

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION FOR PEACE CONFERENCE

15-16 May 2002

CONFERENCE REPORT

On 15-16 May 2002, the International Education for Peace Conference was held at Landegg International University (LIU) in Wienacht, Switzerland. The Conference was jointly sponsored by LIU and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH. The occasion provided an opportunity for an exchange of views among senior government officials from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH); school directors of primary and secondary schools in BiH participating in EFP, representatives of invited countries and international development agencies, among which were Canada, Japan, and Switzerland; eLearning, peace, and conflict resolution experts on Education for Peace and its place in development, and for donor agencies to assist in raising the necessary funds for the introduction of the EFP Program to all 300 Bosnian secondary schools over a four-year period.

DAY ONE – 15 May 2002

Opening Statements

The Conference, chaired by Professor H.B. Danesh, President of LIU, began with opening remarks from His Excellency **Ambassador Walter Fust**, Director of SDC. Referring to the rich experience of SDC in post-conflict environments such as BiH and Afghanistan, Ambassador Fust stated that it is clear that peace is not accomplished by physical and economic means alone, but rather, it is a long-term process within which psychosocial dimensions must also be addressed. He emphasized the need to focus on "preventative" conflict resolution and stated that the Education for Peace Program of LIU makes a significant contribution to BiH's reintegration and democratization through building up the "social capital" of the country. He articulated the need to gain international support for the extension of the program to all secondary schools and for development of the online delivery of the EFP curriculum. He confirmed that he would be ready to bring the proposal to colleagues in other countries.

Following Ambassador Fust's remarks, **Dr. Hubert Eisele**, SDC Head of Division for Special and Regional Programs in Eastern Europe and CIS, offered an overview of the humanitarian aid and reconstruction initiatives that Switzerland has conducted in BiH from 2000 to 2003. During this period, SDC has focused its activities on three key areas: (1) economic reconstruction, (2) reconciliation and conflict transformation, (3) good governance. In all these programs, mainstreaming of gender and youth issues has been a priority. Summarizing the overall aim of SDC's mission in BiH, he stated, "We should strive towards a well-respected BiH, integrated in the region and in Europe; a BiH that is prospering in a social and market oriented economy, with a well-established democracy on basis of a profound and sound legal system."

Representing the BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Assistant Minister **Mr. Željko Jerkic** reiterated the full support of his government for the strategy aimed at bringing EFP to all schools in both entities of BiH. Having just returned from the World Summit for Children, which was held in New York between 8-10 May 2002, and at which event the issue of education was prominently featured, Mr. Jerkic emphasized how education must be viewed as "a local, national, regional and global issue." "Education," he stated, "is the

most powerful arm that should enable our young generations to take over the ruling and organizing of our society and carry out the message of peace, communication and tolerance.” With particular reference to the present needs of BiH, he shared how “the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina inflicted great damage in many sectors of life, but also in the education sector.” Citing brain drain, the decimation of school buildings, and fragmentation of the educational system in general, Mr. Jerkic explained how the 1992-1995 war “made education a tool for separation, and not for communication and bringing people together”. Envisioning the road ahead, he concluded his address by saying:

The tasks before us are enormous. We have to reverse this negative current and ...help the recovery and sustainable development of our country. The Education for Peace project is an outstanding and especially valuable project which will help us to reinvent in Bosnia and Herzegovina communication between people, long-term cooperation, and the living together of different ethnic groups. Contrary to stereotypes, people in this area lived together and respected each other (prior to the war) and helped and learned from one another. We have to reinvent civilized dialogue and reinvent a culture of peace in our country. Without this, we cannot talk about development as a whole in our country. Huge tasks are before us. Education and Education for Peace will put us into the family of established European values, which is one of the pillars of our overall strategy to join the European mainstream. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is behind this project. We think that the second phase, which would enable us to train the trainers—and thus enable a group of people to spread the knowledge of peace and tolerance—and to embark upon use of the most developed electronic way of communication, is of crucial importance in our overall development path.

