

## Chapter 1 – Bosnia & Herzegovina

The National Report on “Education Policies for at Risk Students and those with Disabilities” of Bosnia and Herzegovina describes the current status of special needs and inclusive education as well as the reform efforts underway. It mentions the specific situation of special needs and inclusive education in a society and identifies the problems in establishing countrywide valid standards due to a highly decentralised and scattered education system. Although essential progress has been made in the past three years with respect to education reform, Bosnia and Herzegovina has just begun to explore issues in relation to inclusive education. As is the case with all of the other reports presented in this book, this account covers the following sections: a short overview of the education system followed by chapters describing the legal framework policies focusing on special groups, statistics and indicators, the current situation of teacher training, pedagogy, curriculum and school organisation. The report also describes necessary goals and strategies of policy development to improve the situation for disabled and at risk children.



## Introduction

A crucial step in changing society's views towards inclusion of persons with special needs is the development of a positive attitude towards others, including respect of human rights (Ibralić, 2002). In addition, economic development, technical knowledge and expertise are also important factors. Until the middle of the twentieth century, children with special needs remained in segregated education systems that had the intention of “repairing” the child and preparing him or her to return to the community and society (Whittaker, 1995; in Ibralić, 2002). Students with impairments or disabilities were excluded from regular schools and the local community. It was taken for granted that the education system had no problems to overcome – it was rather the pupil who “needed to be changed” (Ornstein, 1998, p.151). However, the increasing democratisation of education throughout the twentieth century, with the new vision of education being “not a privilege for the few, but a right for all” (UNESCO, 2001), promoted the principle of inclusion as a basis for education systems and schools by meeting the needs of all pupils.

This chapter will describe the situation of persons with special needs in the complex context of post-war society in Bosnia and Herzegovina – still characterised by intensive divisions, struggles and prejudices that may continue to last for many years. In all state and local legal documents, from the constitution to other laws and regulations, non-discrimination is specifically highlighted. The constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Article 2, paragraph 4), states that all persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be free from discrimination based on gender, race, colour, language, religion, politics and other opinions, nationality or origin. However, policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed faster than implementation and, for the time being, discrimination towards persons of different ethnicities and persons of all ages with disabilities remains an important issue. Consequently, the development and democratisation of society have been delayed and barriers remain to further changes. Further efforts to reduce discrimination need to be made in the future.

Bosnia and Herzegovina was the battlefield of a cruel war. The war lasted three years and had devastating effects – the dissolution of families, of small communities and of the entire social structure. This destruction of an environment of tolerance and peaceful co-existence was one of the most tragic long-term consequences of the war. A society is infinitely more

difficult to reconstruct than roads or bridges. The destruction of the system of public administration and governance, the interruption in the development of knowledge and technological innovation and the brain drain of qualified workers and experts has had a tremendous effect. After seven years of reconstruction and recovery with broad international support, the country is still at a lower level of development than in earlier periods (Bosnia and Herzegovina Human Development Report, 2003, p.15). Before the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina, being part of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was a progressive state of medium development, with a gross domestic product of USD 2 450 per capita in 1990 and with developed capacities in the social and health sectors. Today one of the main challenges is re-building the economy. The UNESCO Report on *Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina Priorities for 2002* underlines how essential the economic situation is for the continuous respect of other fundamental civil and political rights and other freedoms, which can be threatened by a weak economy. Improving the economic situation will require European standards in education and training, economic growth, the creation of new jobs, and increased employment rates and living standards (Smajić, 2004). Poverty and unemployment still remain high. The unemployment rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently approximately 40%. A survey of unemployed persons shows that 21% of unemployed persons had completed secondary education. However, the disparity between the output of secondary vocational education and the requirements of the labour market is significant (Programme for Finnish Co-operation in the Education Sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2003-2006).

The loss of life and material devastation during the 1992-1995 war were enormous. According to the *Bosnia and Herzegovina Human Development Report (UNESCO)* of 2003, the number of dead or missing inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been estimated to be at about 258 000 – a loss of 5.9% of the pre-war population. Most of the health expenses in the country are still covered by emergency and humanitarian funds. War in Bosnia and Herzegovina stopped all development in social policies and led to a large number of invalids. Over 2 500 children are orphans and over 30 000 children lost one parent. Around 25 000 elderly people are in need of different kinds of care. One third of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina have the status of refugees in other countries and 70% of citizens have the status of displaced persons living under extremely difficult social conditions. Today, there are around 800 000 people in need of social assistance; 500 000 have monthly incomes lower than BAM 20 (approximately USD 10), while the estimated price of a typical basket of consumer goods needed for one month is around USD 112 per person. During the war, state

social policies completely ceased to function and at present, over 50% of institutions, including social centres, exist only in name. As an example of the overburdened social services, each social worker in the Federation is responsible for 13 000 citizens (UNESCO Human Development Report, Bosnia and Herzegovina Youth, 2000).

### **Socio-economic conditions and their impact on the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

In terms of education, Bosnia and Herzegovina is in a unique situation in that no overarching governmental ministry of education exists. The Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports only has a co-ordinating function amongst the various regions and administrations. Each Canton has its own ministry which is fully responsible for education policy and implementation. The Office of the Higher Representative (OHR) is the only body with a mandate and responsibility for policies throughout the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the education sector, the OHR has transferred co-ordination responsibility to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) which operates through six working groups. As a result the role of the international community in the field of education is very strong. According to the national report from the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2004), in the Republic of Srpska, the Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for monitoring policy, planning and implementation. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBH) it is the responsibility of education ministries in each canton. The Federal Ministry of Education has the role of co-ordinator of cantonal ministries. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska, formed a joint commission to promote standards in education. This basic principle of operation is also valid for the Higher Education Co-ordination Board. These two bodies act to facilitate the formulation of a coherent education policy framework.

The division into entities and cantons has led to differing legislation, differing languages of instruction, differing curricula and textbooks, differing modes of administration and differing standards. The burden on fiscal and human resources of this sort of reduplication of programmes, institutions and administrations is not sustainable. To some extent, the atomisation of policy left space for reinforcing ethnic divisions, *e.g.* textbooks have been used which contain material offensive to others. There is now a tendency towards finding common ground, both at the classroom level and on the level of textbook production, but also in terms of structural and systemic change. Much progress has been made recently in gaining

consensus from all ministries on the need to modernise the education system and bring it up to European quality standards. This policy is the most important trend of development.

Poverty can pose an important obstacle to achieving full access for all children to primary education, even though primary education is, for the time being, most resistant to poverty-related difficulties. The *UNESCO Bosnia and Herzegovina Human Development Report* (2003) points to a connection between socio-economic conditions and education matters. World Bank research has proven that poor populations have, on average, one and a half years' less education than wealthier groups. The urban population goes to school for an average of two years longer than the rural population. Furthermore, poverty strongly affects pre-school education. While an average of 4.3% of all children attend a pre-school institution, just 1.1% of children from poor families attend (even though they could be subsidised), compared to 5.6% from richer families. The data on primary school indicate that this level of education is the least subject to inequality based on gender, regional background (rural/urban) or household income.

Besides poverty, as stated in the *UNESCO Human Development Report*, national discrimination also contributes to the falling enrolment rate. In the years since the end of the war, the education sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been shaken by the “discovery” that children of returnees to areas in which they belong to an ethnic minority have been prevented from attending the nearest school. This has been accompanied by reminders of the past disregard of the enrolment of Roma children, as well as children with developmental and physical disabilities. When taken together, this constitutes a powerful obstacle to achieving full enrolment in primary schools. Although certain attempts have been made to overcome discrimination of this type and some results have been achieved, they have been moving slowly and are often the result of the efforts of only individual schools and teacher collectives.

## **Legislative framework**

### **Law on pre-school education in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

In the law on pre-school education, the main approach to schooling is outlined in Article 2 which states that scientifically grounded theories of education and child development should be applied in preschools, respecting

the level of development, individual needs and characteristics of the child. Article 12 states that “children with special needs are included in organisations of preschool education following programmes that are adjusted to their individual needs”. Furthermore, “individual programmes adjusted to individual needs and abilities shall be created for each and every child and the necessary developmental status (intellectual, speech and language) is to be determined”. Article 13 also includes the opportunity for children with special needs at the pre-school level to be educated partially or completely within special organisations for pre-school education using full developmental programmes, specialised developmental programmes, intervention, compensation and rehabilitation programmes and programmes of strengthening parental competencies as well as programmes for pre-school children if they do not attend any kind of pre-school education activities. Article 30 states that the government budget provides the financing for the organisation of activities within the pre-school education system as well as for financing pre-school education units within hospitals, departments for children with special needs within institutions for children with special needs, as well as for minority group children (Roma children).

### **Law on primary school education**

Each child shall have the right to access to education without discrimination on any basis whatsoever. Equal access and equal possibilities shall ensure equal conditions and opportunities for all as related to enrolment and the pursuance of education. An adequate education indicates an education process which shall provide the optimal development of a child’s innate potential, intellectual capacities and moral characteristics. Elementary or primary schools are institutions of primary education and upbringing established as “ordinary, parallel or special primary schools”. Article 5 defines the age of children in school (from ages 6-15). Article 5 also states that “Inclusion shall be understood as the inclusion of persons having difficulties in development and difficulties in both learning and general social integration not only in the upbringing-education system but also in everyday life”. Special education is defined as “education for pupils with special education needs when adequate education at ordinary schools cannot be provided”. Article 27 states that no school may decide upon children’s access to education based on race, sex, language, religion, political beliefs, national or social origin or any other basis. Primary school founders, together with the primary school itself “shall ensure the functional accommodation and facilities for undisturbed access to education and participation in the education process. The same applies for children with special needs, youth and adults”.

Education for children with special needs is specifically defined in the Law on Primary School Education in Articles 48-52. Article 48 states that the education of children with special needs is a “public priority and represents an integral and unique part of the education system”. The basic aim of education for children with special education needs is to offer the same opportunities for the enjoyment of benefits of education and participation in society based on the best interests of the child. Article 48 also states that “Education of children with special needs shall be carried out at ordinary primary schools, based on the principle of integrated education, which means that all pupils, including pupils with special needs, have the right to attend ordinary classes where children with special needs should be included into educational activities in each class to the highest possible degree”.

