaucratic or legislative initiatives but through personal enterprise and outreach. Measures as simple and effective as increased communication and the greater engagement of the community as a whole can make a big difference. These, however, are often lacking. Furthermore, there is no comprehensive system ensuring that every child is in school. Regular coordination among the bodies involved is rare; legislation is not always specific; and school officials usually receive no training in how to recognise and assist vulnerable children in their schools. In addition, no systematic reporting and follow-up procedure exists for children who drop out of school, statistics on under-age school leavers are mostly unreliable, and opportunities for catch-up classes limited.

School-leavers tend to come from low-income families, and sometimes include children of refugee families who have returned to their pre-war places of residence. The reasons they give for their failure to attend school range from the high cost of books and travel to inadequate living conditions, special needs, and troubled backgrounds. Continuing, though considerably weakened, traditions of early marriage are also a factor. Some returning refugees also mentioned their discomfort with the local school's use of a "national" curriculum different from that of their own nationality.

What stands out, however, are the efforts made by individual school officials and community members to reach past these barriers to ensure that the children facing the greatest challenges are enabled to overcome them. There are school directors who go out and recruit students in nearby settlements, parents who do the same, and teachers and pedagogues who both spend hours of their own time with the families of their most at-risk students and ask community members to provide support.

As this suggests, where the gaps in the current system are being filled it is mostly thanks to individual enterprise and personal outreach. Where such enterprise or outreach is absent, or where prejudice is present, the fragile legal and procedural structure develops fissures through which too many children are still slipping.

This report therefore makes the following recommendations:

- Community engagement should be enhanced by the urgent adoption of a community self-assessment tool for inclusion, such as the **Index for Inclusion**.
- Pre-school and life-long learning programmes should be developed and expanded, with a particular focus on adults who have not completed school and their own children.

¹ UNDP National Human Development Report of 2007, *Social Inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, page 93.

- Education, health, and welfare authorities should try to ensure that fully qualified professionals are always available to assist children in need of counselling and support. This should be backed by strategies for preventive work, particularly modalities for regular inter-agency cooperation.
- Education authorities should work with universities on incorporating practical training on recognising and working with vulnerable children into the qualification courses of all school staff and should also ensure that school directors receive training in all available procedures and measures.
- Local authorities, in line with Bosnia and Herzegovina's international and domestic commitments, should ensure that the costs of textbooks and transport do not jeopardise access to education.
- The action plans for children with special needs, for the educational needs of Roma and members of other national minorities, and for school enrolment and completion should be fully implemented.
- In accordance with the *Interim Agreement* on the rights and needs of returnee children, school environments and curricula should be made welcoming and suitable to all children and their families.

INTRODUCTION

Five children ranging from six to thirteen years of age belong to a family that returned to the village of Rakovac in the municipality of Maglaj. Their parents had wanted these children to go to school. Three of them had even begun to do so. But the family was so short of food that the children dropped out of school because of hunger.² Today, thanks to concerted efforts by local and international agencies, all five children are now back in school. Even so, the children initially had no textbooks: these are now being provided by the school at the urging of the international community.

These children are by no means unique in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The United Nations Development Program's *National Human Development Report for 2007* notes that almost 42 percent of the population has received little or no education. Within the European Union and the region, this report points out, only Albania and Romania have a poorer performance than Bosnia and Herzegovina. As the *Development Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina* declares, one of the chief problems still facing this country is "incomplete coverage of children by primary education, particularly vulnerable groups such as Roma children, female children, refugees and displaced children, and children whose education has been interrupted by the war and who were not reintegrated into the education system."³ While the problem is clear, its exact scale is not. *The National Human Development Report of 2007*, citing the Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics, puts the figure between four and six percent.⁴ A lack of reliable data on birth and location, however, makes this figure impossible to verify.

A widespread tendency to deny the existence of any problem whatsoever makes this problem worse. "We do not need to be concerned about possibly non-enrolled children," a director of a primary school in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton has explained, "because we are convinced that all parents are bringing their children to school." There is also a tendency to view this as a problem confined to particular groups: "We have no cases of non-enrolment or non-completion - except for Roma."⁵ There are, however, many examples of non-Roma children who do not attend school. These include children living in poverty, children from troubled backgrounds, children of families displaced by the conflict, children with special needs and, occasionally, girls marrying early.

THE ACTION PLAN

Developed by local experts with the support of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNICEF, signed by all Ministers of Education, and issued in May 2006, the *Action Plan on School Enrolment and Completion* provides a strategy for plugging the leaks in the current system. Its steps and goals include:

- Regular coordination among different responsible bodies – municipalities, social welfare bodies, education ministries and statistical agencies – including comprehensive data collection and exchange;

² This family's story was covered in the NTV Hayat documentary of 11 October, and the *Dnevni Avaz* article of 27 October 2007.

³ Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sectoral Priorities – Education, p. 182.

⁴ Report on Education Statistics, No.1, Sarajevo 14 January 2006.

⁵ Director of a primary school in Banja Luka, 22 August.

- Accelerated learning programs enabling children up to 15 years of age to return to regular schooling and similar programs enabling children over 16 to finish their schooling;
- Full implementation of the 2002 *Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children*;
- Removal of financial, administrative barriers, and physical barriers (e.g., a lack of wheelchair facilities) to school enrolment and completion.

WHAT SYSTEM IS THERE?

Educational officials from all over the country look back with some wistfulness to the pre-war system. As one school director put it, “Before the war the school was able to plan in advance the number of enrolled pupils, the number of classes and the number of teachers needed, which is not possible today.” Under this system, information from municipal birth registries was regularly passed to all schools. Schools within a designated catchment area analysed this information and compared it with the group of children appearing for enrolment. If children seemed to be missing, schools expected to receive a notice from the school into whose catchment area the child had moved or information that special needs were preventing enrolment. The system rested on several assumptions: that all parents registered their children at birth; that populations were stable; and that parents enrolled their children at the school within the catchment area where they lived.

Even before the war, however, this was not always the case. But with the onset of conflict, all these assumptions became shakier still. (The termination of universal male military service may have been a further factor in the decline of meticulous record-keeping.) Although hospitals still offer parents every opportunity to register their children at birth and although most take advantage of this opportunity, there is a far lower likelihood today that children who are of an age to begin school will be living in the place where they were born. Many municipalities also lack a hospital or clinic with a delivery ward. These municipalities must therefore seek to procure data from municipalities that do have such facilities. This procured information is much harder to break down according to catchment area and even less likely to be accurate.