The Deputy Minister of Education for the Republika Srpska (RS), **Mr. Stevan Pašalic**, expressed his regret that the Minister of Education for the Federation of BiH was unable to attend. Nevertheless, he conveyed unequivocally the support of the RS Ministry of Education for the expansion of the EFP Program across schools in the RS entity, indicating that EFP makes an important contribution to the realization of sector-wide reform goals for the Republika Srpska. Citing the successful results achieved during the pilot year of implementation, Mr. Pašalic also took note that “Education for Peace is ...a long-term process.” Committing the support of the Ministry for these initiatives, he assured all present that the Ministry is “in complete agreement with the project...understand(s) what the plans are for the future, and what it requires to expand the project to more schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”

Dr. Mujo Demirovic, Minister of Education for the Federation of BiH, who was unable to attend the Conference due to ill health, sent a message to the Conference participants, affirming the full support of his Ministry for the strategy involving expansion of the Education for Peace Programs in all schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A message addressed by the High Representative for BiH, **Mr. Wolfgang Petritsch**, to the Conference was also read. In it, he writes that “during my three-year term as High Representative, I have witnessed Bosnia and Herzegovina make tremendous progress. However, several key issues remain if the people of this country are to secure a peaceful, prosperous and democratic future. The reform of education is among the most essential of these.” Reiterating the support that OHR has given the Education for Peace (EFP) Project of LIU since its initiation in 1999, Mr. Petritsch stated that “I am especially aware that one of the main reasons for its success is 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.” In concluding his message, the High

Representative says, "I give my full support and confidence to the EFP project and wish you success in you efforts to extend its reach to build on the accomplishments you have already achieved."

His Excellency **Mr. Jugoslav Jovicic**, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Switzerland, who attended the full two-day program of the Conference, warmly welcomed all guests and offered his full support for future EFP activities.

Following the above statements, **Professor H.B. Danesh**, President of LIU, provided a background on the inception of the Education for Peace Project and its pilot implementation in BiH. He emphasized the fact that the program was initiated at the invitation of the Federation Ministry of Education, and with the full support of the RS Ministry and the relevant Cantonal Ministries in Sarajevo and Central Bosnia Cantons. In each of these communities, representing the three main ethnic groups of the country, the EFP curriculum and approach were universally accepted. Thus, the program began with support and representation from every sector of BiH society.

Remarks were then shared by four of the BiH school directors involved with the EFP pilot program:

Mrs. Meliha Alic, Director of the 2nd Gymnasium of Sarajevo, and Deputy Speaker of Federation BiH Parliament, emphasized the way in which the EFP approach has helped parents, teachers, and especially children who were in Sarajevo during the war and those who have recently returned from other countries, to understand one another better and establish relationships. She further stressed that this project has helped participants to see how the principle of unity in diversity can be implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She stated that EFP has given people a way to cultivate a greater sense of peace.

Mrs. Slavica Ivošević-Njezic, Director of the Banja Luka Gymnasium, stated that after the Dayton Peace Agreement it was difficult "to see the light at the end of the tunnel" until the EFP Program was brought to them. Through the trainings and methodology of EFP, teachers had the necessary tools to show students how to create peace. She urged the conference participants to see the importance of bringing this program to all schools in the country.

Mrs. Jelica Zuljevic, Director of the Croat Primary School in Nova Bila, emphasized the tireless efforts of her staff and teachers in implementing the EFP Program in their school, and the spirit of sincere collaboration that has been established between the local community and the international staff members of the EFP Program. She stressed the fact that the "Conflict-Free Conflict Resolution" methodology of EFP is very important for a newly structured BiH. It provides the basis for forming new patterns of behavior that result in the well-being of oneself and others.

Mr. Vojin Milakovic, Director of the Ivo Andric Primary School in Banja Luka, re-affirmed the statements of his colleagues and emphasized the effect that EFP has had on strengthening communication and friendships among people in BiH. In his belief, he said, that if EFP is enabled to continue, BiH children would be able to travel to any part of this country and meet the people there as "friends."

Concluding the opening session of the conference, Dr. Danesh observed that "in the course of our work in BiH we have encountered many outstanding and noble souls in all parts of this extremely rich and diverse society. These individuals have unhesitatingly committed themselves to the cause of peace and its transmission to the younger generation in BiH." Dr. Danesh paid particular attention to the fact that "the human child is molded by the education that he/she receives in the home, school, and society. It is,

therefore, important not only that every child has the opportunity to have an education but also that every child receives a kind of education that will help increase both the quality of life and the degree of unity experienced by each generation.”