The education process for children with special education needs at an ordinary school can be realised in groups at school or through individual work with a teacher or specialist (*i.e.* a defectologist with a specialisation), at the recommendation of a commission or by consent of the Minister of Education. In addition, a special primary school can be an integral part of upbringing and education, which could cover, in addition to the fundamental upbringing and education, some other activities, programmes, diagnostic procedures, categorising methods and an early rehabilitation of children with impediments to development. For the sake of the children who are attending the special primary school, the elementary training and education can be organised in combination with a full day sojourn. Special schools are also responsible for the teachers’ professional training. They are also obliged to carry out support and information activities with parents of students with special needs in order to support pupils to return to and abide in the ordinary residential area school.

Article 49 states that any changes in the development of a pupil should be recorded and transitions from a special to an ordinary school, or vice versa, require the school to encourage the pupil to address the Commission for Capabilities Assessments. Based on the findings and opinions issued by the Commission, the pupil shall be registered for a primary school and the information is to be reported to the Minister of Education.

Article 50 explains that the school is responsible for creating adequate learning conditions for students with special needs in primary schools. Education goals shall be identified and described by the school in co-operation with the parents. The school is permitted, with prior consent from the Ministry of Education, to engage teachers and experts for implementing special programmes for pupils with special needs. The pupils with special

education needs have the right to be educated on the basis of an individual syllabus in which education activities and goals are defined. The parents shall be provided with a written report for each term containing the pupil's scores relating to the goals determined in the plan.

Article 51 allows institutions educating children with special needs to allocate budget resources to cover the costs of an individual programme or to adjust the school environment to the physical needs of a pupil. Article 52 entitles an ordinary school to co-operate with a special school for the purpose of educating teachers through seminars, workplace training, over short or extended periods, including for individual programmes and other activities, with a view of educating the pupil with special needs in the realisation of special programmes described under Article 48.

### **Law on secondary school education**

General provisions under Article 37 state that secondary schools shall educate “both ordinary and talented pupils and also pupils with special education needs”. In addition, according to Article 70 “the vocational secondary school educates ordinary pupils having disturbances in psychical or physical development”. These studies will be in accordance with adjusted programmes for vocations of the first, second and third degrees of vocational education from two to four school years.

According to Article 84, students with special education needs should be integrated into ordinary schools according to individual programmes adjusted to the pupils' needs, abilities and capabilities. Students with a severe disturbances and developmental difficulties can be educated partially or totally at the special upbringing education institutions when it is impossible to provide adequate education at an ordinary school.

In Article 86, it is stated that secondary schools are entitled to enrol students with special education needs based on a certificate of completed primary school but also on the recommendation of an expert from the Commission for Professional Orientation. Recently, there have been some changes in the legal provisions relating to the increasing number of general conventions on the rights of a child with special needs. Inclusion is now seen increasingly in the framework of a broad education system reform.

### **Legal protection for basic human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina no longer contains just two legal systems, but rather 13 given the division of the Federation into

cantons. This involves a variety of regulations from one canton or one entity to another and also a certain legal insecurity. According to the *UNDP Human Development Report*, the only player that is entitled to take concrete actions throughout the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the United Nations High Representative, whose competencies are not clearly defined. Under the provisions contained in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitution under Article 2 “the highest level of internationally recognised fundamental human rights and freedoms (based on international standards such as the 1950 European Convention on the Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms) shall be directly applied in the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina”. All persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina are subject to human rights and freedoms, including the right to education. (Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Article 2; Constitution of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chapter 2, Article 2; Constitution of the Republic of Srpska, Article 38). In this somewhat unusual way of implementing an international legal document, Bosnia and Herzegovina undertook the application of the provisions of the European Convention, despite not being a member of the Council of Europe at that time.

### **Overall law on elementary and secondary education**

For a number of reasons, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s official policy has not been able to sufficiently influence the critical situation facing education. Laws that were in force within the previous system of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina have regulated the education of children with special needs or “children with psychical and physical disturbances” (terminology used in previous education laws). In certain regions, some of these laws are more or less still in use. However, the newest *Overall Law on Elementary and Secondary Education* (Official gazettes, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 18/03) has stated that:

Regular primary school is supposed to educate children without psychical and physical difficulties, but also children who experience psychical and physical difficulties. Regular classrooms (grades 1-8) should include children with special needs and provide them with individual education programmes in subjects where they are encountering difficulties (language, literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology). These classrooms should have not more than 25 children.

## Policy review focusing on special groups

While no accurate data exist, the *Bosnia and Herzegovina Human Development Report* estimates the number of persons with disabilities at close to 10% of the total population. Persons with special needs are often isolated by the poor quality and quantity of support services, which in turn can affect their already vulnerable psycho-social condition. According to a Statement by NGOs about the rights of children in Bosnia and Herzegovina, children with special needs are the group of people who are most discriminated in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. The state has not systematically protected their rights, which has negative influences on persons with special needs and their access to services. Resolving these problems requires an interdisciplinary approach. Indeed, this is not just a health-sector issue touching on disability prevention and treatment, but also a problem of social welfare, education, lifelong learning and vocational training.

### Plans for education reform

Overcoming any type of discrimination and segregation is one reason for inclusive education today. Though changes have occurred in many parts of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in “special education” there has been some reluctance. In general, the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina has fallen behind the rest of the Europe. Reform is not only necessary but also imperative in order to improve the quality of education and the lives of many young people. The reform towards better and more satisfying futures for our youth demands the fulfilment of a number of prerequisites for successful inclusion and the provision of quality education. The include changes in legislation, improved funding and other economic inputs, qualified staff and respect for social and cultural diversity.

An education system that divides and segregates children is unacceptable. Our education system should enable children to respect and cherish the precious cultural diversity that makes Bosnia and Herzegovina unique. In the *Basis for the Educational Policy and Strategic Development of Education in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2001), it is stated that the official curriculum is characterised by overloaded contents and outdated teaching methods, and learning is based primarily on teaching and memorising of facts. According to Smajic (2004) education reform should end segregation and discrimination through education, and encourage children with special needs, returnees, Roma children and others at risk to participate together with other children in regular educational settings.

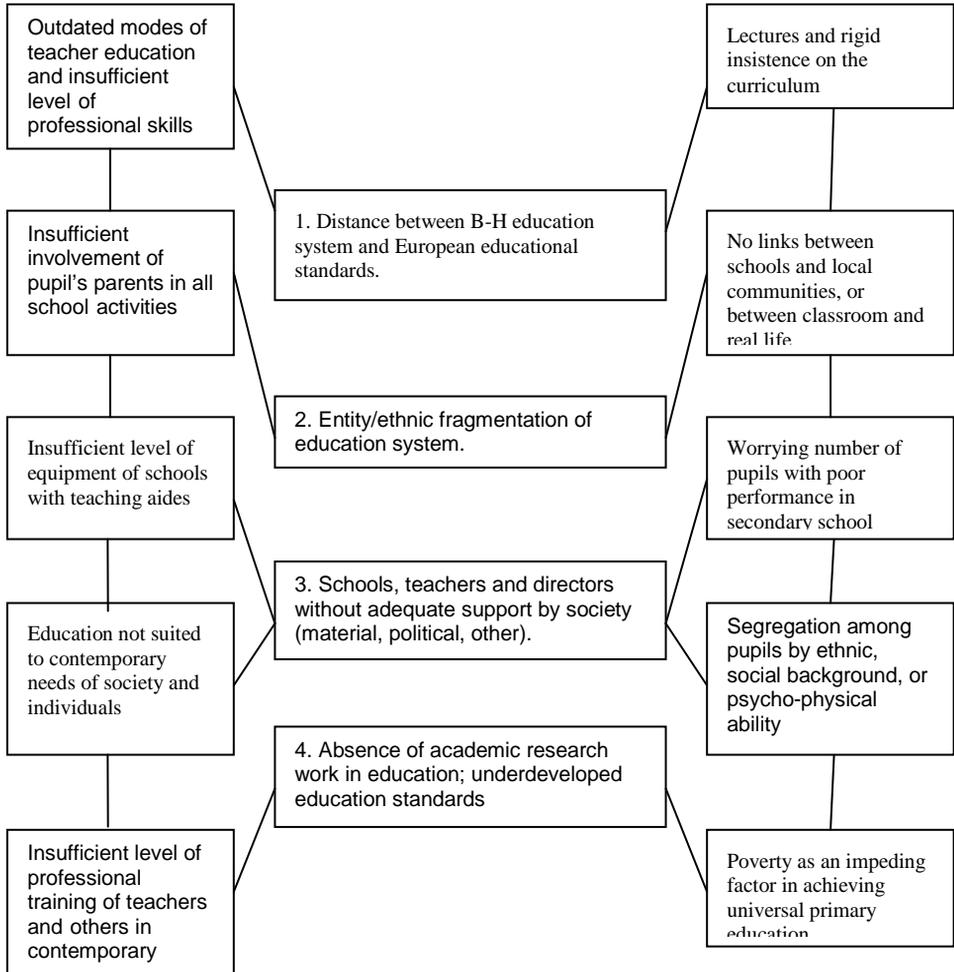
The war and the subsequent destruction of the education system made education reform almost impossible. As a result, most of the characteristics of the schools in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have not changed at all. There remains a collectivist approach to education, *i.e.* the same goals for all pupils irrespective of their talents, the same education programme content and a single prescribed textbook. Blackboards and chalk are the basic equipment and discipline is the guiding principle. Moreover, the latest war caused a fragmentation of the education system across jurisdictions, national divisions into three separate curricula, segregation of pupils, dualism and a pronounced discrepancy between education goals and targets and ethnic and religious enmity amongst pupils. All of these factors are clearly unacceptable in terms of democratisation of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Several issues raised in the *Bosnia and Herzegovina Human Development Report* deserve to be mentioned here. Primary schools seem to be unprepared to open their doors to marginalised groups of children. Pupils with developmental difficulties are systemically isolated and marginalised. Such children, if they receive any education at all, are educated in specialised institutions. Officially, only 0.4% of children with difficulties in their development go to school (some authors estimate 0.8%). Roma children, poor children and children of ethnic minorities find themselves in a similar situation. With no sensitivity to these issues and with little preparedness in how to tackle this kind of problem, the dominant attitude is that everyone should be educated in his or her “own” culture, language and history – a situation that is predisposed to the development of conflict. This usually results in a situation whereby children belonging to a minority are required to learn according to the majority’s language, culture and history. With regard to children with special needs (various developmental or physical challenges), the dominant approach remains that of keeping those with similar developmental difficulties or physical disabilities together.