Civil registries are found in local offices in municipalities. Larger, usually rural municipalities also have sub-municipal field offices. No formal mechanism exists for the regular exchange of information among such offices across the country. People still have to travel to their original place of birth in order to request, and be issued, a copy of their birth certificate. Only those born abroad are able to re-register themselves at their local registry office. Children of displaced families or children whose families have simply moved are thus not in the data bases of their municipalities.⁶

Where municipalities still follow the practice of sending lists from the registry offices to the schools, it is with the full knowledge that these lists will be far from accurate. In those few cases where hospital records are used instead, their reliability is also questionable. The practice in other countries is commonly to procure this same information by involving the local community. In some cases this includes having people go from door to door. In the United Kingdom the Index for Inclusion offers schools a list of mechanisms for working together

⁶ Information from the “Report on the Government System for Monitoring School Enrolment and Dropouts in BiH Primary Schools”, Ešref Kenan Rašidagić, page 8.

with their communities to ensure universal enrolment. Save the Children UK and UNICEF are attempting to introduce a similar tool in this country. Local authorities have yet, however, to adopt it.

As a result the methods for ensuring that all children are in fact attending school vary from municipality to municipality and even from school to school. Some schools receive no information at all from local authorities. Others rely entirely on the municipal registry lists. Asked what they could do about known inaccuracies, schools were mostly not optimistic. As another school director put it, “Not much. Just rely on the parents’ conscience.”⁷ Still others rely on announcements in the local media or on their knowledge of their small communities. As one school director put it, “People in the village know everything, every pregnant woman and every child, so it cannot happen that a child is not enrolled.”⁸

In a few areas schools are more imaginative. They draw on vaccination records and baptismal certificates and even make house calls to determine who should be in them. But these are the exceptions, and the places where such things occur usually coincide either with low birth-rates, most notably the eastern Republika Srpska and parts of Herzegovina, which make schools particularly anxious to seek out every potential student, or with the presence of specific projects aimed at boosting enrolment and completion rates.

Schools that have followed the common, if illegal, practice of enrolling children from outside their catchment area without going through the official procedures to allow them to do so, a practice explored in more detail in the recently-released OSCE Mission report *Tailoring Catchment Areas*, have little incentive for raising this issue with the authorities. They have even less motivation if the children come, as is the case for large numbers who live near administrative boundaries, from a different canton or entity. This practice, which seems prompted predominantly by a desire to attend schools with others of the same ethnicity, offers further potential for allowing those who are not enrolled in school at all to go unnoticed.

WHERE DO THE NUMBERS COME FROM?

Three different government agencies deal with statistics in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (One belongs to the state and the other two to each of the entities.) The only statistics about education available from the Statistics Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are literacy figures from 1991. Most cantons have on their websites lists of schools and sometimes the numbers of enrolled children, but these neither indicate how many children are not enrolled in school nor give figures for those who have dropped out of school. The lone exception to this is Una-Sana Canton, which, thanks to the project called “Basic Education Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina” of Save the Children Norway, offers more detail than most:

Una-Sana Canton Enrolment Statistics

School year	Total number of pupils	Pupils not attending school
2001/2002	31896	222
2002/2003	30639	134
2003/2004	30939	119
2004/2005	32944	135
2005/2006	32244	97
2006/2007	31523	83

⁷ Director of a primary school in the Pale area, 19 September.

⁸ Director of a primary school in Banja Luka, 30 August.

In partnership with the International Bureau for Humanitarian Issues (IBHI), Save the Children Norway is now attempting to assist Central Bosnia Canton to do the same thing.

The Republika Srpska's statistical agency has the advantage of being able to draw directly on information from throughout the entity. Its figures, which are given below, only track, however, the total primary school intake for each school year. They do not provide a breakdown that would suggest how many children may be dropping out, nor do they suggest how many children may not be enrolled in school at all.

Republika Srpska Enrolment Statistics

	Total	Female	Male
2000/2001	119038	57837	61201
2001/2002	114816	55768	59048
2002/2003	114603	55890	58713
2003/2004	124 539	60 431	64108
2004/2005	121 830	59 080	62750
2005/2006	119 101	57 897	61204 ⁹

Information currently available to the Republika Srpska Ministry of Education suggests that 206 children in the entity, both male and female and between 15 and 18 years of age, have not completed the compulsory amount of schooling. These figures can be compared with statistics regarding school attendance and level of education for children and adolescents living in social welfare institutions in the Republika Srpska, compiled by the statistics agency:

Attendance Statistics for Children in Care in the Republika Srpska

	Total	Level of Attended School				Not Attending
		All	Basic School	Secondary School	Higher Education	
2001	126	103	76	19	8	23
2002	134	108	80	20	8	26
2003	154	139	75	21	43	15
2004	223	121	62	50	9	102
2005	231	111	71	31	9	120
2006	265	121	78	35	8	144 ¹⁰

At the same time, information submitted for the 2007-2008 school year to the Republika Srpska Ministry of Education suggests there are no new cases at all of non-enrolment and only three of non-completion.¹¹ As this implies, the lack of reliable statistics makes it extremely difficult for decision-makers in Bosnia and Herzegovina to grasp the scale of the problem.

WHEN CHILDREN DO NOT APPEAR

Schools adopt various approaches when they have detected children who should be enrolled but are not. All schools inform their founders – that is, the legal body responsible for establishing the school, usually the municipality or the Ministry of Education. For some this ends

⁹ Republika Srpska Institute of Statistics, Education Statistics basic education, End of 2005/2006 and beginning of 2006/2007, Statistical bulletin No. 7, Banja Luka 2007, page 9.

¹⁰ Republika Srpska Institute of Statistics, Social welfare statistics, Page 77.

¹¹ Information from Ranko Savanović, Senior Advisor for Preschool and Primary School Education in the Ministry of Education for the Republika Srpska, 30 October.

the matter, particularly when Roma families are involved. Others wait for a short period, to see if illness may be an explanation, and then send written notification to the families, usually also requesting a meeting with them. School officials may also visit the homes of missing children and conduct an informal assessment, which may then lead them to get in touch with the local Centre for Social Welfare to see whether poverty or special needs are the cause and what can be done to overcome them. Other available measures include informing the relevant education inspector and filing misdemeanour charges against the parents. Still, because they lack reliable data, some schools have little confidence in many of these measures. Actual prosecution of parents is very rare, and its success is questioned by many experts - often appearing to depend on whether other measures are put in place to support the family.

