

# International Conference for Bosnia and Herzegovina

## At the International Conference Centre of Geneva

State-building and the constitution, economics, culture and education, security and democracy, justice and reconciliation, regional and EU integration, conditionality and ownership, beyond "lessons learnt", responsibility for the future

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Geneva  
20-21 October 2005

**1995**  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Ten Years of Dayton  
and Beyond  
**2005**

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# Panel on Education in Bosnia

## Geneva, 20 October 2005

Austrian Cooperation  
Eastern Europe

chair	Boris Tihi, professor of economics, University of Sarajevo (Sarajevo)
keynote	Mirza Kušljugić, professor, University of Tuzla (Tuzla)
speakers	Bojan Arula, socio-political analyst and civil society activist (Banja Luka)
	Svetlana Đurković, anthropologist and civil society activist (Sarajevo)
	Dina Duraković, legal analyst and civil society activist (Tuzla)
	Aida Bašić-Čečo, cultural analyst, journalist and poet (Sarajevo)
	Farah Tahirbegović, cultural analyst and artist (Sarajevo)
	Jasmina Husanović, lecturer in cultural differences, University of Tuzla (Tuzla)



## PANEL ON EDUCATION

After the completion of both panels on culture and education, its participants agreed on the following press release statement:

### PUBLIC STATEMENT

It is the role of culture and education to provide the critical optics through which we can express what transformative politics and reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be about. The cultural sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the source of alternative practices and conceptions of citizenship and identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but this must be translated into institutional political frameworks and non-institutional ways of organising for change. These alternative practices and conceptions have to become part and parcel of the educational sphere whose state in Bosnia and Herzegovina is at the moment discouraging.

Our key concern is how can we influence the sphere of politics and what roles do the cultural and educational policies and their reforms have in the processes of integration. Institutional politics in the sphere of culture and education today is focused on ethno-nationalist myths and cannons; it is about false choices, where intentional chaos, endemic corruption and acute incompetence rule the day.

Our challenge is finding new ways of organising for change and creating both mainstream cultural and educational politics and alternatives. This process must be head started by making cultural and educational policy an essential element for reform, and a condition for the accession and integration processes that Bosnia and Herzegovina is aiming at on the European level.

This 'pressure from above' (international level) must be accompanied by the 'pressure from below' (grassroots activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina) – in other words, by an empowered active participation, networking, lobbying and campaigning by those key actors and forces in the non-institutional sphere of cultural production, educational field and civic engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Struggles in the cultural and educational field are essential for the state-making and state-breaking processes. Hence, it is perfectly possible for some of them also to bring about 'a new Bosnia and Herzegovina' in line with the civic and democratic ideals of plurality and justice, diversity and difference.

### **Aims and objectives of panels on culture and education:**

The aim of these panels is to present some key insights that resulted from the first stage of a long-term pilot project “In Search of New Politics in Culture and Education” which began in April this year and runs until September next year. This project is run under the auspices of the Association Bosnia and Herzegovina 2005, and has as main sponsor the Austrian Development Agency.

Its goals are:

- To identify and strengthen alternative cultural practices, which breed integrationist, cosmopolitan and civic identifications, solidarities and bonds,
- To interlock such cultural praxis with the concerted drive for a ‘new politics’,
- To infuse the educational system in Bosnia with such alternative cultural and political imaginings and enactments of Bosnia, and
- To reinvigorate civil society potentials by infusing it with progressive cultural and educational praxis.
- To create a critical mass of young academics, artists and activists who will act in concert and on a long-term basis on the production of relevant research, policy suggestions and advocacy in the field of cultural and educational politics.

The long-term aim of the project is the creation of a strong network of key actors and practices throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina in the sphere of education and cultural production in order to produce relevant knowledge, conduct research, instigate wider public dialogue on key topics and develop effective strategies for change in this direction.

We are only at the start of a complex process of interlocking research with public dialogue and policy-making on pertinent issues in culture and education, as envisaged by the project. Also, this pilot project aims not only to continue after September next year, but also to extend the scope of its programme in the course of 2006, more in the direction of campaigning and advocacy concerning policy-making and certain practices in the sphere of culture and education. This event in Geneva was the first opportunity to bring some preliminary insights from our work into the international public sphere.

