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Education for Peace – World Programme Bosnia and Herzegovina

Implemented by International Education for Peace Institute

Project Duration: 1.9. 2002 – 31.8.2006

Assessment of Selected Elements of the Programme

Programme Desk Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bern, September 2004

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Background

The Education for Peace (EFP) project was first initiated in June 2000 in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), in partnership with the Ministries of Education of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. The pilot project lasted two years and involved three primary and three secondary schools including each national group, i.e. Bosnian, Croatian and Serb. Altogether 400 teachers, 6000 students and their parents participated.

In 2002, the EFP-World Programme was developed as a pilot project addressing e-learning and a media-based version of the EFP Programme aiming to offer a comprehensive peace education programme online or on CD ROM to schools. The EFP-World Programme in BiH is co-funded by SDC through a four-year grant for development of the main segments of the EFP-World curriculum in both English and Bosnian language. EFP-World will be implemented in 100 secondary school communities of BiH involving the participation of approximately 60 000 students and 5 000 teachers and school staff.

The BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministries of Education in the Federation BiH and Republika Srpska are actively involved in consultations throughout the implementation of EFP-World. In the long-term, it is expected that the Ministries of Education will introduce EFP-related curricula developed by Bosnian teachers into the educational standards and policies of the Entities.

Introduction

An evaluation mission to BiH on behalf of SDC took place in May 2004. SDC mandated a Norwegian expert on peace education (Prof. B. Brock-Utne, University of Oslo, team leader) and a Swiss expert on e-learning (Dr. R. Greber, University of Berne) with the evaluation mission that was carried out between 19 and 28 May 2004. The report was shared with EFP International who wrote a response addressing the issues raised by the evaluators ("EFP-International Response to an Evaluation of the EFP World Project, 30.7.04").

An additional assessment of EFP-contents was contributed by an SDC staffer – specialist on issues of conflict and peace research. This assessment is based on the analysis of two EFP teacher manuals and other documents.

This paper summarises selected issues discussed in these three documents and considered of importance at the present period of project implementation. Most texts below are quotes and edited passages from the three documents mentioned above.

In order to clearly identify the author of the various texts, the following labels were applied:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Label</u>
Evaluation Report	EVRE
Response by EFP Institute	REFP
Assessment by SDC-staff	SDCA

This document is addressed to the implementing partner and the EFP Steering Committee; it represents a basis for monitoring of the project and pending operational decisions.

1. Reception of EFP in BiH

1.1 Observations by the evaluation team

1.1.1 (EVRE) Interaction of the project with ministries and pedagogical institutes

It must be looked at as an achievement that all of the 13 Ministers of Education had agreed to participate in this EFP programme as well as the Directors of the 8 pedagogical institutes and one hundred directors of secondary schools. The Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Directors of Pedagogical Institutes and Directors of secondary schools, met by the evaluation team, talked positively about the programme, though few of them had attended any project seminars. For them the project led to a spectacular peace event and to children and teachers getting together.

1.1.2 (EVRE) New didactical elements and learning experience

School directors and school principals were seldom themselves confronted with the didactical material of EFP. They made reference to the work of the teacher at their schools when asked about the effectiveness and didactical learning methods used by the EFP-program.

The teachers interviewed mentioned first of all the opportunity to be trained by the EFP-program through a new educational framework which offers new didactical possibilities: more interaction between students and teachers, an open forum for discussion between students and teachers, and the relief for students of not having a heavy memory load with drill exercises. They considered it as important to have a new learning environment and another learning experience due to EFP-lessons. To be a "peacemaker" was declared as an important learning target by many teachers. Almost all students interviewed referred to the impact of EFP in positive terms. Some students mentioned that EFP had been used as a common topic to discuss with their parents.

1.1.3 (EVRE) The importance of bringing people together

The most important part of the project seems to be that it has brought people together across nationalities and languages; it has provided a place to meet. Several persons said that in the education sector there was no other project like this. It has provided and continues to provide physical spaces and opportunities for people to meet, share their experiences and build up friendships. The project seems to have had - and still continues to have - a healing effect on a war-torn nation. One of the teachers said: "The biggest impact was on the psychological level. People got an opportunity to express their emotions. We need this type of therapy. It had to do with the atmosphere created".