In addition, teachers are still insufficiently trained to recognise the individual needs of particular pupils and do not develop the curriculum in a manner so as to allow talented children to learn at a different pace. Moreover, special education needs of students are still not recognised, resulting in a failure to meet the fundamental requirements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the World Declaration on Education for All (1990) and the Salamanca Action Framework (1994), which specifically insist on education for all children in their local school, in an unrestrictive environment and in conditions that will meet their needs.

The education of future primary school teachers is still carried out in a traditional fashion, with lectures and a small number of practical exercises. Even though some changes have been made, they tend to be formal only, rather than essential or qualitative – such as the transition from two-year to four-year terms. The permanent education and continuous professional training of teachers still lags behind contemporary needs and requirements. The lack of expertise is more pronounced in remote, rural and suburban schools, compared to schools located in urban centres. In principle, the further away a school is from the urban, political, and cultural centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the lower the level of its staff profile will be. Bosnia and Herzegovina also lacks a sufficient number of educators trained to work with children with special needs. There is a growing need for almost all teachers to undergo additional training for innovations in education work (*i.e.* individualisation in education, interactive learning and teaching, education inclusion, partnership with parents, development of a democratic environment in schools).

Figure 1.1 **Diagram of the situation of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the beginning of the 21st century - qualitative assessment**



Source: Human Development Report, 2003 in Smajić, 2004

### Education for all without discrimination or prejudice

The first strategic aim of education reform is to enable all children to have high quality education in integrated multicultural schools at all levels,

free from political, religious, cultural and other prejudices and discriminations.

### ***Right to education of returnee children***

Considering the increased number of families returning to their pre-war homes, as well as the problems of inclusion of returnee children into the education system, education ministers signed a “Provisional Agreement on Meeting Essential Needs of Returnee Children” on 5 March 2002. The aim of this agreement is to increase the enrolment of returnee children in schools throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in places where returnees belong to minority groups. A co-ordination board comprised of all education ministers was formed to ensure the implementation of the provisional agreement. Results show an increased number of returnee teachers and teachers belonging to ethnic minorities and 25 schools with alternative curricula chosen by parents. The number of returnee students reached over 27 000 in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and over 6 200 in Republic of Srpska. The national composition of school boards has been harmonised with the national composition in schools and inter-entity review of textbooks has been conducted – aimed at the removal of offending content. Criteria for school names and symbols have been developed and the number of pupils transported to school in another canton has decreased in four cantons, but increased in two (Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2004).

### ***Education needs of Roma and other national minorities***

Almost no Roma children attend higher classes of both primary and secondary schools. It is estimated that 80% of Roma children do not attend schools. The main reasons for this situation are poverty, discrimination, lack of confidence in authorities, distinct tradition and customs, language, war and resettling. In mid-February 2004, all education ministries of Bosnia and Herzegovina signed an “Action Plan on Roma and Other Ethnic Minorities’ Education Needs” which provides funds at municipal level for education of Roma children. Analyses show that poverty of the population is the core reason for their inability to attend school (Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2004).

### ***Children “at risk”***

At risk children may have temporary or life-long needs because of social, emotional, economic, political or other conditions. This term does not only refer to children who have impairments, but also to other children with

different types of disabilities. According to the available data from the Federal Institute of Statistics in 2002, around 3 720 children do not have parents. These children are considered tremendously vulnerable and at high risk for behavioural and emotional difficulties during their development. Within this population, around 1 067 (28.68%) children are without both parents, 97 (2.60%) children are of unknown parentage, 649 (17.47%) are abandoned children, 1 482 (39.83%) children have parents who have lost their parental rights and 425 (11.42%) children have parents prevented from performing their parental duties. The majority of these children are placed in foster families (2 700 children). 1 004 children are in special institutions and 16 children are in boarding houses.

In addition, according to the data of the Federal Institute of Statistics from 2001, the following groups of children are considered to be at risk as they are living in extremely difficult situations: children suffering from extremely difficult family situations (29 962), children abused and neglected in the family (269), educationally deprived and neglected children (628), vagabond children (176), children who beg (91), children who were formerly engaged in prostitution (24) and children who engaged in criminal actions (674). According to the Federal Institute of Statistics (2004) in 70.01% of cases, extremely bad relations with parents were mentioned as a reason for their behaviour – alcoholism in the family (19.7%), financial problems (41.4%) and prohibitions by parents (27.1%).

## **Definitions of special needs and special education needs**

Definitions of different difficulties, or special needs, given within the “Rulebook on Detection, Assessment, Classification and Evidencing Children and Young People with Psychic and Physical Disturbances in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (1975, most recently 1986) lag behind current international definitions. Persons with special needs are divided into the following categories: persons with visual impairments, persons with hearing impairments, persons with motor disabilities, persons with mental retardation (mild, moderate, severe or profound), persons with combined difficulties and persons with speech and language difficulties.

As the heterogeneity of society becomes more recognised, the terms that are used to describe its diversity become the focus of intensive debate. This applies to both concepts that are associated with visible markers of diversity such as race or ethnicity (Ryan, 1999) and to concepts that are associated with changing views on diversity such as handicap and disability (Corbett 1995, 1998 in Fredrickson and Cline 2002:5). “Special needs” may be of many kinds: disabled and gifted children, street and working children,

children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups (Salamanca statement, 1994). “Special needs”, though not a legally defined term in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is generally used to refer to the needs of pupils from particular social groups whose circumstances or backgrounds are different from most of the school population (*i.e.* children whose families are homeless or children whose language spoken at home differs from the language of instruction at school). The needs of these groups of children are likely to require special consideration by their schools. Sometimes the term “special needs” is used to refer to “special education needs” and this may cause confusion since individuals from groups that have special needs may or may not also have special education needs.

In legal terms, children are said to have special education needs if they require special education provision because they have greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children their age. This could be because they suffer from a disability that prevents them from making use of the education facilities generally provided for children of their age. However, a child should not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or medium of communication of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught (Smajić, 2004). In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the term “special education needs” is related primarily to children with different disabilities such as mental retardation, physical, hearing, visual and multiple impairments, speech and language difficulties. A similar situation exists in neighbouring Croatia. In the legislation and education documents of Croatia the term, “children and youth with developmental difficulties” is still in use (Ibralić, 2002.). Special education needs differ according to general psycho-physical characteristics, as well as in relation to important methodological aspects of teaching.

One of the best definitions in Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning school-age children with developmental difficulties is given by Stančić (2000, p. 37-41): “children and young people with special education or rehabilitation needs are those who, in order to reach their optimal level of abilities and other social or positive personality characteristics, need specifically adapted, individualised conditions and activities”. Igrić (2001:20-25) states that “children with special needs are those who experience difficulties in social integration because of different psychical or physical conditions such as mental retardation, autism, specific learning difficulties, visual, hearing, motor impairments, chronic diseases and/or multiple impairments”.

There are two conceptualisations of the nature of learning difficulties: *individual differences* (between children) and *environmental demands* (placed on an individual, which exceed their current capabilities). The causation of individual differences is within the child and may be *biological* (profound hearing loss, CP), *behavioural* (the length of time the pupil can stay engaged in learning activities) or *cognitive*, related to their ability to solve problems (poorly developed language skills or low socio-emotional skills). *Environmental demands* are situation-centred rather than person-centred. Proponents hold that special education needs “can only be defined in terms of the relationship between what a person can do and what a person must do to succeed in a given environment” (Deno, 1989 in Fredrickson and Cline 2002:8). The assumption is that a child’s current attainments reflect the nature and quality of previous learning experiences and the child will be able to learn when teaching contents and methods are adjusted to his or her individual needs and personal interests (Smajić, 2004).

### **Classification in Bosnia & Herzegovina**

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the procedure for categorisation and assessment of the competence of people with difficulties in their development is initiated by social protection services at the level of municipalities (cantons). The process can begin *ex officio* or upon the request of parents or guardians, health, education, social or other organisations aware of the condition of the person with difficulties in its psycho-physical development. The “Commission for Categorisation and Assessment of the Competence of People with Difficulties in their Development” are most commonly established in cantons, while the second instance commissions are at the level of the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This commission assesses the capacity of people with difficulties in development, under criteria that determine procedures of detection, assessment of ability, classification and registration of children and their physical and mental development. The aim is special protection, education and life-skills training.

The commission consists of six members: a clinical psychologist, a paediatrician or school physician, a neuro-psychologist, two special education teachers (one of whom specialises in work with children with mental retardation and the other specialising in work with children with speech and language difficulties) and a social worker. If a party (child or parent) is not satisfied with the finding of the commission in the first instance, they can address the second instance that reviews the findings and passes the final decision. In accordance with the *Law on Amendments to the*

*Law on Child Welfare* in the Republic of Srpska, these children are placed in a special protection category in comparison to other categories of children. These children acquire the right to a supplementary welfare allowance regardless of their financial status and the order of birth.

## **Regular and special schooling**

Different approaches to the issue of regular and special schooling in Bosnia and Herzegovina exist (UNESCO, United Nations Teacher Project of Development, 2002, Human Development Report, 2003). Education for the majority of children with special needs still takes place in special schools or special classrooms within regular schools. Placing groups of children together who are thought to have similar needs results in their segregation from other pupils their age, which can be stigmatising and can restrict access to important education opportunities. By contrast, inclusion demands that schools change by adapting curricula, methods, materials and procedures to become more responsive to children.

According to the new *Overall Law on Primary and Secondary Education*, special classrooms previously attended by children with special needs will gradually decrease in number as those children will be included in the regular inclusive education system. Special schools and institutions have so far been independent and separated from the regular education system while following a special curriculum. Some schools will still have special classrooms to be attended by children with moderate mental retardation, as well as children with combined difficulties who encounter special difficulties in following the curricular content offered by the school. Children with average intellectual abilities who also have visual impairments (blind and low vision), hearing impairments and motor impairments require individually adapted programmes, but children with mental retardation attend the school according to a special programme. Children with severe mental retardation may not be included in any kind of education. Since the law does not consider these children as “educable” but “trainable”, these children have been placed, often for their entire lives, in large institutions (asylums). However, it is foreseen that the number of these institutions will decrease due to the redirection of children with special needs into regular education settings.