Presentation of the EFP-BiH Four-Year Implementation Strategy and Roundtable Discussions

This session focused on the Four-Year Implementation Strategy designed to introduce the EFP Program to 180,000 students, 15,000 teachers and staff, and 320,000 parents and guardians in BiH. The Strategy components include:

- 1) Training of 1000 teachers as EFP specialists for program implementation and sustainability;
- 2) Implementation of EFP-WORLD in all 300 BiH secondary schools, via Internet and CD-ROM;
- 3) Implementation of EFP-INTENSIVE in 30 strategically selected schools;
- 4) Involvement of 1000 BiH municipal leaders in specially designed EFP seminars (EFP-LEADERSHIP Program).

In this session, participants reviewed in detail the features, feasibility, and financial plans associated with components 1 and 2: the EFP-WORLD and EFP Professional Certificate programs (see attached document).

Mr. Omid Hodaie, Executive Vice-President of Sun Microsystems, presented the concept of eLearning, its advantages and requirements. He then introduced components of the technical design and development of EFP-WORLD and emphasized that through application of advanced technology to EFP, the scalability potential for the program can be made worldwide. Mr. Hodaie then announced the commitment of his private foundation to invest €2,000,000 in the development of the online EFP Program.

EFP-WORLD: Following Mr. Hodaie’s remarks, a 10-minute demonstration of the EFP-WORLD program was presented by **Ms. Sara Clarke**, Administrator of the EFP Programs, giving conference participants an opportunity to view a sample application of EFP lessons as they would be delivered in online or CD-ROM format. The demo included samples of EFP instructional modules for teachers and students.

Mrs. Alic highlighted the technological needs of BiH schools and the benefits that the EFP-WORLD program will bring. She suggested that better-equipped schools, such as the 2nd Gymnasium, offer their facilities for teacher training in the use of EFP-WORLD. She also emphasized that the use of BiH teachers as trainers has been the most effective and meaningful method of introducing EFP Program to new school communities and urged that this should continue.

EFP-Professional Certificate: Participants discussed feasibility aspects of the EFP-WORLD Program and its two-year training program, EFP-Professional Certificate, for 1000 BiH teachers. Upon their graduation, these trained teachers would act as facilitators and resource people for schools receiving the EFP-WORLD and EFP-INTENSIVE programs. **Ms. Nermana Šukalic**, an assistant EFP-BiH Coordinator, reported that, to date, thirty-eight teachers have completed the EFP Professional Certificate. These teachers—representing the Bosniak, Croat, and Serb communities—are working together to design, test, and refine peace education curriculum units.

Ms. Naghmeh Sobhani, Coordinator of the EFP Program in BiH, cited the example of a biology teacher in the Sarajevo Gymnasium whose EFP biology lessons were evaluated by Ministry inspectors to be of such quality that she is now training other biology teachers in the Canton to use the same approach. The inspectors noted in particular the high level of student participation and enthusiasm for the learning process. Having participated herself for two years in the EFP implementation process, **Ms. Šukalic** emphasized the need to train an increased number of EFP specialists in order to facilitate the process of expansion.

Contribution of the BiH Government to Project Goals

Ambassador Fust remarked that a system of incentives may be very important for building and maintaining the program sustainability. He then asked the BiH delegation: "What is your government ready to do? Are they ready to provide political, technical, and financial support? What is the school budget like and where does this budget come from?"

To this, **Mr. Pašalic**, Deputy RS Minister of Education responded that the assistance of the Ministries to date has been in the form of providing a "green light" for the project, as well as space and technical assistance. He then commented that, "based on the good results of the first phase, it will be recommended throughout our reports that support for the project continue. It is possible, therefore, and right that a portion of the entity budget be allocated for these efforts."

Mrs. Alic stressed the value of the teachers' enthusiasm and the capacities that they contribute to all aspects of the EFP Program. Connecting the dedication of these human resources to the sound methodology of the EFP Program during its pilot phase, she stated: "I would say that Dr. Danesh and his team have struck the right chord in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we should draw upon this great resource of enthusiasm." All of the school directors present agreed that the willingness among their staff for the expansion of the program is high. Mrs. Alic also emphasized that the delivery of EFP through application of modernized tools will be good for the development of the education sector as a whole.

Opportunities for Coordinated Donor Efforts

Mr. Keiichi Muraoka, Resident Representative of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency for the Balkan region, stated that peace building and education are of great concern to the government of Japan, and informed the participants that in 2002 Japan will be financing the rebuilding of five BiH elementary schools, destroyed during the recent war. Additionally, they are considering contributing funds for a further six elementary schools in the coming year. Mr. Muraoka asked if the education sector has been described as a priority in the interim-PRSP, so as to gain the necessary support from the government of BiH and the international donor community.