## PRESENTATIONS:

Bojan Arula

**“The reform of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina”**

Before the beginning of armed conflicts in the regions of ex-Yugoslavia, higher education acquired at the faculties of universities' centres in each republic, was considered to be one of more modern ones in the world, and students from abroad were rushing to Yugoslavia in order to gain their university degrees there. However, the education system in Yugoslavia and in B&H, at that time, was far from perfect and exactly at the moment when a reform should begin and when all the other developed countries started thinking in that direction, the time in Bosnia stopped for everything including scientific institutions such as universities. Fifteen years later, the reform of higher education is getting into the swing and curricula have been modified to suit the requirements of the Bologna's declaration. Although the signing of the Bologna's declaration represents a significant step forward, the previous decade marked with the war and economic instability has dramatically influenced higher education in B&H. Even though there were many improvements in the field of higher education after the war years, many crucial issues were left unsolved or only partially touched.

Can B&H at this point accept the reform and does it have financial and technical contributions for that? Are the leading bearers – the university staff, students and ministries clerks – aware of two crucial questions: their role in the Bologna's process and its main aims: the recognition of diplomas, the mobility of students, accreditation, the providing of quality, lifelong learning etc. It is necessary to perceive and understand the aims of the Bologna's process and its implementation seen from three different perspectives: university staff, students and civil servants from state structures responsible for education.

The quality of academic degree and the opportunities for employment in our conditions have special dimensions. The state is still not economically recovered and has not got possibilities to fund higher education. This is reflected in very modest universities' budgets and the lack of active developing projects, which cannot result in the high quality of university education. On the other hand, unemployment in the country is great, and the needs of the market for highly educated labour appear slight. The state as well as economic sectors, do not offer a sufficient number of scholarships to promising ambitious students. All this has caused the persistence of strong wish of students' population to leave the country. The education reform, carried out according to the principles of the Bologna's declaration, that has to improve the quality of university education, increase the mobility, support lifelong learning, develop the European dimension of education and advance all the other proclaimed principles, besides everything, has to contribute to the resolution of a social issue in the country.

Although we do not know whether the higher education reform will make the academic community better, more useful and more important for B&H, a society does not have an alternative: changes have to be brought about. B&H cannot simply allow itself a luxury to wait for a radical change of its political and academic structure that will consequently derogate the provincial status of universities and ensure them legislative and financial legitimacy. There is no other option than, step by step, to return dignity to tertiary education and scientific production, hoping that our scientific incorruptibility will become a basic place of our intellectual reality, the founding power that will return the investment of society by increasing the profit of community for ten times. But, if this has to happen, universities must announce the end of ideology.

Besides the fact that B&H has begun the process of universities reform relatively late, the so-far implementation of the Bologna's declaration is completely unsatisfactory. Macedonia and Bulgaria have joined the process at the same time, but they have made great further progress. The universities in B&H are known for the lack of contemporary equipment for education, the irrational usage of existing equipment, the unstable financial situation, teaching curricula limited within the framework of one faculty, which unable the choice of interdisciplinary studies; the level of supplies and knowledge for using modern information and communication technologies is not satisfactory, which essentially influences the quality of educational and scientific work and every form of innovations in that field; there is also an insufficient activity in solving the problems of students' standard, extracurricular activities, the affirmation of teaching profession and continual selection limited with the quality, etc.

The current approach to the reform of higher education is far from systematic, since the reform process is led by universities and not by the state, so at the same time, it is inadequate. The state should certainly take a leading role in order to ensure the reform of higher education. Universities can do a lot themselves but they cannot take a leading role in the reform process. If they continue to work independently and without the coordination of their efforts, the universities in B&H will make trouble with possible harmonization of legal regulations in the future, as well as with the whole harmonization of the higher education reform. In order to ensure the systematic approach to the implementation of the Bologna's process, it is necessary to establish the state's agency and to ensure better coordination at the state level and also to establish the Agency for the quality insurance and the Centre for information, acknowledgement and quality assessment. It is also urgent to enact the overall national law on higher education.

Also, the participation of students' population in the implementation of the Bologna's process is unsatisfactory. The Bologna's process prescribes that students are equal and competent partners in the reform of universities. B&H is far away from fulfilment of this requirement. B&H students are a mute group without strength and will to involve in the reform of university. There are some organized groups that take separate actions, but unfortunately they do not have global influence. Their strength and influence depend mostly on individuals who lead them and they last until those outstanding persons study. Such a situation can be changed by urgent implementation and adoption of the Law on student organizations and the Law on student standard.

The universities in B&H must be led to the principles of stabilization and maintaining the work continuity and its institutional reconstruction, transformation and reform, the affirmation of the quality of studies and scientific research, financial consolidation, etc. According to this, the aims of each university in B&H could be made concrete as follows:

- institutional autonomy;
- a (complete) integration of universities;
- financial autonomy of university;
- development of permanent education;
- adaptation of curricula to European experiences and trends;
- development of the system that will ensure quality;
- autonomous development of personnel policy;
- creation of new partnerships with the government, economy, non-governmental organizations, civil and cultural institutions;
- formation of high standards and criteria in the university life that will classify us among competitive partners in Europe;
- modernization of infrastructure.