## **Inclusive education**

Inclusive education is one of the key elements of education reform that will enable all children to attend regular schools, notwithstanding their

physical, intellectual, social, emotional and other characteristics. Administrators and teachers should receive the training and help they need to make this the best option. Furthermore, early identification and intervention, curriculum-based assessment, ongoing assessment of a pupil's progress and programme effectiveness, and strong partnerships with parents are the prerequisites for the success of all children in a regular education environment. The inclusion option signifies the end of segregating organisation of special education, but not the end of necessary supports and services that must be provided in integrated classrooms.

Every child has unique characteristics, interests and learning needs and therefore if the right to education is to mean anything, education systems should be designed and education programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs. (UNESCO, 1994:8)

Inclusion enriches experiences and humanity and offers opportunities of decision-making and responsibility to every person equally. It helps children from regular classrooms to develop understanding towards pupil diversity, promoting mutual respect and friendship. Not every child learns, grows and develops at the same speed and in the same manner, nor does every child need the same approach. Being aware of these issues as well as of current trends in special needs education, authorities at the national and federal government levels – with the support from NGOs and the international community – initiated discussions aimed at making schools more effective in terms of the numbers of pupils completing school and the support of those who encounter difficulties during schooling.

Smajic (2004) states that even though inclusion, from the perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina, might be considered idealistic and unrealistic, it certainly has full justification as an advanced perspective for the future, “a perspective that does not claim special conditions for ‘special persons’”. Research conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has shown that a great number of children attending regular primary schools will need support while participating in regular classroom activities (Human Development Report, Country Report, Programme for Finnish Co-operation in the Education Sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2003-2006).

Some cantons and the Brčko District have already made legal provisions that acknowledge inclusive education principles. In addition, there are several agencies engaged in securing better approaches to education by children of differing abilities. The Sarajevo University introduced postgraduate studies on inclusive education – a pilot project which supports the inclusion of children with lesser mental handicaps into the first and

second forms of primary schools. Sixteen municipalities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina undertook training for the education of consultants, linguistic trainers and teachers for primary schools to introduce inclusive education (Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2004). Positive examples of inclusive education exist in several schools throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, but these still represent a rather small percentage in comparison with all children who need to be included. In regular schools, one can clearly speak about the lack of good school management as well as about the lack of readiness of teachers and school staff to accept children with cognitive disabilities (mental retardation), motor difficulties, visual and hearing impairments. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the understanding that children with special needs should attend special schools is still a controversial issue. This area requires hard work and serious approaches to the process of raising public awareness and changing attitudes. The concept of special education should be seen as an integral part of an education system that offers the same educational and social opportunities for all children who attend schools all over the country without regard for their ethnicity, gender or ability level. Such a system ensures the responsive environment necessary for optimal development of the pupil with considerations to individual differences.

International regulations and documents (Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, Salamanca Statement, 1994) state that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. The inclusive approach to education was promoted in the form of different education projects and programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the training of special education teachers of tomorrow who will be responsible for providing adequate and quality support for all children with special needs attending the regular schools.

### **Facilitators and barriers of teaching/learning in inclusive classrooms**

In the current context, facilitators of the teaching-learning process and inclusion of children with special needs include individually tailored programmes, competent staff and teams of experts (psychologists, pedagogues, special education teachers, speech therapists, social workers and teachers). Other facilitators are a positive socio-emotional climate in the school and classroom and sufficient equipment and materials in the school and classroom. A meaningful curriculum is another positive element that will allow inclusive education to succeed. Education of teaching staff for all

categories of difficulties and impairments is essential. To date, the education of regular teachers does not consist of even general knowledge about children with special needs. Education and motivation of parents as partners will help support teachers and classrooms. Inclusion of persons with special needs in different school activities and understanding and encouraging the potential of pupils with special needs are other facilitators of inclusive education. Financial support for the schools is essential. Support by the local community in implementing inclusion in social and other events in the school are also important. International agreements such as the Convention on the Rights of the child help to encourage inclusive education implementation. NGOs and associations working on inclusion are also essential. In addition, the co-ordination of social, education and health providers (*i.e.* centres of social care and protection, health centres, centres for consultation and guidance for parents and children) helps inclusive education to succeed.

In general, there remains an insufficient awareness about inclusion, including the ways in which inclusion should be practised. Children with special needs are still not accepted by other children and their parents. Some parents may have prejudices related to the fear that the presence of children with special needs in the regular classroom could negatively influence the development of their own children. Such opinions can negatively affect the co-operation between the school and parents, consequently preventing children from inclusion. However, experience shows that parents of children in the regular classroom and children themselves can become more interested in inclusion of children with special needs when the nature and purpose of inclusion are explained to them.

Since inclusion signifies that support from both special and regular teachers is needed in an integrated classroom, all teachers should be prepared for inclusion during their studies, preventing many problems and misunderstandings concerning support for children with special needs. In addition, financial support pertaining to this issue is currently minimal and insufficient. In this regard, Bosnia and Herzegovina is still suffering from the consequences of the war (unemployment, low taxes, low budgets, etc.). Lesser-equipped schools lack materials for supporting the teaching/learning process of children with special needs. A team approach to these issues is not evident and negative attitudes remain. Furthermore, the “Commission of Assessment of Abilities of Children with Special Needs” lacks support. Many children included in regular schools do not have the necessary documentation, such as the results of assessment procedures and expert opinions. Even though this procedure has traditionally been seen as somewhat negative due to the diagnosing and consequent labelling of

children, the assessment procedure and opinions of the team of experts give necessary information about the child and help to organise the work with the child.

The curriculum, pedagogy and examinations can all create barriers as well. Persons with special needs are still often segregated in separate institutions and distanced from their families. Efforts have been made to end segregation, but the necessary supports and services that must be provided in inclusive classrooms should be continued. In general, the adaptation of schools and pedagogies is still incomplete as there is only a small professional staff and many are inadequately prepared for work with these children. The curricula on the national and school level are inappropriate for children with special education needs. A large number of pupils in a classroom can also create difficulties in providing an individual approach. In addition, schools are not physically prepared for children with special needs and architectural barriers remain a problem for children with motor difficulties.

Outside of schools, many institutions that were giving support to children with special needs and children living in poor conditions, children without parents, abused and neglected children, have been poorly functioning since the war or have closed. Some have been repaired and equipped thanks to donations by NGOs. However, many NGOs have since redirected funds to other regions of the world.

## **Projects of non-governmental organisations**

In 1996 after the war, various humanitarian organisations undertook projects to introduce the idea of inclusive education into Bosnia and Herzegovina. Non-governmental organisations have an important role in implementing modern European standards of education and in working with marginalised groups of children such as children with special needs. However, promising results from different projects conducted by UNESCO, UNICEF, Red Barnet, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and *Médecins du Monde* as well as by “*Duga*” (Rainbow) encouraged people to make additional efforts, introduce and represent the idea of inclusion in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the support of experts in the field of special education. *Duga* has been implementing a project called “Schooling adapted to children with special needs”. 1 708 students have been enrolled in 70 first grade classes in 16 primary schools. This project is a successful model for inclusion of all children in regular schools and can be considered to be the origin of expanded interest in inclusive education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (results of research done by

the *Duga* project will be presented in the statistics and indicators section below).

In order to support new education trends such as the inclusion of pupils with special needs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a group of experts from UNOPS, headquartered in Sarajevo from 1998/99, started the project “Integration, one possible experiment in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. The central aim was to include some children with special needs in regular kindergartens and in the lower grades, grades 1-3, of primary school (UNDP, Print-Project, 1999). However, gaining approval for the integration of children with special needs in regular kindergartens and schools encountered many obstacles in relation to cantonal ministries of education because this project required approval and additional resources for the employment of a special education teacher. However, the approval was granted by the cantonal ministries which assumed that children with special needs, especially slow learners, might be educated in regular educational settings according to regular curricula adapted according to individual needs. Other internationally supported projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina advocate and work on education inclusion and provision of proper education support for children with special needs in the regular education system. Specific interest in support and implementation of such projects was shown by UNESCO, UNICEF and Teacher Education and Professional Development (TEPD) and their programmes have influenced the awareness of pedagogues, special educators and parents.

These efforts resulted in positive outcomes related to the issue of inclusive education. However, when external financial and logistical support for projects has ended, local authorities have failed to continue supporting inclusive education due to a lack of finances.

### **Parents as partners in the process of inclusion of children with special needs**

According to the *Human Development Report of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2003), insufficient inclusion of parents in all trends and activities of primary schooling is one of the current problems. Schools still serve only those pupils who can adapt to the present education system, rather than adapting the system to the needs of pupils. Partnerships with parents and other members of local communities would be a significant step in ensuring that schools overcome this limitation and work to serve all children.

In recent research, parents of 55 organisations of pre-school education and 175 primary schools assessed their attitudes as significant partners in the process of inclusion. Parents influence their children's attitudes through their own outlooks. Thus if the parents have positive attitudes towards children with special needs, it is assumed that their children will have the same attitudes towards their peers or other children with special needs.

Another important influence of parents is in the encouragement of education for their own children. This is particularly true at the pre-school level. Pre-school organisations are mostly attended by children whose parents are well-educated (secondary school, college, university). In a survey of 1 123 parents of pre-school children, 53% had attended secondary school, 14% attended college and another 30% finished university and less than 2% of parents had no school or had only attended primary school. In another study of 4 292 parents of children in primary school, approximately the same pattern holds: 58% of parents attended secondary school, 10% college and 23% university. Only two parents had no education, 44 had an incomplete education and 314 had just a primary education (This data is from the aforementioned *Duga* study).

Larger towns have private kindergartens, attended mostly by the children of relatively affluent parents since these kindergartens have fees that are not affordable for all parents. Society is not offering opportunities to the numerous children of poor parents at the same levels. All children need pre-school education, which is of great importance for their general development, socialisation, knowledge and skills. Children whose parents are less educated, unemployed or with a low socio-economic status do not have the opportunity to attend pre-school organisations. These children might also be considered to be children with special needs.