1.1.4 (EVRE) Impact on teachers, staff and students

There seems to be little doubt that the project has had great impact on many of the participants, both on teachers, support staff, administrators and students involved. The most important impact seems to have been on the personal level, the meeting of people across nationalities and languages. The evaluation team heard several touching stories from teachers about their own experiences and the experiences of parents and children gained especially during the pilot phase of the project.

1.2 Conclusions by SDC

It may be concluded from the evaluators' observations and comments that the programme is generally well received by Bosnian pupils, teachers and authorities. Psychological elements such as 'bringing people together in an atmosphere of trust' as well as a number of didactical innovations are recognised by the evaluators. EFP has achieved positive impact not only among teachers and students but has had effects on the families of participants as well.

However, while the value of EFP modules and the e-learning component - from a point of view of learning contents and didactics – has been well established, programme effects on the behaviour of students, teachers and communities at large can be assessed only at a later date and will present certain methodological challenges.

2. Observations on the Contents of EFP

2.1 Observations by an SDC staffer

2.1.1 (SDCA) A global-humanistic orientation

The basic orientation taken towards education in this Program is **to be rated as positive**. The Program adheres to a comprehensive-humanistic orientation which is rooted in the same values as the activities of the SDC (not only equality, justice, humanism, but also anti-nationalism, anti-racism, as well as world-level anti-fundamentalism and anti-chauvinism). In this way, Education for Peace furthermore attempts to build up a standpoint from which to counter reigning tendencies towards disintegration and national fundamentalism. This is certainly beyond any criticism even for those who may possibly reject the emphatically spiritual orientation.

2.1.2 (SDCA) Coherency and orientation towards resources and potentials

Another praiseworthy aspect is the coherence of content matter shown by the various modules and units, obviously penned for the most part by the same author. The reader thus gains the impression of a unified approach regarding both content and method. The marked focus on resources and potential is to be accorded recognition.

2.1.3 (SDCA) A lack of reference to the current scientific discourse

Critical points, which unfortunately are at times in stark contrast to the positive impression, include the following: Globalization is understood and communicated in an almost deterministic sense as being a product of positive integration efforts of reasonable human beings. A critical embedding of the concept into the current state of discussions is missing, as well as an examination of the role of states, institutions, and the economy. Above all, the danger of a setback in the process of global civilization, as is being discussed in scientific circles (Dieter Senghaas *et al.*), is ignored. The entirety of the material is treated in a narrative-descriptive and normative manner as opposed to (in accordance with the level!) a manner characterized by scientific discourse, calling the theses into question and critically examining them.

Even if the authors' intention is to facilitate the breakthrough of a certain world view (and there is nothing to be said against this!), the students capacity for critical thinking must be stimulated. The worldview of the authors is accorded major prominence in all of the documents. This view is scarcely to be called into question any further, but rather to be reinforced by means of numerous – albeit in end effect didactically minimally productive – quotations of various world-renowned personalities from recent centuries.

On the whole, the vision of world unity and living together side-by-side in harmony is preponderant. More recent peace education theory, however, places the accent more on the

development of conflict understanding and, first and foremost, on the development of individual conflict capacity, i.e., the constructive management of discord, frustration, problems, and acute conflict. This dimension is entirely absent.

2.1.4 (SDCA) Lack of reference to different systematic levels

The orientation towards a culture of non-violence (in the spirit of Ghandi, Gene Sharps, etc.) is very welcome. At the same time, however, any connection (in the 3 Units assessed) to the various system-levels (from the individual up to the UN "World System") is missing. Modern peace science attempts to understand and to explain the levels of individual, institution, and system in their interactions, dependencies, and asymmetries, which furthermore implies the aspects of power. Neither is anything to be found this-concerning, not even in the Teacher's Manuals.