In order to raise the whole of B&H higher education at the level that will enable it to cooperate with the institutions of higher education from all over Europe and other parts of the world, it should fulfil one of

the most important requirement – and that is the quality at the international level. Of course, this aim cannot be reached all of a sudden, but in order to make it possible, it is necessary to create a clear and dynamic time framework and the schedule of activities, with the actual financial plans indicating priorities and expenses.

Dina Duraković

**“Key Issues in Education: From Form to Content”**

There are two main aspects of education reform that is formally underway in B&H. One deals with technical and formal aspects of the reform and insists on principles set out in the Bologna Declaration; namely, adoption of formal preconditions for acceptance of B&H diplomas abroad, technical advancement of curricula, modernization of educational capacities, in short, this aspect of the reform is related to meeting the criteria needed for improvement of the general standard of education at all levels. The second aspect of the reform is often ignored and avoided – this is the one that deals with issues of fundamental importance for the future of B&H state and its citizens. That aspect of the education reform is about giving an answer to the most important question of all – what kind of people do we want our system to educate? Citizens? Ethnic subjects? Individuals? Members of constituent peoples? Critical minds? Obedient subjects? Activists? Which system of values do we want our education system to support? Which group of socially desirable personal characteristics do we want to develop through education system, and which undesirable personal characteristics do we want to discourage? In which way do we want the education to deal with our recent past, and in which way do we want it to define our future?

Answers to these questions only seem straightforward. By associating ourselves with the group of those *civically oriented*, we hope for an education system that would deliver a new generation of citizens, free of prejudices, open minded, citizens of critical mind and activist spirit, citizens with broad horizons and admirers of diversity. However, we have to ask ourselves if this hope, in light of the circumstances in which we live and given the framework in which we act, is no more than a utopia? Is it realistic to expect that the education reform will result in achievement of such highly set goals?

Within existing constitutional framework and political environment in B&H it is neither realistic nor possible to expect much better and more *civic* system of education than the one we currently have. The existing constitutional framework is a system that defines B&H citizens primarily as members of peoples/religious/national/ethnic or linguistic groups; system created to protect collective rights and promote national interests; system in which ethical and religious identification is much more important than any other kind of personal identification; a system that discourages *individualization* of the society; a system that rests on discrimination of all those individuals that cannot and do not want to build their own self-identification around primordial concepts of ethnos, myth, language, culture. (Discriminatory nature of the existing constitutional system is perhaps most evident in the political sphere where almost every attempt to politically position oneself is conditional upon membership in one of the three constitutional peoples – we should only recall discriminatory provisions of the Constitution that define composition of the B&H Presidency. Anybody that does not belong to one of the three constitutional peoples (or does not want to be identified with them) has no chance of ever becoming a member of this institution).

This domination of ethnic and collective in institutional and political framework is transcribed to all other societal spheres and areas, including education. So, at the moment in B&H we do not really have one, but

three poor education systems – primary focus of every one of these systems is education of members and not citizens, subjects and not free-thinkers, and promotion of only one version of history and one system of (national) values. Therefore, in many local communities in B&H we do not have schools, but national schools, we do not have educational but national curricula, we do not have teaching staff, but Bosniak, Croat or Serb teaching staff (as an illustration of the existing segregation in B&H schools it is enough to mention that there are still around 50 so-called schools under one roof – institutions in which children of different nationalities are physically separated and are taught different national curricula, attend different lectures in the same building, with school administrations being completely separated.)

So, in such circumstances, institutional reform of education that would result in significant transformation of dominant educational practices would require deep changes to overall societal, institutional and political system. Considering the existing situation, one may conclude that such a comprehensive reform of education system is really not possible in dominant societal paradigm which insists on all those factors that we want to overcome, at least officially, through education reform. Is it really realistic to expect the reform to be implemented by the same political factors (and this reform, as any other reform in B&H, is primarily a political issue) that live within the system and of the system that reform wants to change? Development of an education system that would lead to education of citizens free of ethno-national-religious boundaries would in essence mean denial of everything that such political factors represent and the framework within which they operate.

Also worrying is the inability of other societal factors to influence this reform efficiently – student unions, parents associations, NGOs or syndicates in education suffer from chronic lack of initiative and civic activism. Further limitation to their credibility in this process is the fact that in most of the cases they are evidently ethnically divided and are therefore unable to position themselves against dominant political structures (as an example we may mention the role of student unions in the reform of higher education that were more concerned about protection of national interests of certain ethnic groups than the end goals this reform has to achieve). Also, we should not ignore the real power of ethnic divide and significance of ethnic affiliation in today's B&H. Ethnic affiliation appears to be the dominant feature of personal self-identification not only in political, but also in public and private sphere, undermining all other possible methods of identifications, i.e. those based on social, age, gender or professional characteristics.