WHEN CHILDREN DROP OUT

Sometimes, of course, children begin attending school and then stop. In some schools, officials try to identify such children before they do so, contacting both the families and the local Centre for Social Welfare to see what help might be available. More often, however, they act only after it has become clear that a child has actually quit school. Schools generally then send written notification to the families, requesting a meeting. Some schools will pursue this further; others, particularly in cases of Roma families, will end matters there, merely informing the founder and, in some cases, the education inspector. A few schools, when meeting with parents, have suggested they take advantage of external examination possibilities. Only a very few schools offer catch-up or evening classes.

WHAT DO THE LAWS SAY?

The laws of Bosnia and Herzegovina place the primary responsibility for the enrolment of children and the completion of the compulsory amount of education squarely on the shoulders of the parents. These laws, or in some cases bylaws, also generally specify that the school should take the lead in prosecuting the parents, though this is a measure most schools avoid. "The school is obliged to initiate complaints against parents. But the school has neither the financial means nor a lawyer to do so."¹²

The laws themselves, however, provide far less detail about the procedures that schools should actually follow and whom they should actually inform, and the details that are contained in bylaws vary widely.

The Republika Srpska's bylaw on enrolment¹³, for instance, requires schools to inform the municipality, which should then inform the entity's Ministry of Education, and to notify the parents, if a child fails to attend school. Zenica-Doboj Canton, by contrast, requires charges to be brought against the parents and also demands that schools inform the relevant child protection agency. As a result, Zenica-Doboj Canton has initiated a relatively large number of misdemeanour proceedings relating to enrolment. (They number twenty-two at last count.) Meanwhile, at the other end of the spectrum, Sarajevo and Central Bosnia Cantons do not specify procedures to be carried out by the school beyond filing charges and informing "responsible bodies." Not surprisingly, inconsistencies arise – in the case of a eighth grade student who ran away from home, for example, the director advised the parents to call the police

¹² School pedagogue, Sveti Sava Primary School, Kotor Varoš, 4 September.

¹³ By-law on enrolment of pupils in first grade of primary school (OG of RS no. 19/05): "*Pravilnik o upisu učenika u prvi razred osnovne škole (Službeni glasnik Republike Srpske br. 19/05)*."

and informed the social welfare centre, but did not file information with either the Ministry of Education or the municipality¹⁴.

In most parts of the country schools – and sometimes even school directors themselves – can be subject to large fines if they fail to enrol children living within their catchment area. In practice, however, this usually means a failure to admit children who have actually registered with the school. It is thus possible for a school director and other responsible authorities to be aware that there are children of school age living in the catchment area who are not attending school and to do nothing to encourage them to come to school.

COORDINATING AND COMMUNICATING

In general, there is no legislation specifically requiring the institutions that have an actual or potential role in ensuring that children enter and stay in school to communicate and cooperate with one another. Usually, however, schools will, once a problem becomes obvious, get in touch with the relevant department of the municipality or go directly to the local Centre for Social Welfare. The laws governing Centres for Social Welfare, however, do not specify any mechanisms for cooperating with schools. They do not even say that schools and social welfare centres should be regularly in communication with one another. As one social worker pointed out, “There is no systematic information exchange or system by which we can be sure that no child has fallen through the cracks.”¹⁵ As a result, schools and social welfare centres usually cooperate only after absence is actually noted. By then, the scope for preventive work is almost entirely gone. “Cooperation happens only when we need the Centre for Social Welfare’s assistance,” noted one school director, “but in general their intervention is limited to material assistance.” As a municipal official sensibly noted, “It would be far better to recognise the potential (for dropping out) and to work on preventive measures – for example, workshops with families, financial assistance, and similar activities.”

The regulation of community involvement is similarly in its infancy. Save the Children UK and UNICEF are both testing self-assessment tools in Tuzla Canton, Sarajevo Canton, and the Modriča area of the Republika Srpska. Save the Children UK is piloting the Index for Inclusion, which provides a checklist enabling schools and communities to verify what measures are in place to ensure the inclusion of all children in schools. Banja Luka’s innovative Centre for Local Development which organises workshops and meetings with local community members, reported two local children had recently dropped out of a nearby school due to poverty and troubled family backgrounds - although the school director claimed to have no cases of non-completion.

Although schools have a broad legal mandate for action, the application of this mandate varies considerably according to the attitude of the school’s management, the degree to which the individual school has established communication and cooperation with child welfare bodies and community members, and the extent to which the importance of preventive work is recognised.

CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS

Even before the war, families in remoter rural areas, often in mountainous regions without adequate roads, presented the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a particular

¹⁴ Interview conducted with a primary school director, Sarajevo Canton, 2 October.

¹⁵ Zijada Garib, Centre for Social Welfare in Bugojno, 6 August.

challenge in ensuring their children went to school. The mountains around Travnik were particularly notorious for the number of children who failed to begin, much less to finish, primary school. The government's answer was the provision of "branch schools," sometimes for four grades, sometimes for eight, in locations reasonably close to these remote communities. This was moderately successful; completion of the first four grades of primary school in particular rose as a result. These schools have continued to exist and to function in the same spots after the war. They have not changed with the changing demographics of the country. As a result, many such schools now find themselves educating only handfuls of pupils in mixed-age classes. These pupils might be better served in larger, single-age classes in the more distant main primary schools.

Transportation to and from such main schools, however, presents a serious barrier. Pupils are most likely to drop out of school after they have completed the earlier grades in the local branch school. This generally occurs when the child must make his or her way to a more distant school in a more central district of the municipality. Rural families, who are the least likely to have access to good roads and public transport, are also often the most likely to have financial difficulties that prevent them from paying for whatever mode of transport may be available. As the National Human Development Report for 2007 points out:

Children who do not attend school come mainly from poor families. It appears that one in four children in the poorest stratum do not attend school at all... It is estimated that in BiH almost 15 percent of primary school students live more than three kilometres away from school, while over 50 percent of secondary school students are located more than three kilometres away.¹⁶

The education laws of the cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and those of the Republika Srpska offer a range of approaches to this problem, with some areas, usually the wealthier, prepared to finance transport for any children living more than two kilometres from the nearest school and others offering only to finance trips of more than four kilometres¹⁷. (Appendix A specifies which authorities pay for transport over what distance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina.) For many families, paying for transport over any distance whatsoever presents an almost insuperable obstacle. In the catchment area of the Vojislav Ilić Primary School in Krupa na Vrbasu, bus fares amount to 78 convertible marks per month. As a local official affirms, "This is high even for those who have good salaries."¹⁸

With the introduction of nine-year primary education, under which children start school in the year they turn six, instead of seven as was previously the case, parents have also grown more concerned about allowing such small children to walk large distances, particularly in winter. In response, some parents are simply holding their children back for a year.