Ms. Susan Brown, Chief of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Peacebuilding Unit, stated that Canada and Japan are now coordinating a special taskforce on E-Learning, and she felt that EFP would be an ideal case study.

DAY TWO – 16 May 2002

The second day of the conference focused on presentation of the remaining two components of the EFP Four-Year Strategy for BiH: the EFP-INTENSIVE and EFP-LEADERSHIP programs.

EFP-Intensive: This is the 2-year community-based program as piloted in six schools since the year 2000; the aim of the Four-Year Strategy is to introduce EFP-Intensive into 30 strategically chosen secondary schools (10% of all secondary schools in the country). The selected schools will include those located in zones most affected by the conflict and violence of the war, those with high percentages of displaced persons, refugees and orphans, those that remain physically divided on the basis of ethnic grouping, and those that are in the greatest degree of poverty. Based on the results of the pilot phase, this intensive method of delivering EFP has been proven as a very effective but very demanding program in terms of the human and financial resources it requires. Since it is not possible to implement such an intensive program in every community, these selected schools constitute the critical percentage of total schools necessary to have an effect on the country's general population. Through implementation of this strategy component over 18,000 students, 1500 teachers and school staff, and 32,000 parents and guardians will be directly affected.

EFP-LEADERSHIP: As one of the keys to the sustainability of EFP, the EFP-LEADERSHIP program for municipal authorities is designed for parallel implementation in the communities where schools are participating in the EFP Program. The objective is to assist leaders to respond effectively to the challenges of governing a multi-ethnic society, in such manner that interethnic harmony and cooperation, regard for the human rights of all citizens, the equality of women and men, and the practice of conflict-free methods of conflict resolution, may come to characterize the communities within their supervision.

Roundtable on EFP-INTENSIVE Program

During the roundtable discussion, the BiH delegation was asked whether the estimated need for inclusion of 30 schools in this component of the strategy is accurate, as no official statistics on disadvantaged schools are available. **Mr. Pašalic**, RS Deputy Minister of Education responded that this is indeed a fair estimate considering the total number of schools in BiH. He then recommended that the best way to select these schools would be through creation of a state-wide committee that would identify and apply appropriate criteria.

Ambassador Jovicic remarked that he is very encouraged by the approach EFP has taken with regard to seeking full cooperation at the state, entity, and grassroots levels. In line with this thought, he suggested the creation of a forum that would meet periodically to exchange ideas and information, and actively participate in furthering the process of EFP Program implementation at every phase.

Mrs. Alic, speaking in reference to school-selection criteria, reiterated the recommendation to give priority to schools that were destroyed during the war, those that are divided at present, those that have a high percentage of returnees and those schools that are in great poverty. She also advocated the use of experienced teachers and students (from the pilot schools) to facilitate the process of bringing EFP to new schools.

Mrs. Ivošević-Njezic commented that the project has "come to BiH at the right time" and thus recommended that every effort be made to include more than 30 schools in the EFP-INTENSIVE process.

She suggested creating a mechanism whereby teachers that have been already trained be provided with the opportunity to facilitate and train other teachers in the neighboring schools so that EFP can eventually expand further. This would allow many more schools to benefit from the method of the EFP-INTENSIVE program, while reducing costs through mobilization of local specialists.

Mr. Muraoka outlined Japan's intention to rebuilt 11 elementary schools in the RS and BiH Federation over the next few years, indicating that five of these will be completed by March 2003. He then expressed his personal view that these schools may be eligible for implementation of the EFP-Intensive program.

Roundtable on Four-Year Financial Plan

Ms. Brown raised the question of whether contingency plans have been made if only a certain percentage of the financial goals are raised. She also asked whether one or another of the Strategy components take precedence over the others. She recommended that EFP Program administrators consider this matter during the planning process for the upcoming phase.

Mr. Shahin Sobhani, Chief Financial Officer of LIU, clarified that the scale of any of the Four-Year Strategy components is directly related to the funds received for program implementation. As indicated in the Financial Strategy document, the EFP-WORLD and EFP-Professional Certificate programs must be paired in order to ensure program implementation and sustainability, and that the EFP-INTENSIVE and EFP-LEADERSHIP programs ensure the overall impact and sustainability of the EFP process in BiH. The contingency plan, if necessary, is to scale-down, for example, the number of schools receiving the intensive program. The overall objective, however, is to ensure implementation of each of the Strategy components.