In such a situation, what are the alternatives to institutional education reform that could potentially bring about results that institutional reform clearly cannot achieve at this stage and in this environment? Are there other societal forces and energy that can respond to challenges of citizen education in a way that would be fundamentally different than the dominant ethno-centric matrix?

The most significant examples in this regard come from the civil society, which is often the sphere where ideas that cannot be realized within formal educational institutions and practices are accomplished. Progressive societal forces are therefore often found in spheres of culture and art, and not within the mainstream (which in existing circumstances inevitably wears ethnic colours), but in the art and culture which identifies with universal, cosmopolitan and multicultural values. (There are many examples of such activities within civil society – one is a series of workshops conducted in Mostar which gathers B&H, Polish and English youth to teach them to live their differences through different forms of artistic activities.) Not even ten years after the end of the war has the need for such social and informal engagement in the education sphere decreased – this need clearly indicates all flaws and problems of existing educational practices and points to the need to institutionally accept successful educational models and methods that exist in the informal sector. (A positive example of institutionalization of a good idea are the interdisciplinary postgraduate programs implemented by the Center for interdisciplinary postgraduate studies of the University of Sarajevo, which were initially a result of enthusiasm and energy of a few free-thinking and progressive university professors from the region, who thought that the best way to fight the ignorance of educational institutions towards the most sensitive issues of the region is to

deal with such issues objectively and academically. The results of this idea are three postgraduate programs that offer young people a chance to deal with human rights, promotion of democratic principles, European studies and state management formally institutionalized within the University of Sarajevo).

One of the answers to the failure of institutional education reform is perhaps to gather individual energies and positive models that certainly exist in B&H and to strive to transform them into institutional practices and dominant educational models. Given the existing situation, this will obviously be a long-term and burdensome task. However, the time has shown that no short-cuts are possible in B&H reform processes.

Svetlana Đurković

**“Evolving Gender Norms and Perspectives: From Social to Individual”**

Before the war in B&H, word gender did not exist. Even after the war „gender“ was not a word that meant anything to anybody. „Gender“ was an unknown new word, foreign word, something to do with women, while local word „rod“ mostly pertained to linguistic gender categories or just reminded of family and/or blood relations. What did exist in B&H and the region before the war was a concept of social norms and roles as a construct and something that is taught and acquired through education, family and society, making all human beings to be men or women or manly women or feminine men. Some did not think that the disbalance was fair or right, some thought that the way the things were was just. And, although some questioned social norms and roles, most did not question anything underneath. Gender as such was questioned, but sex as such was not.

With ratification of CEDAW, adoption of state Law on Gender Equality in Spring 2003 and creation of implementing bodies (Gender Centers of RS and FBiH, Agency for Gender Equality, and numerous NGOs and projects regarding gender equity/equality), gender politics and policies in B&H started gaining major ground. However, the definition of gender is lacking the most important angle, that of an individual. By default, such gender mainstreaming does not allow for roles to shift, the system to be challenged or human rights to take hold. By default, such gender mainstreaming and implementation of CEDAW and Law on Gender Equality is not enough as it regards gender as a given and not as something that is flexible and dynamic and a right and a choice of every human being.

Official definition of gender used in B&H is the one used by the Council of Europe. Although majority of organizations and institutions insist on the fact that gender implies social while sex implies biological, there is no clear line between the two when it comes to their own interpretations of the definition and the work that is being done. It seems that by insisting on using the English term, most organization define gender to be a sort of a combination between sex and gender, that is a combination of both.

What does language have to do with it?

**Sex** = spol or pol

**Gender** = rod, gender, džender

The Law on Gender Equality is a bit confusing regarding the definition of gender. In early 2003, Law on Gender Equality was passed and adopted. This law although representing a gender law does not use word gender. Additionally, in Bosnian language the law is stated and translated as a Law on Sex Equality, that

is equality of sexes. The word sex is used to imply and define both sex and gender. Under the definition section in Article 4, word sex (*spol*) is defined as: „sex: socially determined roles of women and men in public and private life which is different from the same term which implies biological attributes. Term sex, in the spirit of this law, shows meaning which is within society given to biological attributes of sex.”

Furthermore, language/s in B&H are highly gendered, and gendered all the way through. Male gender, especially in plural, is the auto pilot of BSC languages. Gender sensitive or gender neutral language is rarely used.