GIRLS AND BOYS AT RISK

The percentage of women without any education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is far higher than that of men – 17 percent as opposed to six percent. However, the gender-gap appears to be closing, with boys similarly vulnerable overall to non-enrolment and non-completion. For example, of 28 decisions issued in the Upper Vrbas region to warn parents that they might face prosecution over non-enrolment or non-completion, 15 were issued in cases of boys, 13 in cases of girls.

¹⁶ Page 95.

¹⁷ See table at Appendix A.

¹⁸ Psychologists at a Centre for Social Welfare in the Banja Luka area, 4 September.

Some experts, however, still cite lingering traditions of early marriage as a reason why girls, Roma and non-Roma alike, drop out of primary school. The director of a school in which the local education inspector issued seven decisions against parents in a single year – five cases concerned girls and two boys – commented that, “Some girls marry very young. Usually it is the husband who prevents the girl from continuing with school.”¹⁹ A worker with an NGO which implements education initiatives in Eastern Bosnia agreed: ‘Yes, (education opportunities are the same for boys and girls) by law. In practice, I’m familiar with several cases where girls are not attending schools. In all of these cases the excuse is the economic situation – if you have very poor people who have enough money to send just one child to school, in almost all cases the parents will decide for the boy to go to school. But it’s just a few cases.’²⁰ Traditional attitudes and early marriages may also be a reason why some girls fail to attend secondary education.

ROMA

Roma children form perhaps the single largest group of children slipping through the cracks. Thousands of Roma born in Bosnia and Herzegovina lack basic documents such as birth certificates, identity cards, and passports. Many children have never been registered in any registry office and are thus invisible to all official bodies.²¹ The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, during its 2006 session, expressed deep concern about “the difficulties that many Roma experience in obtaining personal documents, including birth certificates, identification cards, passports and documents related to the provision of health insurance and social security benefits.”²² Roma children also appear to be excluded from the normal focus of local authorities on ensuring that all children in the community are in school. Although there are teachers and school directors who do make particular efforts to reach out to potential Roma students, the prevailing lack of interest in their attendance inevitably influences the numbers of Roma who gain an education.

The National Human Development Report for 2007 notes that less than ten percent of Roma children in Bosnia and Herzegovina attend primary school. It observes, too, that when they do attend school, their presence is “frequently marked by various forms of hostility and even racial abuse.”²³ Save the Children UK agrees. In its report *Denied a Future?* (2006), it cites many obstacles to keeping Roma children in school. These include poverty and unemployment among their parents; a lack of parental awareness regarding their own and their children’s rights; low levels of parental education; the lack of support for the Roma community among the broader community; and, in many cases, the attitude of teachers towards those few Roma children who do attend school. The same report notes that some are placed in special education classes.

Even in Sarajevo, the wealthiest canton of the Federation and the home of substantial Roma communities, the outlook is mixed. A few dedicated school directors visit their local Roma communities regularly, form relationships with children before they begin school, and make sure that they have adequate school materials, clothes, and food. They also offer washing facilities for children whose families are deprived of the most basic hygiene. The Hasan Kikić

¹⁹ School Director in Central Bosnia Canton, interviewed 12 September.

²⁰ Interview conducted by students of George Mason University in May 2007, “Education Reform and Identity Formation in Bosnia and Herzegovina [pp.46].

²¹ An article written by Sue Birchmore of World Vision BiH states that “64% Roma children (in Bosnia and Herzegovina) still do not attend primary school.” The article is available at http://meero.worldvision.org/news_article.php?newsID=532&countryID=6.

²² Article 17, 68th session, 20 February – 10 March 2006.

²³ Page 96.

Primary school in the Gorica settlement of Sarajevo Centar municipality has enrolled one hundred percent of the local Roma children. The Director of Džemaludin Čaušević School in Novo Sarajevo and the Directors of the Osman Nakaš and Avdo Smajlović primary schools in Novi Grad, working with the municipal authorities, the local Centres for Social Welfare, and some local non-governmental organizations, have also achieved remarkable results, going beyond the letter of the law to ensure that all children complete their education.

These cases, however, contrast starkly with those in which the authorities are less concerned about the opportunities denied to Roma children living in their communities. Over thirty school-age Roma children live near Ilidža primary school in Sarajevo Canton, most of whose births are registered. These children did not appear for enrolment. The school director (along with representatives of the municipality and the local Centre for Social Welfare) feels no obligation to take any action to ensure their attendance of school – although all officials spoke at length of activities they conduct in the cases of non-Roma children not attending school.

Experts throughout the country acknowledged that hopelessly inadequate living conditions and lack of access to basic utilities are the main obstacles to Roma attendance. Although these living conditions are not solely confined to Roma – as the case cited in the introduction to this report makes clear – nevertheless, an overwhelming proportion of Roma children face such conditions when attempting to gain an education.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The integration of children with special needs as far as possible into mainstream classes is a principle accepted many years ago in Bosnia and Herzegovina and embodied in education laws throughout the country. In practice, however, most schools still lack the necessary facilities. Wheel-chair bound students, for instance, often have to be carried by parents or staff up three flights of stairs. Nor do teachers in many cases have access to expert support to help them work with children with special needs. According to *The National Human Development Report for 2007*, during the 2003-2004 school year fewer than one percent of children with special needs were included in the regular school system.²⁴ To provide the necessary support to teachers seeking to integrate children with special needs into their classes, the professional unfortunately known in each of the three local languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a defectologist (*defektolog*) should be available at least occasionally. Although many cantons and the Republika Srpska have created mobile teams of professionals, including defectologists, to visit schools where children have special needs, in practice teachers and pedagogues often find themselves alone in dealing with these needs. “After hearing from an Education Ministry all about the mobile team in the area and its successes, we interviewed school staff and found they had never even heard of the mobile team.”²⁵

Save the Children UK also notes that ‘categorisation’ of children – that is, ranking them according to degree of disability – too often leads to institutionalisation. Moreover, where defectologists recommend enrolment in special needs institutions, if such an institution is not available locally (most are only present in the largest cities) the child may simply never attend school.