## Statistics and indicators

The position of persons with special needs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the current definitions of difficulties in psychical and physical development, is defined by the *Rulebook on Detection, Assessment, Classification and Evidencing Children and Young People with Psychic and Physical Disturbances in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. The following rights of these persons are specifically mentioned in the rulebook: the right to an appropriate education; the right to professional qualification and employment; and the right to different kinds of social care. Internationally

comparable categorisations of children with special needs which are not included in the rulebook are the following: children with behavioural difficulties, autistic children, children suffering from ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), children with learning difficulties, children with difficulties in reading and writing, children with chronic diseases and talented/gifted children. For the time being, all of the categories of children mentioned above are included in the schooling system, both special and regular ones (depending on the readiness of the school to accept and support children with special needs), as well as by the system of social care.

According to the data from the Federal Institution of Statistics in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are currently around 6 119 children with special needs. The placement of these children rose slightly from 1 403 in 1998 to 1 488 in 2002. However, a considerable number of children with special needs remain who have no opportunity to fulfil their needs and enjoy their rights. A report from the Republic Institute of Statistics (2004) shows the following data from the year 2001 regarding persons with special needs in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina: children with visual impairments 143; children with hearing impairments 119; children with speech and language difficulties 92; children with motor impairments 197; children with mental retardation 870; children with behavioural difficulties 84; children with combined difficulties 300 and psychically ill children 135.

The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has three institutes for care of people with difficulties in physical and mental development located in Pazaric, Drin and Bakovici. Together they accommodate 1 067 people, 52 of whom are children. In the Republic of Srpska, there are homes for people with difficulties in physical and mental development in Prijedor and Jakeš. The number of institutionalised children with difficulties in their development, according to the report of the Public Fund for Child Welfare of Republic of Srpska is 845. The information from the Brcko District states that there are four registered cases of severe mental retardation and three cases of profound mental retardation. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the total number of children placed in institutions that take care of people with special needs stands at 46. In these institutions, a specific problem for children with special needs is separation from their parents. This problem occurred during the war and so far there has been no agreement on the method of return of children to the areas where their parents and relatives live (National Action Plan for Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2002-2010).

## Education services and statistics based on research by *Duga* and UNICEF

As mentioned earlier, one particularly successful project in Bosnia was funded by UNICEF and implemented by a local organisation called *Duga*, which has worked on the inclusion of children but also on detection, recognition and provision of treatment for children with special needs. In addition, much of the research in Bosnia and Herzegovina to identify the number of children with special education needs has been conducted by *Duga*. This research embraced 16 primary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a sample that included 1 772 pupils attending first grades in 2001/2002 school year and 195 pupils with special needs in the second grade in the 2002/2003 school year. 35% of these pupils followed a regular curriculum and 59% followed an adjusted curriculum. 6% of pupils attended special classrooms.

Some of the latest research of *Duga* and UNICEF from the 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 school years included 30% of pre-schools and 30% of primary schools throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the intention of investigating the attitudes of teachers, caretakers, pedagogues and parents with respect to inclusive education. Random sampling procedures were used for the purpose of this research. It embraced an equal number of schools and pre-school organisations in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Banja Luka and Mostar, including 55 preschool organisations and 175 primary schools. This research intended to include all educators (teachers, pedagogues, caretakers) from the selected schools. 15 000 questionnaires were printed out for parents of pre-school and school age children, caretakers, primary school teachers, pedagogues in pre-school organisations and schools, principals in primary schools and preschool organisations. Below are some of the results obtained from this research.

### *Pre-school education*

From 55 selected organisations of pre-school education, 4 940 questionnaires were returned completed. 651 children (13.17%) were recorded as having special education needs (students who were tested by the Categorisation Commission) and 793 (16.05%) have special education needs according to their caregivers' opinions.

The results of this research show that there are differences among the regions covered by this research in relation to the nature of difficulty as well as to the type of assessment. Of the total number of 4 960 questionnaires, 1 444 or 29.23% related to children with special needs. The greatest

percentage of children with special needs is found in the region of Tuzla (19.94%). The reason for such results could be that the region of Tuzla, both during and after the war, accepted a great number of refugees, including children coming from all other areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Children were from different backgrounds, many had no parents, were wounded or were returnees from abroad. A smaller percentage of children with special needs (around 3.94%) was found in Sarajevo, in the Banja Luka region (3.81%) and in the Mostar region (1.54%). None of the children attending pre-school organisations in the region of Sarajevo had registered or diagnosed special needs. This does not mean that there are no children with special needs but that there are no commissions for categorisation of children. All of the children are attending regular pre-school institutions. Caregivers and administrators have announced a larger percentage of children with psycho-physical difficulties than the number being officially categorised.

In pre-school institutions, the number of children with psycho-physical difficulties as assessed by caregivers and administrators was 793 (16.05%). Those children had special needs of various natures and came from different areas around Sarajevo. In Sarajevo, the total number of children with diverse special needs attending regular pre-school is 195 (3.95%), as identified by caregivers and administrators. Overall, there are 1 444 children with special needs attending pre-school institutions.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) focuses on the key areas of reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina such as: democratisation, legislation, education and the economy. The mission of OSCE to Bosnia and Herzegovina covers the entire territory. The following information was gleaned from regional OSCE centres located in Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo and Tuzla. Schools in some areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina have children with special needs whose diagnoses are confirmed either by official documentation (issued by the Commissions for Categorisation and Assessment of the Competence of People with Difficulties in their Development) or by the classroom teacher (who may not be sufficiently competent to identify special education needs children). If the child attends a special school, he or she has been documented as having disabilities. These data are reflected in the following tables.

**Table 1.1 Preschool age children with psycho-physical difficulties according to caregivers' assessment (A) or documentation (D)**

	Banja Luka		Regional OSCE Centres				Tuzla		Total	
	A	D	Mostar	A	D	Sarajevo	A	D	A	D
Cognitive Difficulties	5	6	2	8	25	0	14	26	46	40
Speech And Language Difficulties	29	5	3	1	6	0	282	257	320	263
Visual Impairments	13	6	2	2	10	0	32	28	57	36
Hearing Impairments	0	1	0	2	5	0	9	8	14	11
Chronic Diseases And Motor Impairments	2	2	2	1	17	0	7	4	28	7
Multiple Difficulties	3	1	5	2	25	0	2	1	35	4
Behavioural Difficulties	7	3	4	7	3	0	17	16	31	26
Epilepsy	0	2	0	0	4	0	6	4	10	6
Educationally Deprived Children	5	0	1	1	3	0	19	14	28	15
Abused Children	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Auto-aggressive Behaviour and Suicide Attempts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children With PTSD	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2
Returnee Children	2	6	4	5	38	0	4	27	48	38
Children From Minority Groups	2	4	2	4	15	0	0	1	19	9
Children From Incomplete Families	34	50	7	11	44	0	70	133	155	194
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>651</b>
In percentage of total school population	2.06%	1.74%	0.65%	0.89%	3.95%	0.00%	9.39%	10.55%	16.05%	13.18%

*Source:* Information supplied by regional OSCE centres in Banja, Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo and Tuzla

The number of children with special needs is greatest in the region of Tuzla (9.39%). Children with vision difficulties (57) were the most numerous, followed by children with mental retardation (46), speech and language difficulties (32) and chronic diseases and bodily impairments (28). None of the children were identified as abused or neglected, but considerable numbers of children were recognised as educationally deprived

(28). Another 31 children were identified as children with behavioural difficulties. From the data above, one can conclude that higher numbers of children are identified by caregivers and administrators as having special needs, compared to the number of children with documented special needs. One interpretation of the data is that Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have proper services for prevention, early detection and intervention that can introduce treatment at an earlier stage.

### **Primary schools**

According to data obtained by questionnaires from 175 primary schools, the number of children with documented special needs is 10 152. The number of children with special needs recognised by teachers or administrators is far greater (14 092).

**Table 1.2 Number of pupils in primary schools according to assessment by teacher/administrator (A) and according to documentation (D)**

	Regional OSCE Centres									
	Banja Luka		Mostar		Sarajevo		Tuzla		Total	
	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D
Cognitive Difficulties	201	109	132	11	306	67	504	329	1143	516
Speech and Language Difficulties	225	86	146	128	309	113	474	282	1154	609
Visual Impairments	96	236	143	150	124	82	369	268	732	736
Hearing Impairments	17	77	12	24	28	17	83	45	140	163
Chronic Diseases And Motor Impairments	66	79	65	32	129	68	209	197	469	376
Multiple Difficulties	51	22	31	14	37	23	122	112	241	171
Behavioural Difficulties	116	34	168	31	263	28	558	103	1 105	196
Epilepsy	9	34	13	4	39	29	45	58	106	125
Educationally Deprived Children	174	48	135	35	428	16	623	133	1 360	232
Abused Children	7	4	8	0	12	1	48	13	75	18
Auto-aggressive Behaviour and Suicide Attempts	1	0	0	0	3	1	13	25	17	26
Children With PTSD	34	11	14	0	204	1	375	105	627	117
Returnee Children	342	105	140	75	527	313	889	438	1 898	931
Children From Minority Groups	94	1 150	44	16	163	124	345	238	646	1 528
Children From Incomplete Families	817	1 097	495	229	1 182	1 410	1 885	1 672	4 379	4 408
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 250</b>	<b>3 092</b>	<b>1 546</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>3 754</b>	<b>2 293</b>	<b>6 542</b>	<b>4 018</b>	<b>14 092</b>	<b>10 152</b>
In percentage of total school population	8.71	11.97	9.11	4.41	13.44	8.21	12.18	7.48	11.32	8.16
Total students in primary education	25 827		16 969		27 927		53 719		124 442	

*Source:* Data gathered from official questionnaires sent to 175 primary schools

Again, official documentation results differ from those obtained by assessment from teachers and administrators. It is possible that teachers are

more sensitive to less visible difficulties, possibly due to lasting direct contact with children, in comparison to experts responsible for official categorisation of children whose contact with children is limited.