### How is gender taught?

Sex and gender as promoted through the primary education, offers very clear messages on who girls are and who boy are. Textbooks are toys which are very colourful and visually stimulating and therefore very successful in showing, that is, creating the gap between the girls and boys, later to be women and men. Textbook cover everything from pictures, colours, norms, roles, games, family chores, behaviours, to family and society. Sex and gender are clearly one and there is no difference between the two, because only one exists. Word gender is not used nor is it explained. Word sex is also not explained nor used in the textbooks of the earlier grades.

In addition, language used throughout the educational system is always male gendered. Feminine language is used only when referring to individuals in singular or when individuals are speaking for themselves. Professions are gendered, as well as most often spoken in male gender. Language is gendered. Children are gendered. Clothes is gendered. Toys are gendered. Bathrooms are gendered. Schools most definitely promote sex and gender stereotyping as well as acquiring of roles and norms.

### What does gender have to do with human rights?

Human rights in regards to gender do not only represent relations of justice and equality between men and women. Internally speaking, human rights can be used to address the being and becoming of men and women, that is being and becoming something else, something in between, both or neither ...

Taking human rights into consideration, that is human rights-based approach, there are two major things that are raised: individual characteristics of the population/group in question have to be recognized and taken into consideration, and true needs of the population/group have to be taken into consideration and addressed. This also means, that the population/group in question has a right to define, explain and describe its own position, needs, situation, and identities. It is exactly this which is lacking from the current discourse of gender politics in B&H.

Gender politics and human rights-based approach mean the following:

- social/medical/legal construct of both sex and gender
- sex and gender can not be controlled by society nor solely defined by it
- all individuals have a right (and a choice) to define the most basic core of their own identity, including „men“, „women“, „male“, „female“ definitions, by default being able to create other definition, norms, and identities as they suit them
- all individuals have a right to their own sex and gender, inducing other identities of their sexuality and social life
- society has no right over persons identities and bodily integrity

It is important to realize that sex and gender are not ownership of our society and that society has no right to put us into boxes (nor do other people) through cultural policing. Sex and gender, as well as gender identity and/or expression, intersexual characteristics and sexual orientation are something that belongs to

each individual. Decisions about one's own body, sex, gender, identity, practices and preferences are individual rights and choices, and it is important to recognize that kind of right. It is important to include personal definitions and understanding of sex, gender, gender roles, and sexuality as a whole, and not to take sex as a given, autochthonous and fixed. Ungendering the gender will not go far unless unsexing the sex also does not take place.

What gender currently represents in B&H politics and its implementing agencies is very limited, and so is its results. Gender equality in regards to „male-female“ relations and rights should not be undermined, however, it is not enough as it:

- still rests on the unquestioned construct of sex and further limitations of some kind;
- totally renders invisible queer population and anyone else who in praxis lives outside of the binary lines and by its own existence transgresses the social norms;
- enables violence and discrimination toward those who transgress narrow lines of social norms and roles and fixed identities and expressions, regardless if the person in question is intersex, transgender, bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer or straight;
- inadequately addresses domestic violence, sexual violence and other forms of physical and psychological violence, sex and gender hierarchy and power structure, and issues and problems of sexism, genderphobia, transphobia, and homophobia.

DISCUSSANTS:

Adisa Bašić-Čečo

**“Challenges of civic education beyond ethnic divisions”**

Bosnia and Herzegovina must go into a painful and exhausting process of the education reform. I agree with Dina, and her claim that a huge obstacle for this reform is deep ethnic division, as well as weakness of civil society, still under construction in Bosnia. For Bosnia, it is inevitable to go on the path of raising and educating Citizens, instead of currently making Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats, or those from the group of Others, to make the absurd complete. But unlike Bojan and Dina, who deal with reform at the institutional and foremost University level, I believe that the process of education reform must combine both top-down and bottom-up methods. What does this imply?

It is great to sign Bologna Declaration. Forcing the Deans, Professors, and even students to respect it, is a necessary step in the process of reviving the anachronous universities, as well as the whole educational system, hibernating for years. But we must keep in mind the necessity of preparing the ground for making the new, open, modern and democratic education work. What use do we have from modern teaching tools and appliances, good curricula, and international exchange of students and professors, if the children and youth live in parallel ethnic worlds: they are side by side with each other, but their paths never cross.

In Lukavica, 10 minutes drive from the centre of Sarajevo, today you may find elementary school pupils who never went to Sarajevo. The talk of the day is usually focused upon the concept of «Two Schools Under One Roof», because it is the clearest example of ethnic division, but nearly identical situation is also found in hundreds of other «ethnically pure» schools. Sociological research in Serbia and Bosnia,

based upon the method of social distance demonstrate that the ethnic division among children is stronger than with the adults!

Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina are built upon two principles: first, primordialist claims that the members of a group share same roots, language, culture and heritage; second, by establishing and reinforcing the differences with other groups. Of course that the political elites who spent four years of war and ten years after Dayton working on deepening the interethnic and interethnic gaps, do not find it in their interest to bridge those gaps. Hence the reforms are stalling at the institutional level.

For a successful education reform it is necessary to work on decreasing the prejudice towards the members of other ethnic groups, as well as diminishing the ethnic division. In America, the famous melting pot of nations, reportedly you can find people in Chinatowns speaking not a word of English, who spend their lives communicating exclusively with other Chinese. Blacks side by side with Whites, Hispanics side by side with Hindus, British side by side with Pakistanis, Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats side by side to each other. This illusion of multiethnicity, this life of ones beside the others, instead of with others, gains more ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina. NGO sector can and must play an important role in connecting people. Bosnia and Herzegovina yearns for sincere activists who do not view projects as synonymous for money, who do not see the ethnic conflict just as an opportunity for well paid jobs, and who are not concerned with personal gain more than with the people for which the NGO exists.

At the risk of sounding too idealistic, I assure you that the education reform begins when children from different communities and ethnic groups go watch a theatre play together for the first time. When they spend summer holidays together. When they sit together in a class. In a secular and civic school.

Farah Tahirbegović

### **Discussion on the higher education reform**

Concerning the fact that my interests, jobs and “extracurricular” activities do not have a direct relation with the themes that the presenters have touched upon, I tried to follow their presentations from the position of a “critical outsider”. I believe that this position enabled me to consider the problems with the education in B&H somewhat differently.

#### **1. What is the higher education reform implemented on the basis of the Bologna Declaration principles?**

The population of B&H finds it rather difficult to get this answer. Bologna Declaration, just like the Dayton Agreement, has become some imaginary distant document that everybody talks about and calls upon. There are a great number of organizations, NGOs, associations and partners affiliated with the B&H universities, a lot of talk and a lot of political point scoring. We are buried with booklets, posters, catalogues in which the Bologna Declaration principles are written in capital letters and vivid colours. However, this Bologna thing is a complete mystery to fresher students at the university, graduating students, parents educating their children. It seems to me that Bologna has become a place of “an eternal project of implementation”, covering countless projects, research, realizations.

Personally I think that one of the possible options is advertising, conversation and dialogue on the Bologna Declaration principles, and the representation of those to the population in the widest possible sense: and this lasting several years. Of course, such an approach would not resolve the issue, but perhaps it would improve it by, say, 20%? At the same time, while our university professors understand why the education reform is important, it would be good to explain all of this to the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, using, if possible, ordinary language and understandable styles of presentation, familiar methods of communication.

This process should last several years (considering that even the university staff have been getting acquired with the Bologna Declaration for the last few years), until we know, down deeply at the 'grassroots' that one average citizen is fully aware what kind of school and opportunities they are paying for their children.

## **2. Implementing the Goals**

If you change the word 'university' in Bojan's presentation with the word 'publishing' or 'book market', you get absolutely the same goals that a certain sector needs to achieve:

- a. Institutional autonomy
- b. establishing a completely integrated university;
- c. Financial autonomy of the university,
- d. Developing life-long education
- e. adjusting the curricula to the European levels and trends;
- f. developing a system for quality assurance;
- g. Autonomous development of personnel policy;
- h. creating new partnerships with economy/industry, government, NGOs, civic and cultural institutions;
- i. embedding higher standard and criteria in the university life which rank as competitive partners in Europe;
- j. updating infrastructure.

I do not find this normal or OK?! What is the problem then? In the fact that every activity in B\$H has the same problems? That basically means that something else elsewhere is not functioning. Perhaps, it is the insistence precisely on those models. Perhaps it is in the Constitution. Perhaps in the translation from English as the administrative language into Bosnian in a superficial and irresponsible way for the last 15 years. Perhaps in the creation of wrong terminology? I would like to hear the ways of realizing these goals.

## **3. Civil initiatives through the prism national/civic**

I certainly believe that every civil initiative is the strongest noninstitutional sphere of action which aims to "break down" our national programmes, classes, subjects and schools. But, one small percentage of this common civil society initiative, and not only of it, which I personally find very problematic. This is that part to which we can link the phenomenon that they stop working once when they are not paid for their "civic initiatives" (I am talking only about education here).

## **4. Who creates curricula?**

This is my eternal enigma. I have asked several professors at several public debates and they would shrug their shoulders and respond "those over there make them". At this particular moment there was a little bit more of "us overhear" sitting together. But for some reason we did not want to dig who creates our teaching plans and programmes. By the way, each of the professors I asked this question is both by declaration and otherwise a part of this "civic option"!?!?