²⁴ Page 96.

²⁵ Danijel Hopić, Save the Children, UK, interviewed on October 20.

CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES

For those children unable to fulfil their potential, from causes ranging from psychological or social trauma to problems not yet widely recognised in the country such as Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), there is little professional support or help available in schools. Similarly, there is little support for the school staff members who are trying to work with these children. According to Save the Children UK, such children are unhelpfully demarcated according to individual disorder. “Each child should simply be described, taking into account all aspects of the child and his or her background, rather than categorised according to a particular disorder. There is a shortage of people able to do this. We need to fight labelling,” argues Danijel Hopić of Save the Children, UK. This organisation also notes the shortage of qualified counsellors, including psychologists, available to work with schools. A trained psychologist could help immensely by making himself or herself available to both students and the staff of the school for a few hours periodically. In practice, however, expert counselling for troubled students is not always there when needed. For example, a pedagogue who requested assistance from the local Centre for Mental Health found this institution lacked the capacity to assist students and their families in need of counselling²⁶.

CHILDREN WHO DROP OUT

Where other local schools are unable to take on children who have dropped out of or been excluded from their original school, or if children are unwilling or unable to return to a standard school environment, there is no other institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina that can offer them education. In other European countries such as Britain, for example, pupil referral units, with a very high ratio of teachers to children, are open to children who have been excluded from other schools or who have other problems that jeopardise their attendance. These include teenage mothers and students with mental health difficulties.

Catch-up classes for those who drop out can be hard to find as well. “Bosnia and Herzegovina has not yet developed appropriate models to enable students who leave school early to continue with their education at some later stage,” says the *National Human Development Report for 2007*. In practice only a very few schools offer such classes. These receive little official support. One school director, who has held the post for six months, when asked about such classes, replied he did not know what education was available for children over 17 years of age or for children who failed the same grade more than twice.

The laws state that children up to fifteen years of age who have not completed primary education and can no longer be placed appropriately in an ordinary classroom should receive instruction free of charge in order to enable them to take certified external exams. This happens only rarely, and the schools which do initiate it often receive little support. The Džemaludin Čaušević Primary School in Sarajevo, for instance, which has organized catch-up classes and examinations for people of all ages for the past six years, has received no financial support either from the Cantonal Ministry of Education or from the local municipality, which under Sarajevo cantonal law is required to finance such education.

²⁶ Interview, 24 October.

CHILDREN IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Institutions that accommodate male children who are in conflict with the law but who have not been imprisoned do not offer internal education. The Tunjice Educational-Reformatory Home in Banja Luka has, after long delays, found a way to partly meet its education needs. A neighbouring school has prepared a program of education and the Home has begun financing separate classes for six of eleven boys. (Two are taking classes at a nearby prison, although not with the adult inmates.) Meanwhile, some of the children in the Hum Institution for the Education of Male Children and Youth in Sarajevo regularly attend local schools, but they do so on their own initiative. There are no similar institutions for girls. Juveniles incarcerated in penitentiaries intended for adults are able to gain access to education outside the prison, but this, too, must be on their own initiative.

CURRICULUM MAKES A DIFFERENCE TOO

Refugees and displaced persons who have returned to the communities in which they lived before the war, along with people living in areas where their ethnic group is or has become a numerical minority, face particular difficulties when it comes to educating their children. In particular, those returning to semi-destroyed communities in remote areas are usually low-income families who, like many rural families, have limited ability to organise and finance transport for their children to the nearest school.

The curricula and the environments of schools depend, as a rule, on which of the three Constituent Peoples controls them. As a result, returning refugees and displaced people and those belonging to a numerical or national minority in a community have motives for seeking schools outside of their local catchment areas. A very large proportion of them do so, as the OSCE Mission's report of October 2007 called *Tailoring Catchment Areas* confirms:

The most frequent reason given by parents (for sending their children to schools outside the catchment area) was the lack of their curriculum of choice. Parents fear their children will lose their national identity if taught in accordance with the curricula of other ethnic groups.”²⁷ “Parents are prepared to make these extra efforts because they are afraid of how their children would be accepted (in schools where another ethnicity dominates). They think their children would be put in an unfavourable position (if they attended such a school).”²⁸

The National Human Development for 2007 report bleakly agrees: “It appears that the problem of registration in local areas will remain unresolved until resolution of the school curriculum issue.”²⁹

Some returnee families, or those belonging to ethnic groups in a numerical or national minority, may also have concerns about their children's safety in school. Each year attacks on the children of returning refugees or displaced people occur. In October of this year, for example, the parents of a Bosniac student from a settlement near Višegrad withdrew him from the local primary school after an incident involving three Serb students from a higher grade. The child is now attending school a considerable distance away in Bosnia-Podrinje Canton.

²⁷ *Tailoring Catchment Areas: School Catchment Areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina, A Status Report by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina*, September 2007, page 17.

²⁸ As above, page 15.

²⁹ Page 96.

NON-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Recognising its importance, particularly for vulnerable children, most European countries offer free, and in some cases compulsory, pre-school education. Several countries also offer free nursery care. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, pre-school education is the exception rather than the rule. Rural areas almost entirely lack preschool institutions. Even where such institutions do exist, they are extremely expensive, in relation to the average salary, and thus affordable only to parents who are employed. (An initiative organized by the Republika Srpska Child Protection Agency does provide municipal play groups for socially vulnerable children for a month.)

The provision of secondary education offers an economical yet effective means of ensuring that those at risk of poverty and exclusion are granted every opportunity for integration. *The National Human Development Report for 2007* notes:

... secondary education is the most important sector for the prevention of social exclusion in BiH. Individuals with a secondary education have a very similar level of inclusion to those with tertiary education. Yet secondary education costs less and reaches the many rather than the few. This level of education is also most important to secure adaptation to changes in the labour market and to provide the skills set which BiH workers require.³⁰

In many member countries of the European Union, as well as the United States of America, secondary education is compulsory. In Bosnia and Herzegovina it is not. According to the *National Human Development Report*, only 57 percent of the students who complete primary school in one generation also complete secondary education. The average in the European Union, by contrast, is more than 93 percent.³¹ Bosnia and Herzegovina does not offer compensatory secondary education without charge for those who have dropped out or for those adults who wish to pursue it, either; life-long remains a barely-developed concept. As noted above, the few schools that do offer evening classes for adults often do so without any form of official support. Usually, too, adults must pay for these classes, with some exemptions for the unemployed.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

The obstacles to staying in school can be, as it were, atmospheric. They can, in other words, arise from the relationship between the student and his or her immediate environment – the local people, politics, institutions, and cultural and social and economic conditions. Keeping students in school is not, then, simply the narrow responsibility of particular institutions or individuals. Instead, the responsibility for creating an environment in which all children have access to education is spread across the entire community.