In addition, data differed across regions. In the Sarajevo region the number of children with special needs is high 3 754 (13.44%) compared to the Tuzla region 6 542 (12.17%), Mostar region 1 549 (9.11%) and in the region of Banja Luka 2 250 (8.69%). An alarming number of 623 educationally deprived children was confirmed in all regions as well as high numbers of children with behavioural difficulties (558) and 375 children with PTSD (post-traumatic-stress-disorder).

## Gifted and talented children

Around 2 237 (45.28%) gifted and talented children were found to be attending organisations for pre-school education. There are 48 622 (39.05%) children in regular primary schools who show special talents in different areas.

Table 1.3 Talented and gifted children - primary schools

	Primary Schools				
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	Total
Total Number Of Children	25 827	16 969	27 927	53 719	124 442
Sense of Practical and Manipulation Activities	376	857	1 105	2 040	4 378
Musically Talented	603	776	1 132	1 850	4 361
Art	766	904	1 368	1 996	5 034
Sports Skills	989	1 348	1 930	2 892	7 159
Talented for Social Science	480	815	1 170	1 412	3 877
Talented for Natural Science	540	862	1 341	1 608	4 351
Mathematically Talented	568	712	1 164	1 637	4 081
Talented for Technology	255	409	724	1 127	2 515
Talented for Languages	1 034	1 157	1 720	2 092	6 003
Gifted	1 036	892	2 486	2 449	6 863
Total	6 647	8 732	14 140	19 103	48 622
	25.74%	51.46%	50.63%	35.56%	39.07%

Source: *ibid*

According to this data, one can see that there are a great number of children who are talented in different areas. The talents are mostly related to the areas of sport, languages and art.

**Table 1.4 Talented and gifted children – pre-school level**

	Preschool Institutions				Total
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	
Verbal Abilities And Skills	74	98	14	126	312
Musical Talent	45	70	7	142	264
Art Creativeness	112	101	13	132	358
Sports' Abilities And Skills	105	145	27	197	474
Social Abilities And Skills	42	96	18	225	381
Manipulative Abilities And Skills	79	92	14	263	448
Total	457	602	93	1 085	2 237

*Source: ibid*

For this category of children and pupils with special needs, an educated school staff with the ability to provide adequate support is needed in addition to well-equipped schools (literature, material, laboratories). If the special needs of the child are not addressed properly, these could be reasons for behavioural difficulties.

### **Attitudes of teaching staff**

The research provided the opportunity for teaching staff to state their beliefs on the potential for success of children with special needs attending regular schools and classrooms.

Teachers' opinions showed that all children, to a certain extent, have a chance for quality education, depending on their intellectual abilities as well as the abilities of the teachers to address the special needs of these children. Those children might not be successful in reading, writing or mathematics, but they often show potential in other areas such as art, music, sport, etc. In addition, if the aims, goals and objectives of the education are adjusted to

the abilities, needs and interests of a certain child, the chance for success of every child with any kind of special need would be greater.

This research coincides with other research conducted worldwide showing that there are several factors influencing the acceptance and success of the child in the regular classroom. The attitudes of teachers are a factor in determining whether or not the child is going to succeed in attending regular classes. For example, negative attitudes might come from a lack of information about the characteristics of children with special needs, their weaknesses and their strengths. Other research on attitudes of staff towards children with special needs (Stephens and Braub, 1980) pointed to three variables in determining the acceptance of children with special needs: the teacher's belief that he or she is able to teach and support such a child; the belief that a child with special needs is able to become a valuable and contributing member of society; and the belief that regular schools should integrate children with special needs.

The attitudes of persons involved in the education process (teachers, caregivers, administrators, pedagogues, etc.) as well as those of the child and the children's environment (children without special needs, the parents of children and local community members, etc.) are the most significant influences since these persons directly determine the future of the child. The following tables give information about the education level of those persons working with children with special education needs.

### *Staff in the organisations of primary education*

**Table 1.5 Level of education of teaching staff (caregivers) in pre-school institutions**

Level Of Education	Regional OSCE Centres				Total
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	
Secondary School	63 24.05%	4 7.27%	13 20.63%	35 18.72%	115 17.67%
College	169 64.50%	44 80.00%	47 74.60%	134 71.66%	394 72.69%
University	30 11.45%	7 12.73%	3 4.76%	18 9.63%	58 9.64%
Total	262	55	63	187	567

Source: *ibid*

The majority of teachers have completed a post-secondary school (two years of study) education. A number of teachers (58) had a university degree.

**Table 1.6 Do pre-school teachers have any education about the field of special education during their regular studies?**

	Regional OSCE Centres				Total
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	
With training	67 25,6%	13 23,6%	18 28,6%	7 38%	1 29.81%
Without training	195 74,4%	42 76,4%	45 71,4%	116 62%	3 70.19%
Total	262	55	63	187	567

Source: *ibid*

Only 169 teachers (29.81%) answered that they had received education in special needs education during their regular studies. Another 398 (70.19%) did not receive any information on people with special needs or respective teaching methods.

60% of preschool teachers indicated that they teach children with special needs in their regular classes. They explained that their work with a child with special needs included the following activities: conversation, individual work (motivation, support in the socialisation process or communicating with other children), organisation of activities with other children, motivation through play, adjusting tasks, co-operation with relevant experts and parents and planning research activities. While working with children, the teachers had support provided by a principal, colleagues, pedagogues, psychologists, speech therapists and special educators.

*Regular primary school teachers – level of education*

Table 1.7 Level of education of primary school teachers

Level of education	Regional OSCE Centres				Total
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	
Secondary School	186	53	108	179	526
	18.39%	10.31%	14.17%	13.52%	14.57%
College	607	311	445	844	2207
	60.03%	60.50%	58.39%	63.79%	61.14%
University	218	150	209	300	877
	21.56%	29.18%	27.42%	22.67%	24.29%
Total	1 011	514	762	1 323	3 610

Source: *ibid*

The data on teachers' qualifications were of great importance for the interpretation of other data collected. The level of education directly correlates with the amount and the quality of information that teachers learn during their studies.

Table 1.8 Did teachers have any training on special education during their regular studies?

	Regional OSCE Centres				Total
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	
YES	348	163	307	413	1231
	33.82%	32.53%	39.87%	31.08%	33.92%
NO	681	338	463	916	2398
	66.18%	67.47%	60.13%	68.92%	66.08%
TOTAL	1029	501	770	1329	3629

Source: *ibid*

Results show that basic knowledge in the field of special needs education is not prevalent, with only minor exceptions around the Sarajevo region. During their academic education, almost 66% of teachers in regions other than Sarajevo did not receive any specific training.

**Table 1.9 Did teachers have an opportunity to attend upgrading programmes on special needs education?**

	Regional OSCE Centres				Total
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	
Yes	349	205	277	389	1 220
	33.79%	33.94%	35.70%	28.81%	32.42%
No	684	399	499	961	2543
	66.21%	66.06%	64.30%	71.19%	67.58%
Total	1 033	604	776	1 350	3 763

*Source: ibid*

Only 1 220 teachers (32.42%) answered that they had the opportunity to attend specific programmes to upgrade their knowledge of special education. Almost 68% were not involved in such programmes.

**Table 1.10 Teachers with and without children with special education needs in classrooms**

	Regional OSCE Centres				Total
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	
With	643	294	527	805	2 269
	68.77%	59.15%	69.89%	60.75%	64.63%
Without	292	203	227	520	1 242
	31.23%	40.85%	30.11%	39.25%	35.37%
Total	935	497	754	1 325	3 511

*Source: ibid*

The majority of teachers indicated that they have children with special needs in the classroom. However, it may be difficult to deduce any clear conclusions from data collected in this way since the questionnaire for teachers did not precisely define the term “children with special needs”. While commenting on children, teachers mentioned different terms such as “poor imagination skills”, “poor psycho-motor skills”, “learning

difficulties”, “inability to follow what is taught”, “difficulties in writing”, “severe difficulty”, “child from the special classroom”, “handicap”, etc. It was obvious that teachers also include children with learning difficulties under the term “children with special needs”.

Teachers explained that working with children with special needs includes individual work with children (683); additional work (512); giving more attention to children (501); adjusted curriculum (432); additional hours (196); individualised approach (108); lessening the requirements and adjusting the criteria of evaluation (102); additional efforts and conversation (97); additional explanations or appraisals (80); adjusted (easier) tasks (71); involving the parents (70); mutual support of pupils (12); music therapy, painting, etc. (11); the same characteristics of work as with other children (10); granting the marks (10); continuous supervision (10); help from an assistant (1); and use of special material (1).

### Support offered to teachers working with children with special needs

This question inquired as to the scope and modalities of expert support to teachers working with children with special needs: special educators, speech therapists, pedagogues, psychologists and other professionals. For unknown reasons, this question was answered by only 75% of teachers within the study.

Table 1.11 Support offered to teachers working with children with special needs

	Regional OSCE Centres				Total
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	
Yes	429	109	326	475	1 420
	50.53%	47.03%	77.25%	46.16%	52.51%
No	42	2	9	5	12
	49.47%	52.97	22.75%	53.84%	47.79%
Total	849	404	422	1 029	2 704

Source: *ibid*

The table above shows that teachers from Sarajevo received significant support (70%), compared with other regions where lesser support was offered – Tuzla (46%) and Mostar (50%).

Table 1.12 Experts offering support to teachers

	Regional OSCE Centres				Total
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	
Pedagogues	351 57.92%	33 38.82%	115 41.82%	350 54.77%	849 52.90%
Special educators	136 22.44%	17 20.00%	85 30.91%	182 28.48%	420 21.17%
Psychologists	48 7.92%	12 14.12%	11 4.00%	14 2.19%	85 5.30%
Principals	23 3.63%	0 0.00%	8 2.91%	42 6.57%	73 4.55%
Parents	22 3.63%	23 27.06%	29 10.55%	27 4.23%	101 6.29%
Colleagues	26 4.29%	0 0.00%	27 9.82%	24 3.76%	77 4.80%
Total	606	85	275	639	1 605

Source: *ibid*

As shown here, pedagogues are the most common type of expert offering support to teachers. Special educators are next in prevalence, followed by psychologists. Other community members also support the teacher. Parents are most active in Sarajevo.

Table 1.13 What level of education is most adequate for the inclusion of children with special needs?