Jasmina Husanović-Pehar

**Reinvigorating academia and activism – ways forward**

Bosnia is all about a potentiality of an incipient critical social movement that will fuse together the energy of generations born in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, which are now dispersed and/or disoriented both within Bosnia, Balkans, Europe and the world as a whole. This mass of talented, ambitious, successful individuals, who strongly identify with 'alternative Bosnias' and 'alternative worlds' and who act upon their visions despite the closures of the institutional political and symbolic orders around them, is fragmented, marginalised, and pushed to the outskirts of dominant constellations. Despite the fact that the feeling of powerlessness and disaffection is being imposed upon them through the overarching context of moral, social, economic and political bankruptcies in Bosnia, they act out of their often traumatic experiences of dislocation, marginalisation and exclusion in ways highly promising of emancipatory change. Guided by their freedom and imagination, knowledge and love, their practice is about sparkling traversals of current deadlocks in a myriad of ways – arts, academia, civil society activism being some of the most prominent ones.

There is a great need to empower and interconnect such circles and practices on a long-term basis. Through a sustained support to these young people and a committed reinforcement of their energy and activities, an incipient critical social movement can gather a momentum and gain voice that will have impact on realities around them. In this way they will be enabled to counter, more effectively, exclusion and disaffection and to instigate more tangible changes in various contexts, and according to their visions and desires that go beyond the ethnonationalist and other exclusionary identitarian or even criminal social and political forms and practices around them.

Cultural capitals are one of the most important axes of transformation in this regard. Alternative and more inclusive forms and ways of life in Bosnia are present and visible on the grassroots level or on the margins, but they rarely, if ever, fruit into something 'institutional' or 'official'. Wherever they were, are now, or will be, young academics, activists, artists, musicians, poets who identify with 'alternative Bosnias' need to channel and express their progressive energies both into and out of Bosnia towards a more far- and deep-reaching change, according to the promise they already embody.

The critical energy and the emancipatory promise already contained in the practices and thoughts of young artists, activists and academics, who are both inside and outside Bosnia and who have potent and progressive visions about its past, present and future, must be increased and intensified. Therefore, the key steps are towards unification of dispersed energies and activisms through more powerful networks able to influence the institutional politics as well are:

- to empower their visions of Bosnian society as more inclusive, just, free, equal and merit/talent-oriented,
- to support on a long-term basis their separate and joint activities within Bosnia and across borders (regional, continental, intercontinental),
- to integrate them into better networks that serve as unifying cores or knots of a critical social movement,
- to bring all this to the fore of local and international public awareness, and
- to enable them to make a sort of a wave-effect within Bosnian society with a tangible impact on the long-term changes and reforms there.

A deep and far-reaching reform is required in the Bosnian context and the policy-makers must respond to the unvoiced new forces in the Bosnian setting. Fostering alternative civic democratic identifications and practices of citizenship and political action in Bosnia is not a matter of inventing what does not exist, but supporting the existing immanent possibilities (and actualities) that are currently suppressed, and giving them a political clout, voice and influence when it comes to reconfiguring Bosnia more in line with the modern democratic ideal. The pilot project currently run by all the presenters and discussants in Culture and Education Panels is a small step in that direction.

The aim of the panels on Culture and Education is to present some key insights that resulted from the first stage of a long-term pilot project “In Search of New Politics in Culture and Education” which began in April this year and runs until September next year. This project is run under the auspices of the Association Bosnia and Herzegovina 2005, and is funded by the Austrian Development Agency.

Its goals are:

- To identify and strengthen alternative cultural practices, which breed integrationist, cosmopolitan and civic identifications, solidarities and bonds,
- To interlock such cultural praxis with the concerted drive for a ‘new politics’,
- To infuse the educational system in Bosnia with such alternative cultural and political imaginings and enactments of Bosnia, and
- To reinvigorate civil society potentials by infusing it with progressive cultural and educational praxis.
- To create a critical mass of young academics, artists and activists who will act in concert and on a long-term basis on the production of relevant research, policy suggestions and advocacy in the field of cultural and educational politics.

The long-term aim of the project is the creation of a strong network of key actors and practices throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina in the sphere of education and cultural production in order to produce relevant knowledge, conduct research, instigate wider public dialogue on key topics and develop effective strategies for change in this direction.