Ministries of Education

Within a Ministry of Education the Education Inspector has a role in supporting schools' enrolment and completion efforts. The value of this role, however, varies according to the level of initiative of the individual inspector. In many places the local inspectors argue that schools do not always provide the necessary information, leaving them with little scope for interven-

³⁰ Page 97.

³¹ As above, page 96.

tion.³² Otherwise, it appears that the most significant role Ministries of Education currently play in ensuring that all students enter and remain in school, in addition to serving as repositories of statistics, is that of issuing bylaws and any further necessary regulations. Some ministries have already issued bylaws on inclusive education or the education of national minorities, although levels of implementation vary considerably.

Ministries of Education and their usual adjuncts, Pedagogical Institutes, also have an important role to play in supporting external and adult education. Pedagogical Institutes, as bodies commonly under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, should in theory advise teachers and school pedagogues on how to keep their students in their schools. In practice, however, members of Pedagogical Institutes, who are themselves pedagogues or subject experts, do not have extensive training in methods of supporting vulnerable children within the education system.

Municipalities

The role of municipalities in ensuring that children resident in them attend school as long as possible varies considerably across the country. In some parts of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina the municipality (or city) is the founder – an all-important, controlling designation and, like the network of schools itself, something inherited from Yugoslavia – of the school. In other cases, however, the canton officially founds – and thus controls – the schools within its borders. In the Republika Srpska the government is in general the founder of all the schools within the entity.

Where the municipality is the founder, it will be the recipient of information about which children on the municipal lists of registered children (if these lists were shared with the school) enrolled in school, and which did not. What the municipality, if it is the founder, then does with this information again varies considerably across the country. Some municipalities are deeply engaged in efforts to ensure that children attend school. Jablanica municipality in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, for instance, shows a strong interest in the results of the enrolment of Roma and children with special needs and cooperates with local schools through its Centre for Social Welfare and the municipal employee in charge of education. Not all municipalities, however, evince the same strong interest. In seven municipalities in the Republika Srpska, the OSCE asked both school directors and municipal representatives the same question: Do municipalities or any other institutions have data concerning cases of non-enrolment and non-completion? The answers were in all cases the same: “Nobody has that.”³³ But in other Republika Srpska municipalities, municipal officials believed they were fully informed: “The municipality carefully follows school enrolment and does not believe there are any cases of non-enrolment and non-completion.”³⁴

The division of responsibility between the municipality as founder and the cantonal education ministry can make for problems. According to one school director in the Mostar area, “There is no coordination between the founder and the Ministry of Education, although this would be very helpful to schools. On the contrary, these institutions often argue over the responsibility for the issues raised by the schools, thus making the schools’ position often more difficult.”

³² Interviews conducted 30 October.

³³ Interviews conducted in September 2007.

³⁴ Interview with Mr Milivoje Radović, Head of Education Department, Bileća Municipality.

Local organisations

Schools rarely engage such civic bodies as parents' councils, Community Councils (*Mjesne zajednice*), or local non-governmental organisations in an effort to resolve cases where children are not in school. A number of organisations are ready to enter into partnership with schools, particularly those with a focus on children's rights, but often they are ignored, even though their engagement usually produces a successful outcome. Some examples of successful engagement appear below.

Centres for Social Welfare/Municipal Departments of Social Affairs

Social welfare services in most municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the direct responsibility of Centres for (or municipal services of) Social Welfare. Most employ social workers who have specialised in child welfare. In both entities, the range of qualifications and expertise available is wide. In its report of December 2005, *Assessing Realisation of the Right to Social Assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the Human Rights Department of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina notes, "The professional development of Centre for Social Welfare staff is neglected by the authorities at all levels."³⁵ In rural areas particularly, these Centres tend to lack personnel such as fully trained psychologists. Moreover there is an overall tendency – although there are many positive exceptions – passively to accept referrals rather than to play an active role and seek out needy clients. The same report recommends "outreach capacities must be implemented to the fullest extent possible given available resources."³⁶ Research supported by UNICEF agrees: "Social workers generally limit themselves to working with children who are in a state of social need and are referred to the Centre for Social Welfare by their parents or authorities, such as law enforcement agencies or courts. Very few preventive exercises are carried out by Centres for Social Welfare and comprehensive and regularly updated databases are not usually kept in the Centres."³⁷

Schools are usually the initiators of any engagement by Centres for Social Welfare in cases where children have left school. The point at which they decide to include the Centre for Social Welfare varies considerably from school to school and region to region. Many schools have developed their own mechanism for cooperation, which usually means involving the Centre for Social Welfare at an early stage in the proceedings. Here is how a primary school director in Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje in Central Bosnia Canton describes his approach: "It is of course up to school to identify [what has become of a missing child]...We wait for the first week: if a child has moved, the receiving school will request documentation. However, usually we know what happened on the first day or two. If the child is not brought to school, we intervene and ask children, teachers, neighbours. If all seems well (the child is not sick, the family has not moved away) we go to visit, to see with parents what the problem is and try to persuade the parents to send the child to school. If this does not work, then we inform the Centre for Social Welfare and the Ministry for Education inspection, and we all join together in trying to find the best solution so the child will start attending school."

On the other hand, cases of schools which take steps to coordinate with the available experts before drop-out actually happens, appear to be rare. "Cooperation with the welfare centre exists only in specific cases; for example, if the child does not come to school."³⁸ As a social worker complained, "I would much prefer to get involved in preventive work before drop-out

³⁵ Page 17.

³⁶ Page 21.

³⁷ "Report on the Government System for Monitoring School Enrollment and Dropouts in B&H Primary Schools", Ešref Kenan Rašidagić, Page 12.