	Responses of parents of children in pre-schools					Responses of parents of children in primary schools				
	Regional OSCE Centres					Regional OSCE Centres				
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	Total	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Tuzla	Total
Preschool education	198	176	145	218	737	617	250	520	841	2 228
	49.50%	52.69%	45.31%	40.98%	46.47%	38.06%	29.69%	40.63%	38.86%	37.72%
Primary schools	131	108	99	175	513	654	433	506	856	2 449
	32.75%	32.34%	30.94%	32.89%	32.35%	40.35%	51.43%	39.53%	39.56%	41.46%
Secondary schools	71	50	76	139	336	350	159	254	467	1 230
	17.75%	14.97%	23.75%	26.13%	21.19%	21.59%	18.88%	19.84%	21.58%	20.82%
Total	400	334	320	532	1 586	1 621	842	1 280	2 164	5 907

Source: *ibid*

The majority of parents stated that pre-school education is the level at which children with special needs can be successfully included. Parents of children attending primary schools stated that children with special needs could successfully be included at the primary school level (2 449). Representation of such opinions was the greatest in the Tuzla region (856).

### Situation in the Tuzla canton

The biggest number of children with special needs was found in the region of Tuzla. A considerable number of refugees have found a temporary home in this region. Many children who were suffering due to war (children with emotional disturbances, post-traumatic stress disorder, children without parents, neglected and abused children, children who have experienced the most negative and difficult situations of the war, etc.) have found a home in and around Tuzla. Those children were enrolled in neighbouring schools – a type of inclusion on a small scale. However, schools were unprepared without adequate material, equipment or training and therefore many children received education inadequate to their needs, abilities and interests. In addition, teachers were in a difficult position because they were ill-

prepared to address the needs of children with special needs in a proper manner or to offer equal attention to the other children in the classroom at the same time.

**Table 1.14 Overall numbers of children with special needs (regular schools only)**

	Total number of pupils	Sensory motor difficulties	Mental retardation	Other difficulties	Total
Primary schools	53 590	213	180	75	469
Secondary schools	25 201	132	17	31	181
University		0	0	0	0
Total	78 791	345	197	106	650

*Source: ibid*

A considerable number of children with special needs have been found in primary schools (469), fewer children with special needs have been found at secondary-school level (181) and no young people with special needs attend university level.

As mentioned earlier, the number of children with special needs attending special schools was not included in the tables above. These institutions educate children with mild, moderate and severe mental retardation and children with combined difficulties. While working with these children, teachers use different methods, ways of work and materials. Recently lectures have been used less, giving more priority to individual work, work in pairs and group work. Teaching content is very often subject to individualisation and adaptation according to abilities and overall characteristics of pupils. The main principle used in teaching is the principle of concretisation and individualisation. In recent years, these kinds of institutions have been criticised by different international and local non-governmental organisations, mostly because of their segregating nature. However, these institutions might be useful if organised in a proper way (*i.e.* in the form of resource centres or consultation and guidance services, etc.).

## School organisation

The *Law on Primary School Education* (Article 31) states that “Primary schools shall organise education according to the curriculum prescribed by the Ministry, which is in accordance with the national curricula valid for

Bosnia and Herzegovina (standardised curricula), with suggestions given by the Institution of Pedagogy”. School has to be based on the principle of quality education and success for all. The curriculum must be accurately targeted at the students. Goals of the school system should be based on assumptions concerning the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the provisions of skills and abilities. The education programme should consist of everyday living skills as well as academic subjects (mathematics, languages, etc.). The school year lasts 38 working weeks, divided into classification periods. The teaching process is organised on the basis of five days per week and a school hour lasts 45 minutes.

The *Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, which took effect in July 2003, introduced obligatory nine-year primary education (Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2004). The education process in Bosnia and Herzegovina includes nearly 610 000 pupils and students. About 367 000 pupils attend 1 836 primary schools. More than two thirds are in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (66.9%), 2% in the Brčko District and the remaining 31% belong to the Republic of Srpska (RS). In addition, about 173 000 pupils attend 295 secondary schools (Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2004). Secondary education is not obligatory.

Pre-school education does not have the same status as primary education. The character of financing and monitoring of pre-school institutions shows that these schools are social programmes more than formal education programmes. The pre-school education budget is often at symbolic levels used only for *ad hoc* annual interventions. The overall number of pre-school institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina is less than 200, including just 4.5% of pre-school age children. The absence of pre-school institutions in rural areas is of particular concern, as is a lack of private initiatives (Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2004).

Several estimations on net primary school enrolment rates range from 93% to 98%, though the average enrolment rate is considered to be 85%. Problems include insufficient inclusion of children from vulnerable groups in primary education, such as the Roma population, girls in some rural areas, refugees and displaced persons (including children who left school during the war and who have not returned to the education process). Other problems of primary education are the small size of schools, widely varying teacher to pupil ratios and inadequate material provisions for teachers. In addition, outdated learning methodologies as well as inadequate education for teachers are also significant issues.

The enrolment rate for secondary school is 72%. However, the enrolment rate for poorer children is as low as 57%. The ratio between general and vocational secondary schools is 20 to 80 and secondary vocational schools are thought to be overly specialised (Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2004). Seven universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina include 95 higher education institutions with 70 000 full-time students. Five universities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihać, Mostar East University and Mostar West University) include 64 faculties and also academies and colleges. The enrolment rate is 25% of persons of university age.

### **Implementing inclusion: a model regular primary school in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Below is a detailed description of one model primary school that has already opened its doors to children with special needs. This is a unique example of a school entirely dedicated to the mission of inclusion.

“S.H.” is a regular primary school located in the suburban area of Tuzla, which was inhabited by refugees from the area of Zvornik, Bratunac, Vlasenica, Srebrenica, and Bijeljina during and after the war. Due to the arrival of refugees in the area near the “S.H.” school, the number of pupils suddenly increased from 400 pupils before the war to over 1 500 pupils. Consequently, the number of pupils per class has increased. However, difficult conditions for work were caused not just by the increased number of pupils, but also by the low socio-economic status of parents and the low level of parental education. Children were not accustomed to working, learning or interacting with one another. The teachers noticed that many children were having difficulties in following educational activities. The reasons varied from mild mental retardation, short attention spans or hyperactivity, to inappropriate living conditions due to poverty and different emotional difficulties caused by war-related stress (over 300 children lost one or both parents during the war).

After their categorisation, many children were recommended to continue schooling in a special primary school, located in the centre of Tuzla city quite far from “S.H.” primary school. But, due to the location of the school and the low incomes of the parents who could not pay for transportation from home to school, the attendance of these children at school was questioned. As the option to attend the special school seemed unrealistic, the choice was between quitting school altogether or continuing at the neighbouring “S.H.” primary school. The parents, teachers and school authorities chose to include these children and that was the first time a

regular primary school opened its doors to children with special needs. Since then, the “S.H.” school is working on restructuring many school features (policies, physical infrastructure and teaching strategies) in order to create a better place to grow and thrive for all children. In spite of the many difficulties the school was facing due to the war and the post-war situation, school authorities were, from the very beginning, working on conducting interactive learning and integration of children with special needs in regular classrooms. The new strategies built on partnerships with parents and worked towards supporting children’s independence. Together with parents and pupils, the school succeeded in establishing a developmental plan for the future which would improve the school and help to implement European standards in schooling for all children.

All children with special needs that are attending this school are included in regular classroom activities. These children have been diagnosed as children with mild mental retardation, Down’s syndrome and other combined difficulties. In order to monitor improvements of these children, a process of re-categorisation is conducted every second year. The diagnoses are approved after each re-categorisation and the child is usually assigned their schoolwork according to a reduced curriculum (“special programme”).

Today the “S.H.” primary school is educating 17 children with special needs from grades 2-8. Five children with special needs are now in the first grade and they are being monitored in order to see whether or not they are able to follow regular educational activities. Full inclusion is represented in the lower grades, from 1-4. In the higher grades (from 5-8), children are partially included. The reason for “semi-inclusion” lies in the difference between the curriculum for regular school and the curriculum for special schools. The difference is in the exclusion of children with special needs from such subjects as physics, chemistry, biology, geography and history. The subject “Nature and science”, usually taken in lower grades, replaces these courses and includes information from all of the above-mentioned subjects without going deeply into the subject. Other subjects like mathematics, language, music, sports, art and crafts are followed by all students.

Classrooms including children with special needs are provided with an extra teacher, who supports and helps children with special needs while the other teacher works with other children in the classroom. Classrooms are not well equipped since the economy of the entire country influences the finances that are at the disposal of the school. However, when entering the school, one can see that the walls are covered by children’s art, craftworks and models ensuring a warm and stimulating climate. The specific

classroom (as well as the majority of other classrooms in the school) also offers a friendly and motivating atmosphere with walls covered with drawings, pictures and photos. Teaching materials are placed in the classroom so that children have easy access to them. Tables are organised in small groups all around the classroom so that nobody is excluded and all pupils have an opportunity to look at each other. Apart from the efforts made to ensure quality education as much as possible in the given context, great attention is paid to the process of socialisation of children with special needs. The process of socialisation has shown the greatest improvement, especially when it comes to children with hyperactivity.

## Pedagogy

Deciding *what* to teach each unique child is rarely straightforward. Deciding *how* to teach, in order to provide children with special needs with meaningful and useful learning experiences, is equally complex. Teachers have a variety of choices, depending on the pupil, to encourage future success in personal, academic and vocational pursuits. Depending on how teachers begin to operate and implement the curriculum, they can create several learning opportunities (Smajić, 2004).

So far, all special schools and the majority of regular schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina employ the same means of presenting educational content to children with special needs – either through special programmes which are completely different from the regular programme or by reduced versions of the regular curricula. However, these answers to teaching content and style put the quality of education of these children into question, since there are no special educators within regular school teams to give expert advice and input necessary in the creation of programmes for children with special needs.

The underlying philosophy of a *holistic, inclusive perspective* (currently represented within education reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina), leads one away from teaching isolated skills according to prescribed curricula and towards learning while engaged in purposeful, real-life projects and activities, as students interacting and co-operating with each other. Individual education programmes make sense in this context in that they provide a vehicle for pupils to learn to better understand, adapt and use the best of their abilities.