Concluding Highlights

In the concluding session, discussion focused on identifying the critical issues that emerged from the EFP Conference. Highlighted below, these issues and recommendations have been incorporated in the Conference's Concluding Document (see attached).

Ms. Brown offered her final observations that:

One of the messages that has been recorded here is the need for the government authorities to ensure that priority is given to the education sector as part of the poverty reduction strategy. We can all undertake to work through our various political channels to provide the moral support and encouragement necessary for the government to do that. The other point that I have picked up from the teachers is the high value they place on the intensive people-to-people work that has been done in the participating schools. We should ensure that the priorities for the project do not follow where the money is available but that, in fact, some sense of priority is established based on perceived needs of the education administrators who are present here.

Ms. Brown then elaborated on the value of financial incentives as an important symbol of recognition of the hard work of the participating teachers and staff. Referring to this comment, it was pointed out that a large component of the expense of EFP-INTENSIVE is the token incentive that is given to all of the school staff.

Mr. Jerkic commented that EFP has so far been evaluated as successful and that there is a need for its continuation and expansion because of its significant contribution to the process of recovery so crucial for

BiH. He commended the importance given so far to the central participation of local people already trained in EFP for the continuation and expansion of the program.

Mr. Pašalic suggested that the concluding document of the conference be shared with both Ministries of Education and then be presented to the Council of Ministers of BiH. He recommended that the Education Reform Strategy Document prepared by his Ministry also be drawn upon and offered to make it available.

Mr. Muraoka commented: "During this two-day session, I have been so impressed by the enthusiasm of the school directors and their intention and eagerness to continue this program as an essential part of their own process of educational reform. We must take particular note of this point of ownership of the community."

Ms. Clarke emphasized the urgent need to reach the present generation of secondary school students, who have full memory of the war, prior to their exit from the public school system and their entrance into professional life and family rearing.

Mrs. Ivošević-Njezic stressed the importance of ensuring that the "best practices" of the pilot program, its components and methodologies, which proved so effective, be preserved in the implementation strategy for new schools. She emphasized the uniqueness of the EFP-INTENSIVE program, and commended its policy of engaging the entire school community, including the parents and family members of the students.

Mr. Milakovic, referring to the challenges in BiH, strongly stated that EFP is "the most effective program in this region" and is critical to the re-integration of returnees. He also recommended involving higher primary school students in Phase 1 of the EFP-WORLD implementation plan. He also echoed the need to improve the overall economic and professional status of educators through the provision of financial incentives.

Mrs. Zuljevic emphasized the richness of local capacities, including the readiness, enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment of teachers, students, and parents to be actively involved in promoting the EFP concepts throughout the region. She recommended the eventual inclusion of kindergarten children and their caretakers in the EFP Program.

Dr. Baechler pointed out that EFP is not just a "peace education program" in the narrow sense, but applies the principles of a culture of peace to the whole education sector. With regard to eLearning, he emphasized that EFP-WORLD will help bridge the "digital divide," and it is thereby an important contribution to the Global Knowledge Partnership.

Ms. Brown added that the full political support given to EFP by BiH authorities and the Office of the High Representative, as well as the practical implementation support demonstrated by the school administrators and teachers present at the conference is of considerable significance. She further elaborated on the contribution of EFP toward the realization of the UN's "Education for All" strategy goals for 2015. EFP, she said, provides a framework for education in good citizenship. Along these lines, she also referred to the Conventions of the Rights of the Child.

Prof. Danesh added to the above points by highlighting the role that EFP plays in raising consciousness about the importance of educating girl children and involving women in the administration of community strategies for development at all levels.

CONCLUSIONS

The conference concluded with participants giving unanimous support for the continuation and expansion of the EFP Program across BiH. It was felt that this could best be achieved through implementation of the Four-Year Strategy and Plan of Action, which was assessed as both realistic and achievable.. Agreement was reached on all issues raised in the final session. Furthermore, all participants agreed that further support should be sought from both public and private donors, at the individual, institutional, and governmental levels, for the continued implementation of the program. The members of the BiH delegation demonstrated a full and heartfelt commitment to working together toward achieving the objectives set out in the Strategy. Representatives of the Governments present shared a willingness to begin negotiations in their respective head offices for the securing of the necessary funds. The technical experts present reiterated their commitment to move into the next phase of developing the online delivery of EFP-WORLD.