

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION FOR PEACE CONFERENCE

15-16 May 2002

CONCLUDING DOCUMENT

The Education for Peace Conference, held at Landegg International University (Switzerland) on 15-16 May 2002, was attended by representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina state organs, international development agencies from Canada, Japan, and Switzerland, NGOs, civil society, and peace and education experts.

The main objective of the conference was to consider a four-year comprehensive plan for the introduction of the Education for Peace (EFP) Program to all 300 BiH secondary schools. The participants based their discussions on the view that education is "one of the principle means to build a culture of peace" (Article 4, Declaration on a Culture of Peace), that it constitutes "the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries" (Dakar Strategy) and promotes "lasting benefits for child growth, development, and protection (A World Fit for Children).

All participants felt strongly that the on-going process of Education for Peace is a necessity in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that the goals of the EFP-BiH Four-Year Strategy and Plan of Action are both achievable and clearly affordable, within an enabling international environment and given coordinated efforts by funding agencies. The conference further recognized the unanimous support in BiH for the continued implementation of the EFP program and noted the relevance and significance of the computer-based (eLearning) version of Education for Peace (EFP-World) for widespread introduction of the program, through both Internet and CD-ROM media, in order to reach the large number of students, teachers and parents of that country.

It was also acknowledged that the principal contribution of the Bosnian government lies in the richness of their cultural diversity, creativity, and expressed readiness, enthusiasm and commitment for the full-scale implementation of the EFP program.

The conference, therefore, resolved to:

- 1) Undertake a joint commitment to realize plans for the extension of the EFP program to schools across BiH through introduction of the EFP-World program (online and CD-ROM) to all 300 BiH secondary schools, and the EFP-Intensive program to 30 strategically selected schools, with a total of some 180,000 students, 15,000 teachers and 340,000 parents;
- 2) Raise the necessary financial, technical and human resources to accomplish these strategic goals within the period 2002-2006.

The participants further agreed that:

- There exists an urgent need to reach the present generation of secondary school students in BiH who retain memories of the 1992-1995 war, and who therefore require special consideration before leaving the public school system to form their own families and become active participants and decision-makers in the life of their society;
- There exists the necessary political will and practical support for the expansion of this program across the country; and

- Every effort must be made to take advantage of these conditions while present.

These assertions are based on the facts that:

- The EFP program in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been assessed by participants as “one of the most effective programs in this region” for enabling re-integration of returnees, inter-ethnic harmony, social development, democratisation, and modernization of the education system in general;
- The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has affirmed in its letter of 6 May 2002 that the Education for Peace program “has created a culture of cooperation and mutual understanding within and between the participating school communities” and that it “fits into the current needs in the field of education of Bosnia and Herzegovina”;
- The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the same letter, “fully support(s) the initiative to consider introducing Education for Peace to all primary and secondary schools across this country”, confident that it will “have a great impact on improving attitudes and understanding among members of the younger generation, and thus contribute to the much-needed reconciliation, stability and culture of peace in our country”, as well as “foster its social development in accord with the high standards adopted by the democratic states”;
- That the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina has stated in a letter of 14 May 2002 addressed to the participants of the EFP Conference, that the reform of education is a key for securing “a peaceful, prosperous and democratic future” in BiH, that the success of EFP is due to “the fact that the program was developed and implemented with the full collaboration of BiH and international educators, and that it received, at its inception, the support of both Ministers of Education in the Federation BiH and Republika Srpska”, and that the OHR gives its “full support and confidence to the EFP project”, and
- That there exists a high level of local ownership, marked enthusiasm and commitment of relevant political bodies, school administrators, teachers and families of all ethnic backgrounds for the Education for Peace program and its continuation.