We are only at the start of a complex process of interlocking research with public dialogue and policy-making on pertinent issues in culture and education, as envisaged by the project. Also, this pilot project aims not only to continue after September next year, but also to extend the scope of its programme in the course of 2006, more in the direction of campaigning and advocacy concerning policy-making and certain practices in the sphere of culture and education. This event in Geneva is the first opportunity to bring some preliminary insights from our work into the international public sphere. Hopefully, we will be able to expand on our ideas and aims in the future.

**Chair:**

Boris Tihi

(Former dean of the Business School (Faculty of Economics, University of Sarajevo), and rector of the University of Sarajevo; professor of Economics, and member of the Bosnian Academy of Arts and Sciences.)

**Keynote Speaker:**

Mirza Kušljugić

(Studies at the Institute for Science and Technology (University of Manchester) and Ph.D. at the Faculty of Engineering in Sarajevo. In 1990 he specialized at the International Center for Theoretical Physics, in Trieste, Italy. He served on the faculty of electrical engineering at the University of Tuzla, and became department chief in 1997. During the war, he was the director of the Logistic Center in Tuzla as well as the section head of the Bureau for International Cooperation. He also served on the board of the Open Society Fund in Sarajevo before being appointed Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN in New York.)

**Presenters:**

Bojan Arula

(He holds a BA degree in Social Work from the University of Banjaluka. For a long number of years he has been a vigorous activist in various civil societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Balkans and the wider region. He has worked both professionally and as a volunteer for a number of local and international NGOs and governmental bodies. His particular research interests touch upon the subjects of students' movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as those related to juvenile delinquency. He is the founder of the Union of Students of Social Work at the University of Banjaluka, as well as of the Association «New Generation» which deals with social welfare issues. His particular research interests and projects relate to the topics of violence, education, delinquency, social welfare, community work, etc. He currently works at the Centre for Social Welfare in Banjaluka and is preparing for a doctoral degree focusing on the youth delinquency in the country.)

Dina Duraković

(She graduated at the Faculty of Law, University of Sarajevo, and holds an MA degree in Human Rights and Democracy from the Centre for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies, University of Sarajevo and University of Bologna. She has long-term experience working with international institutions and NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her research interests touch upon the subjects of the democratisation of the public sphere in Bosnia, reforms of the educational system, and other ways of addressing multiple injustices affecting Bosnian society. She is currently working at a lawyer's office in Tuzla.)

Svetlana Đurković

(Holds a BA degree in anthropology from Longwood University, and an MA in social sciences from the University of Chicago, focusing on topics like nationalism, national identity and conflict. She has been active in a number of projects, either as a researcher or a consultant, which deal with national and gender identity and education, as well as human rights, particularly the rights of sexual and gender minorities. She is also an activist and a volunteer in a number of domestic, regional and international initiatives that deal with the problems of education and equality, as well as gender and national identity. She is the founder and the president of the Organization Q for Promotion and Protection of Culture, Identities, and Human Rights of Queer Persons, Sarajevo; she is also a fellow at the Open Society Institute and Center for Policy Studies-Budapest, researching educational policies in B&H.)

**Discussants:**

Jasmina Husanović

(Lecturer in cultural studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tuzla. She holds a BA in Politics with International Studies from the University of Warwick UK, as well as a PhD from the Department of International Politics, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, UK. Her doctoral thesis was on the topic "Recasting Political Community and Emancipatory Politics: Reflections on Bosnia". Her research interests span some universal issues in political philosophy, sociology and cultural studies, viewed through Bosnian optics. She is the President of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Research, Art and Civic Engagement "The City".)

Adisa Bašić-Čečo

(She graduated at the Philosophy Faculty in Sarajevo, at the Department of Comparative Literature. She is currently studying for an MA degree in Human Rights and Democracy at the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Centre of the University of Sarajevo and University of Bologna. Since 2001 she has been working as a journalist at one of the highest selling weekly magazines in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slobodna Bosna, in the section for culture, where she is editing a regular column for cultural criticism. She published two books of poetry, Hava's Sentences (1999) and Trauma Market (2004). Her poetry belongs to the top of literary production by the younger generation of Bosnian writers. In 2003 she was on a three-month visit to the United States on a writer's scholarship awarded by the US government, and in 2002, she spent a year in Germany as DAAD scholar in German Studies.)

Farah Tahirbegović

(Her higher education includes a degree at the Higher School for Social Work, Ljubljana, Slovenia, as well as a BA degree in comparative literature and librarianship at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo. She is the Executive Editor at the publishing company Buybook, Sarajevo. She published a collection of stories A Letter to Parents (Ljubljana, 1993), and co-edited a book The Song of A Heart of Mine - 100 Best Songs of Zaim Imamovic (Sarajevo, 2004). Her research interests focus on the problems besetting the publishing industry, and its relationship and impact on culture/education in a wider sense.)