³⁸ Director of a primary school in Mostar, 9 September.

occurs”³⁹. A school director admitted, “We do not cooperate with the Centre for Social Welfare, but we work with pedagogues and parents when there are problems. If we need Centre for Social Welfare intervention, it is only after we inform the relevant department of the founder. It is the procedure. I think that the Centre for Social Welfare should be much more involved, in this post-war society.”⁴⁰

Directors and teachers

School directors’ perceptions of their responsibilities vary enormously, as does their actual capacity to assume particular responsibilities. As the director of a primary school in Trebinje in the Republika Srpska put it, “It is not the school’s responsibility to go around and search for pupils but the parents’ responsibility and legal obligation to enrol their children in school.” By contrast, the director of a primary school in Vlasenica, which is also in the Republika Srpska, when he discovered two ten-year-old children of returned refugees who had not been in school, approached the entity’s Ministry of Education and obtained approval to enrol them. Similarly, teachers may or may not involve themselves in keeping their pupils in school. Their perceptions of whether they should do so also vary enormously. To the question of whether teachers are trained to recognise at-risk children and to do something about them, one common answer was, “No, teachers do not have any role in school enrolment.”⁴¹

Pedagogues

Pedagogues are the professionals who come nearest to having the qualifications necessary for working with troubled students, since their courses of study involve more theoretical psychology than the courses required for teaching qualifications. Still, the bulk of even their training is purely educational; their primary role is to evaluate and advise the teaching staff. They therefore usually have no hands-on qualifications for counselling troubled children. Many of them find themselves additionally required to fulfil a whole range of other duties, which may include large amounts of administrative work.

Pedagogues are often the people to whom other teaching professionals turn in their struggles with troubled students. They themselves, however, do not have many resources to draw on in dealing with complex and difficult cases. Such cases, as discussed above, range from special needs to psychiatric trauma and often require expertise that may simply not be available. Pedagogues must therefore fall back on their own devices. As a pedagogue in Central Bosnia Canton put it, “There is no specifically designed jurisdiction for the school, Centre for Social Welfare, Centre for Mental Health or hospital...A school pedagogue must estimate the jurisdiction of each in every individual case.” Although pedagogues should in theory receive support from the local pedagogical institute where one exists – Bosnia-Podrinje Canton has only a nominal institute, while four other cantons receive occasional visits from Pedagogical Institutes located outside their boundaries — in practice the members of such institutes will be either subject experts or have pedagogical qualifications similar to the pedagogue’s own.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

But it does not necessarily have to be a school pedagogue alone who intervenes to keep children in school. Concerned individuals and organizations, through their own initiative and sense of responsibility and without particular goading from governmental authorities, have

³⁹ Social worker, Jajce Centre for Social Welfare, 11 September.

⁴⁰ Director of a primary school in the Mostar area, Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, August 31.

⁴¹ Interview with a pedagogue in the Nevesinje area, 27 September.

demonstrated an ability to make things better. People as different as municipal mayors and Roma parents regularly go out of their way to reach vulnerable groups and to enlist everyone possible to resolve their problems. Some of their stories provide object lessons for their counterparts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere.

A school director

Haša Albinović, the Director of the Džemaludin Čaušević Primary School in Sarajevo Canton, began visiting the Roma settlement near her school in 1996. Her hope was to enrol the children in this settlement in her school. They had previously received no education at all. She convinced some of the parents and the head of the community to allow their children to receive an education, offering washing facilities and clothing, along with childcare solutions to enable parents to send children to school who had previously stayed home caring for younger siblings. Today, all of the children in the settlement attend her school, and the generation that entered the school in 1996 is now sending their children and younger siblings to school, where Roma language classes are available and are attended by interested non-Roma children as well.

In addition to her work with Roma, Ms. Albinović tries to help older children and adults who have never completed primary school. With the assistance of Save the Children UK, she began offering classes and extraordinary exams for children and adults. These are free of charge, except for employed adults. She and her teachers organize these classes without pay. Other schools send children and adults from their catchment areas to benefit from these classes too.

Ms. Albinović has also created advanced courses for above-average children. In addition, she sends her teachers and staff to every training course she can, even sending the school pedagogue to Sweden for a year to receive specialised training in inclusive education. Her efforts have not gone unnoticed. Most schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina now know who she is.

A teacher

Rifeta Turanović, a teacher in the Kuprešani branch of the Berta Kučera Primary School of Jajce, works in a small and tightly-knit community. She is aware of every family and their issues, both Roma and non-Roma (although the majority are Roma). Thanks to her work, every child in her local community who should be in school now is.

Ms. Turanović also works hard to secure funds when they are needed. She has gotten the municipal authorities to carry out repairs on the roads, water supply, and other necessities for her community. A few years back, when nine young mothers were pregnant, she organized a support system through Jajce hospital, bringing in donations of basic baby-care supplies. Several of those babies began school this year. She also helped establish a strong relationship with the local Centre for Social Welfare, which helps when the school is unable to provide necessary support and materials such as books and school supplies. When asked about how teachers can help keep children in school, she said, “If you do this job properly, you should be able to recognize warning signals and be able to act on them appropriately.”

A mayor

Petar Jurišić is Mayor of the small but widely dispersed municipality of Dobretići, in Central Bosnia Canton. Despite the many difficulties he faces, which include the general poverty of the area and the inadequacy of the basic infrastructure and services, he takes a special interest

in issues related to education. He stays in direct communication with teachers, who inform him of any cases of children who are not in school. When such cases are brought to his attention he gets in touch with the families and tries to find solutions. The Mayor has already helped several families to send their children to school.

Most of the problems preventing their attendance at school, he found, stemmed from the lack of consistent and reliable transportation. In the absence of any other possibility, the municipality organized accommodation for several children with a local non-governmental organization called DUGA during the week and enabled these children to go home to their families every weekend by arranging transport from door to door.

A parent

Mr. Šaćir Osmanović is the President of the Banja Luka-based Roma association Veseli Brigeg. This association uses all kinds of methods, including visiting homes and ensuring that needy families receive the necessary assistance from the Social Welfare Centre, to encourage Roma children to start and to stay in school. Mr. Osmanović began by personally taking the initiative to convince Roma parents that they must send their children to school: thanks to his efforts seven children initially enrolled in the local primary school, Branko Radičević, during the 2003-2004 school year. Mr. Osmanović continues to be strongly involved in the lives and the progress of these children. Most of the Roma children in Banja Luka (a total of 44) are now receiving an education. Three of them attend university. The Association is trying to create catch-up classes for 15 children who are over 15 years of age.

Two local non-governmental organisations

DUGA offers much-needed mental health care services to “at risk” youth and children. Although it focuses in particular on children with special needs, it is open to working with any children at risk. It conducts training workshops and offers counselling for parents and teachers on working with children with special needs. Its activities seek to reform both the systems of education and of mental health care in Bosnia and Herzegovina through advocacy and awareness-raising.