An important part of the work of regular and special education teachers is the adaptation of the general (national) curriculum to the needs, abilities and interests of the particular child (Smajić, 2004). Children with special education needs should have concrete material to be adequately supported in a regular classroom. According to Smajic, it is important to know that pupils learn using different strategies, activities, media and methods. Some can master generalisation through different learning situations, while others may learn the same things through observation and experimentation (visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learners).

Different persons employ different learning strategies and techniques for their self-development. Some pupils may prefer studying in a group while others pupils would rather learn individually. Some schools employ interactive learning, which could be considered a new trend in the teaching/learning process where the child is the centre of attention. Interactive learning is not just a methodological approach, but also a new way of thinking about teaching being a dynamic process characterised by continuous change. The focus is on the child and the provision of conditions for the child to grow and thrive in school.

Regular school activities, regardless of the inherent diversity of backgrounds, learning speed, styles, interests and needs of pupils in Bosnia and Herzegovina are still organised in accordance with a standardised curriculum. The pre-defined curriculum usually causes teachers to start with a pre-defined teaching content. It is essential to recognise that this kind of standardised curriculum does not evolve from or relate to pupils' lives and the world around them. The current education reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina tries to contribute to inclusive education.

## Curriculum

According to the *Human Development Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the curriculum and classes are still strictly divided into subjects, making it difficult to integrate teaching content. Also, the existing curriculum does not include much practical knowledge based on real-life requirements. There are many other examples of how pupils are unprepared for life outside the classroom. Even when learning a profession, pupils only have access to theoretical knowledge with little practical experience.

According to the document *Didactic Milestones* (2003), the curriculum in primary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina should follow the principles

of providing equal opportunities, inclusion and quality education. As a result of learning according to such a curriculum, the pupils shall develop different abilities; emotional awareness; acquire self-confidence, self-esteem, optimism and responsibility; understand, interpret and use the concepts related to numerical and special structures; be aware of their national, cultural and other traditions and values; learn to express themselves through different creative activities; learn languages; know how to take care of themselves and others; and acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary in the acquisition of an independent and quality life.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the primary school curriculum includes the following obligatory subjects: “mother tongue”, a foreign language, mathematics, social studies, science and technology, sport, music and art. The curriculum for secondary school includes: languages (mother tongue and a foreign language), social studies (history, geography, sociology, psychology, philosophy and logics, democracy), mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, information technology, culture, health, music, art and sport.

According to Smajić, because of the shortcomings of a standardised “lockstep curriculum”, greater attention to a more holistic perspective on learning is gaining attention and acceptance in general education. Recognising the pupil as the centre of learning is one of the common elements that tend to emerge in the holistic perspective. There is little or no focus on re-mediating deficits and weaknesses, which are addressed or compensated for as children become excited about learning and engaging in purposeful projects and real-life activities.

A holistic perspective to a curriculum, one of the future aims of the Bosnia and Herzegovina education reform, recognises that the information to be learned must take into account the dynamic nature of the knowledge needed to successfully live and work in a community. Identifying the information to be learned, used and maintained must continue to be meaningful and make sense to the pupil (considering the child’s background of experiences, interests and understanding). Subjects concerning important issues for the geographical area where the child is living should be represented and this information should be connected with actual questions, interests and everyday problems.

Within a holistic perspective, the teacher is viewed as a facilitator of pupils who become actively involved in the process of learning information that is meaningful and of interest to them, rather than the teacher being the dispenser of “the curriculum” (a predefined,

discrete, unchanging set of facts and information) (Smith, 1986, p.36).

Instead of an exhaustive emphasis upon purely academic skills (the actual practise in Bosnia and Herzegovina), the education programme should be built in terms of achieving basic mental and social needs. Skills in managing daily life could also assist children in avoiding undesirable situations that result from the fast and significant changes in society that are currently affecting Bosnia and Herzegovina. Developing communication skills in order to interact successfully with society, including training in skills that are necessary for everyday living, can help children to acquire useful knowledge (Smajić, 2004).

### **Individual education programme**

An individual education programme (IEP) is an essential tool in the education of children with special needs, especially for inclusion. An IEP is a written programme – a working document that results from an assessment of the strengths and needs of an individual pupil and describes the special education programme and services.

The individual education programme is based on a thorough assessment of the pupil's strengths, interests and needs. It identifies specific goals and expectations and explains how the special education programme will help to achieve the goals and expectations set out in the plan. Special education programmes and services are being modified by continuous assessment.

The pupil's individual education programme is developed, implemented and monitored in a collaborative manner (Smajić, 2004). According to Mustačić and Vicić (1996), an individual education programme should reflect the basic characteristics of the national or district's curriculum but the curriculum should be adjusted to the individual characteristics of the child. In addition, the IEP should allow for didactical adjustment and adjustment of each curricular subject and include a diversity of specific methods, materials and strategies. Psychological and methodological focus is needed, as well as a connection between curricular subjects and real life, concretisation, systematisation and operation of curricular subjects and socialisation and motivation of the child with special needs.

The scope in which the child is going to be involved in regular school activities and subjects should be defined and long-term (annual) and short-term aims, goals and objectives should be outlined. Individual support services and the objective criteria, ways and methods of education work and evaluation should also be determined. Persons responsible for the creation,

implementation, evaluation and revision of the curricular features should also be identified (Mustać and Vicić, 1996).

One of the future aims for all schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina is to begin working on the implementation of important practical goals such as the introduction of IEPs as well as a general policy of including all children with special needs in schools.

## Teacher training

Teachers are educated over two to four years at the faculties and academies of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Teachers who are going to work with children with special needs are educated for four years at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation at the University of Tuzla. A graduate diploma is granted in one of the fields of special education: visual impairment; hearing impairment, motor impairment, mental retardation, speech and language difficulties, and behavioural difficulties.

Special education is not adequately represented in the professional upgrading of regular teachers. Teachers who have attended seminars or conferences regarding special education and inclusion gain only scant knowledge about the subject. Teachers in regular schools feel that they do not have enough knowledge and skills to make their own decisions about opportunities for each individual child. This is a major problem in the school that practises inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Teachers, apart from their responsibilities in relation to education of children *without* special needs, are now taking over the responsibilities for the education of children with special needs as well. Frosting (1980) states that one can “appreciate those teachers who, without effort and in a friendly way, accept new tasks and responsibilities that result from the inclusive policies”. Affleck, *et al.* stated in 1973 that regular teachers in integrative education ought to have the following competencies: to be able to work together as members of team; to be able to perform individual and group assessments; to implement different programmes and activities in addressing goals; and to be able to evaluate pupil achievements.

Lewis (1974) thought that teachers should be additionally educated in order to be able to give adequate support to children with special needs in regular classrooms. Their education should broaden their knowledge about the characteristics of children with special education needs so to be able to

address the needs of each child in the classroom. Education should also help to develop positive attitudes towards children with special needs, which will not be characterised by compassion but by acceptance of human diversity.

Upgrading courses for teachers could be organised during regular graduate study or teachers training studies through additional education content pertaining to children with special needs and their characteristics. Another option is to offer additional courses in special needs education after graduate study or during the process of permanent qualification and upgrading in the field of special education. Programmes for teachers' upgrading should focus on the goals of special education, thus making teachers capable of recognising difficulties in different areas (cognition, behaviour, speech, psycho-motor development, psychology and the sociology of development).

Today in Bosnia and Herzegovina, only a very small number of special needs educators of different profiles are employed in regular schools, adding one more barrier to inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools. Regular teachers, at this point, and without co-operation from special educators, cannot provide adequate support for children with special needs attending regular schools.

### ***Training of specialists***

Tuzla University is the only university in Bosnia and Herzegovina offering higher education in the field of special needs education. Founded in 1993 during the war, with the support of Zagreb University, the Faculty of Defectology teaches traditional Eastern European Defectology. In the aftermath of the Dayton Agreement which formally ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, institutional capacity-building efforts are now aiming to adopt international principles, following a general trend in Eastern European universities after the fall of the Berlin Wall. As one of the results of the efforts to catch up with international trends in education and to promote the humanity and acceptance immediately after the establishment at the Faculty of Defectology, the staff expressed a common opinion about the necessity of changing the name of the institution. Today the "Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation", consists of three departments: (1) logopedics (speech therapy) and surdoaudiology (hearing impairments); (2) education and rehabilitation (oligofrenology/mental retardation, somathopedics/motor difficulties and tifology/ visual impairments) and (3) behavioural difficulties.

## Conclusion

Essential steps in education reform have been made in the past three years (2001-2004). The trend towards increased support for the development of inclusive education and meaningful curricula are encouraging. Yet many elements are missing in the reform process. It should meet the principles of education for all, human rights and democracy.

Special attention has to be paid to:

- Provision of conditions for attending primary school to all school children to the greatest extent possible through provision of a greater public investment in education, with a special emphasis on poor regions and on students who are educated in difficult conditions. Special attention should be given to institutional building and the development of teaching material.
- Inclusion of at least 20% of children in pre-school education. It is also necessary to develop alternative forms of care for children, especially outside of large urban centres.
- Modernisation of the education system (curricula, teacher training, education management).
- Quality assurance in accordance with European and international trends.
- Enhancement of teacher training.
- Development of new methods of measuring student performance.
- Establishment of an information system to measure trends in school enrolment and monitoring the status of minorities in the education process.
- Inclusion of young people in health and prevention programmes through health education.
- Training of teachers, psychologists, pedagogues and other professionals.
- Organisation of educational, cultural and recreational activities so that students spend their free time in co-operation with parents and the local community.

- Providing support to parents and strengthening the role of the family in order to create an environment for a safe and stable child development.

In recent years, there has been considerable emphasis on how to include all pupils with special needs in the social life of the society or classroom, but less attention has been given to how those pupils actively participate or effectively learn in inclusive settings (Lipsky and Gartner, 1989). Bosnia and Herzegovina has just begun to explore the questions raised in relation to inclusive education and has not only improved practices, but also identified other questions which will form an integral role in transforming the learning/teaching practice in the school. These questions are, however, open-ended. There are no definite or easy answers and they will need to be continually revisited as one measure of quality of life.

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Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, FYR of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia

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