2.2 Observations by the evaluation team

2.2.1 (EVRE) A harmonizing approach

The conceptual approach is one of harmonization: based on the hypothesis for global peace to be achieved, a new worldview is needed. It seems somewhat strange that the project sees it as its mission to promote global peace. It should be enough to concentrate on the local context.

2.2.2 (EVRE) Concept and function of conflict

The approach of the project is one of conflict avoidance: there is a belief in the creation of a conflict-free society. The evaluation team has not been able to detect a thorough discussion of the concept of conflict. There is a claim that societies become conflict-oriented or peaceful depending on their worldview. The author responsible argues against peace researchers and theorists who hold a conflict-oriented worldview and see conflict as an inherent part of daily life.

It is certainly possible to see conflict as an inherent part of daily life, as necessary and beneficial, yet argue for the solution of conflicts in a non-violent manner. Indeed one might see one of the goals of peace education as being to teach students to learn to solve conflicts non-violently. Conflicts may be seen as daily realities that come from differing needs, values, goals, resources, from scarcity and competition. Conflicts seem to be inevitable. The ability to resolve conflicts without using violence and force is probably one of the most important skills an individual can learn, yet there are few formal opportunities for such learning. In order to be dealt with constructively, conflicts have to be faced. Peace education seeks to avoid power confrontations and to work instead for compromise, negotiations and the creation of win-win situations in order to resolve conflicts. Learners need to learn to work together constructively and to cooperate rather than compete. While cooperation gives training in win-win techniques, competition creates winners and losers.

2.3 Reply by EFPI to observation of the evaluation team

2.3.1 (REFP) A shift of approach is needed in peace education

The issue of peaceful conflict resolution, as stated in the Evaluation Document, is indeed very important and it already has been incorporated in the EFP curriculum. Reference is made to two articles possibly not considered by the evaluators which present the conceptual framework and methodology of Conflict Free Conflict Resolution (CFCR).

2.3.2 (REFP) The notion of 'conflict free conflict resolution'

CFCR calls for a shift of attention in the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) field from sole focus on conflict and its resolution, to the underlying causes of conflict and how points of unity required for no adversarial resolution of conflicts can be identified. Application of this formulation to peace education, as is done in the EFP Curriculum, likewise calls for a shift in the currently held perspectives and approaches to peace education. EFP is based on the hypothesis that in order to create peace, we should create unity in the context of diversity. This sounds simple and may be perceived as “simplistic”. However, it is, in fact, one of the most challenging and difficult tasks. The focus of EFP and CFCR in BiH schools is not to emphasize for participants how destructive entrenched conflict and war are. They already know this first-hand. Rather, EFP and CFCR aim at helping the participants to create a culture of peace and peaceful conflict-resolution out of the ruins of war. The skills taught are primarily about how to create cooperation, harmony, unity, and peace within and between the participating individuals, their families, their places of work, their communities and finally in the context of the whole nation and eventually between the nations. We also teach the participants how to ensure that once a conflict appears it does not degenerate into violence, and if it reaches the stage of violence, how it could be resolved without creating new violence: thus the notion of Conflict-Free Conflict Resolution. CFCR does not hold the view that we can create absolutely conflict-free societies. It is not possible. The important issue before us is to learn how to prevent conflicts and how to resolve conflicts without creating new conflicts and without creating violence. These issues are all discussed in the two articles.

2.3.3 (REFP) The need of new methods of peace education

While the acceptance of conflict as an inevitable and beneficial phenomenon is widespread, there remains considerable debate over the definition of the terms “conflict”, “peace”, and their application to varying scenarios. Furthermore, there is considerable research from the field of peace studies that demonstrates both how conflict is anything but beneficial and that humans are indeed capable of behaving in non-conflicted and non-violent ways in the midst of conflict and violence. In other words, within the arena of academic discourse, the views of the evaluators regarding the inevitability of conflict are broadly held, but are not representative of the entire field of peace education, nor are they conclusive. Indeed, the academic uncertainties regarding the nature of peace and how to successfully cultivate it in human life are substantial enough to warrant the development of new models of peace education and to test their validity through application in the field – only in this manner can knowledge on the subject of peace and peace education evolve and be shared.