DUGA has been active in developing strategies for including children with learning difficulties in society. To this end it has opened a rehabilitation centre in Novi Travnik that offers day care and occupational therapy programs. Some children are accommodated in the centre itself because of the remoteness of their homes from any transport and the absence of any other way to receive an education. These children go home regularly to see their families.

In Tuzla an organization called Zemlja djece offers children who are not in school a chance to receive instruction and preparation for external exams. These are provided in cooperation with the Tuzla Canton Ministry of Education. It also tries to increase enrolment by offering activities that would attract children to school. Thanks to the initiative of this non-governmental organization, a provision of Tuzla Canton Law on Primary Education, which formerly stipulated that all candidates for external exams aged over 15 must provide funds for instruction and exams, was amended in 2005. As a result, the costs of instruction and examinations for all candidates under the age of 18 now come from the cantonal budget.

An international non-governmental organisation

Save the Children Norway began a project called “Basic Right to Education” in cooperation with the authorities of the Central Bosnia Canton in 2005. The project surveyed the reasons why children failed to stay in school. Its findings became the basis for a public awareness campaign and for discussions with responsible authorities. A number of students - 14 out of 51 who were not in school in the previous year – returned to school after and perhaps as a result of this public awareness campaign. The canton also allocated 80,000 convertible marks for assistance to socially vulnerable people. Save the Children Norway now intends to turn to training teachers. It will publish a teachers’ training manual, which will include practical examples and best practices.

CONCLUSIONS

As the work of Save the Children, IBHI, UNICEF, and large numbers of individual directors, teachers, social workers, and pedagogues has shown, the engagement of the community is the key to keeping children in school. This requires changes in attitude rather than large sums of money. Instead of viewing children who are not in school as either a non-existent or an inevitable phenomenon, communities need to recognise these children as what they are under law – the responsibility of the entire community – and to work with them accordingly. Schools cannot do this alone, either. They require communal, institutional, and expert support and guidance.

Children who continue to slip through the cracks will potentially form a large obstacle for a country that dreams of rebuilding itself after war and becoming a member of the European Union to achieve its goals. There are, however, some simple steps local authorities can take to remove this obstacle from their path. If, for instance, they would follow the *Action Plan for School Enrolment and Completion*, they would have at their disposal some not-very-complex and generally inexpensive measures that might help them shove this obstacle aside more easily. They might also consider strengthening the legal framework governing compulsory education, particularly where the collection of information about who is enrolled in school and who is not is concerned as well as the kind of interventions needed to keep children in school. They could also profit from paying more attention to how to provide for those children – not to mention adults – whom the system has already failed. These children and these adults both represent a sad waste of potential as well as a potential reservoir of human capital that is now more than ever needed in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Community engagement should be enhanced by the urgent adoption of a community self-assessment tool for inclusion, such as the **Index for Inclusion**.
- Pre-school and life-long learning programmes should be developed and expanded, with a particular focus on adults who have not completed school and their own children.
- Education, health, and welfare authorities should try to ensure that fully qualified professionals are always available to assist children in need of counselling and support. This should be backed by strategies for preventive work, particularly modalities for regular inter-agency cooperation.
- Education authorities should work with universities on incorporating practical training on recognising and working with vulnerable children into the qualification courses of all school staff and should also ensure that school directors receive training in all available procedures and measures.
- Local authorities, in line with Bosnia and Herzegovina's international and domestic commitments, should ensure that the costs of textbooks and transport do not jeopardise access to education.
- The action plans for children with special needs, for the educational needs of Roma and members of other national minorities, and for school enrolment and completion should be fully implemented.

- In accordance with the *Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children*, school environments and curricula should be made welcoming to all children and their families.

APPENDIX A

The table below shows whether the law regulates the issue of transport, and who pays for it:

Area	Regulated by the law	Funds provided by/from
Canton 1	Yes, for pupils, residing 5 or more kilometres from the school they attend (Article 132, OG no. 5/04)	Not specified
Canton 2	Yes, for pupils residing more than 4 kilometres (Article 42, OG no. 4/04)	Municipal budget (Article 7, OG no. 4/04)
Canton 3	Yes, for pupils residing more than 4 kilometres from school (Article 12, OG no. 6/04)	School founder (Article 12, OG no. 6/04)
Canton 4	Yes, for pupils residing more than 5 kilometres from school (Article 9, OG no. 5/04)	School founder (Article 9, OG no. 5/04)
Canton 5	Yes, for pupils residing more than 4 kilometres from school (Article 12, OG no. 5/04)	School founder (Article 12, OG no. 5/04)
Canton 6	Yes, for pupils who live more than 4 km away from the school they attend (Article 87, OG no. 11/01)	Founder co-finances the transport costs, in accordance with criteria proposed by the Ministry (Article 87, OG no. 11/01)
Canton 7	Yes, for pupils who live more than 4 km away from the school they attend (Article 15, 53, OG no. 5/00)	Municipal budgets (Article 15, OG no. 5/00). The Government, upon the Ministry's proposal, will provide financial assistance to municipalities which cannot completely provide funds for financing the transport of pupils (Article 15, OG no. 5/00). Founder (Article 53, OG no. 5/00)
Canton 8	Yes, for pupils who live more than 2 km away from the school they attend (Article 7, 41, OG no. 6/04)	Municipal budget (Article 7, OG no. 6/04)
Canton 9	Yes, for pupils who live more than 2 km away from the school they attend (Article 14, OG no. 21/06 amending the Article 69, OG no. 10/04)	Founder in cooperation with the municipality (Article 14, OG no. 21/06 amending the Article 69, OG no. 10/04)
Canton 10	Yes, for pupils residing more than 4 kilometres from their nearest school (Articles 9 and 43, OG no. 12/04)	Municipal budget, for co-financing the transport costs (Article 9, OG no. 12/04) Municipality, for co-financing the transport costs (Article 43, OG no. 12/04)
Republika Srpska	Yes, for pupils who are transported to school from distance more than four kilometres (Article 145, OG no. 38/04)	Government (Article 145, OG no. 38/04)
Brčko District	Yes, for pupils (primary and secondary education) residing 3 or more kilometres from the school they attend (Article 4, OG no. 28/03) Law on Amendments and Addenda to the Law on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in Brčko District)	Competent authorities and school Founder (Article 4, OG no. 28/03 Law on Amendments and Addenda to the Law on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in Brčko District)