The conference participants further noted that:

- The task of creating a culture of peace must be held as a priority in all development efforts;
- The Education for Peace program provides a comprehensive conceptual framework within which all programs related to the goals of literacy, numeracy and life skills may be designed;
- The Education for Peace program has demonstrated its synergy and accord with the key strategies and principles identified in the Covenants and Resolutions adopted by the international community over the past two decades, including “A World Fit for Children” adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at the Special Session on Children (10 May 2002); the Dakar Strategy on Education for All adopted by the World Education Forum on 28 April 2000; the Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25, 20 Nov 1989); the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243, 6 Oct 1999); as well as “International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World 2001-2010” (A/RES/53/25, 10 Nov 1998);

- Advancements in eLearning present unique opportunities for the enhancement of learning in general, and the creation of EFP-World for the widespread and systematic training of large numbers of educators and students in the principles and practices of a culture of peace, in particular.

To ensure accomplishment of the goals of the EFP-BiH Four-Year Strategy, the Conference strongly recommends that:

- A consultative “forum” be created with representatives of all relevant sectors of BiH, to meet together quarterly and deliberate on the further development and implementation of the program;
- Well-trained local specialists (EFP Professional Certificate) be used to the greatest extent possible for the continuation of program implementation, to strengthen local capacity, ensure program sustainability, and make the training and implementation process relevant and meaningful for the local communities;
- The “best practices” of the EFP-Intensive pilot program be replicated as widely as possible in the EFP-World and all other applications of the program;
- The policy of incentive for participating teachers and staff be continued, in recognition of the many additional hours of work entailed in realizing the project, and as a way of enhancing their status, morale, training and professionalism; and
- Avenues be sought to ensure that education, and education for peace, receive a higher priority within the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for Bosnia and Herzegovina as a means of ensuring longer-term commitment.

Conclusions and Invitation:

In accord with these principles and objectives, we adopt the Plan of Action described above, confident that this collective effort will contribute significantly to the achievement of a culture of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and ultimately strengthen the foundations of peace in the Balkans and the global community.

The plan requires dedicated political will and additional resources at the local, national and international levels, which must be met through concerted and sustained effort.

We hereby call on all members of the international community and BiH society to join the participants of this conference and offer generous and immediate support, thus ensuring the full realization of the Education for Peace Four-Year Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

16 May 2002, Wienacht, Switzerland

Participants in Education for Peace Conference:

H.E. Ambassador Walter Fust, Director, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Dr. Günther Baechler, Head, Conflict Prevention and Transformation Division, SDC
Dr. Hubert Eisele, Head, Division for Special and Regional Programs, Eastern Europe and CIS, SDC
Ms. Susan Brown, Chief, Peacebuilding Unit, Canadian International Development Agency
Mr. Keiichi Muraoka, Japan International Cooperation Agency
Mr. Omid Hodaie, Individual Contributor, (Canadian Executive Vice President, Sun Microsystems)
Mr. Omid Afnan, Individual Contributor, (Canadian Director, Sun Microsystems)
Mr. Željko Jerkic, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Mr. Stevo Pašalic, Deputy Minister of Science, Culture and Sport Republika Srpska
H.E. Ambassador Jugoslav Jovicic, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Switzerland
Mrs. Meliha Alic, Director, 2nd Gymnasium Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Mrs. Slavica Ivošević-Njezic, Director, Banja Luka Gymnasium, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Mrs. Jelica Žuljevic, Director, Nova Bila Primary School, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Mr. Vojin Milakovic, Director, Ivo Andric Primary School, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ms. Naghmeh Sobhani, Project Coordinator, Education for Peace, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ms. Nermana Šukalic, Assistant Project Coordinator, Education for Peace, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prof. H. B. Danesh, President, Landegg International University,, Director, Education for Peace Programs
Ms. Sara Clarke, Administrator, Education for Peace Programs, Landegg International University
Mr. Shahin Sobhani, Chief Financial Officer, Landegg International University
Ms. Nancy Ackerman, Director, Office of Development, Landegg International University
Mr. Peter Gut, Past-President, Rotary International – Zurich, Founder, Rotary BiH
Mr. Urs Halter, Rotary International, Switzerland