2.3.4 (REFP) The challenge of transforming worldviews

As UNESCO states “[f]irst and foremost, a culture of peace implies a global effort to change how people think and act in order to promote peace”.

However, as research indicates, the task of worldview transformation is, by itself, a very difficult objective, even under normal conditions. But under conditions of conflict, violence and war, a new and more fundamental challenge to changing “how people think” is encountered. Conflict and violence afflict and damage all aspects of human life. They destroy the physical habitat of people. They inflict physical and psychological injuries on people. They cause social dislocation, poverty, and disease. They weaken the moral and spiritual fabric of individual and community life. Conflict, violence, and war negatively impact every aspect of life—environmental, medical, psychological, economic, social, moral, and spiritual. These injuries make the task of creating a culture of peace through alteration of worldview very difficult and point to yet another prerequisite condition for effective peace education: a

culture of healing. Stated differently, successful peace education can only take place in a peace-oriented milieu— a culture of peace—that in turn assists participants to heal their conflict-inflicted injuries in the context of a healing environment.

2.4 Conclusions by SDC

An unavoidable difficulty which may be a source of misunderstanding when assessing the contents of the EFP World Programme is that the evaluators and SDC staff have made their assessments based on the material available at the time of the mission. EFPI has stated, that some of the points raised are still in the process of writing and will be covered by later versions of the EFP teaching material.

Obviously, there is a fundamental difference in opinion between the evaluation team/SDC staffer and EFP authors on the function of conflict and its relation to peace education. SDC does agree with the evaluators' suggestions as to presenting to students the various academic views prevalent in research and teaching on peace and conflict. It recommends the partner, to implement respective recommendations.

3. Recommendations on Programme Implementation

3.1 Availability of computers at schools

Recommendation by the evaluation team: The evaluators questioned the availability of computers at EFP schools and connectivity to the internet, a precondition for the implementation of the e-learning component.

Response by EFP: A survey of the 100 participating EFP-World schools indicates that the majority of schools have some functionally-adequate computer infrastructure. Many schools have indicated that additional computers will be received before the next school year. The majority, however, are financially unable to add new computers at this time and would require a donation or grant for this purpose. EFP-Balkans will be consulting with school directors on how students and teachers may increase their access to existing computers through a rotational schedule.

3.2 Additional staff training

(REFP) Recommendation by the evaluation team: There is a need for staff training in peace studies encompassing approaches other than the one currently adhered to.

Response by EFP: We are in agreement with the evaluation team and will keep their recommendation in mind as we arrange our future in-service training schedule. Many of our staff members come with prior training in a variety of peace education approaches and continue to receive on-going and systematic training in essential new developments in this and related fields.

3.3 Internet links to further educational resources

(REFP) Recommendation by the evaluation team: The Teacher's Manuals are too strongly axed towards a unitary text which is a predetermined "given". There is an absence of indications to on-going discussions, to current literature, to various schools of thought, etc. The list of reference literature is extremely erratic in terms of current scientific literature on

peace. Indeed, at present there exists a respectable range of standard works on the topic which are simply not taken notice of.

EFP-World-learning-units are very much self-referential. This should be changed to have EFP-units which are open to other academic sources.

Response by EFP: In a previous report to SDC we indicated that the instructional design approach to the EFP-World units has been undergoing further evolution based on newly researched best practices in e-learning. These revisions include greater interactivity within the e-learning unit and more tutoring and academic referencing elements (e.g. interactive glossary of terms, interactive contextual background resources for conceptual discussions, etc.), which are accessible in both the CD-Rom and future online versions, as well as links to further educational resources and academic articles on the internet.

3.4 Collaboration with local universities

(REFP) Recommendation by the evaluation team: The dialogue that EFP has just started with the University of Banja Luka and the University of Sarajevo in order to get professors and teaching staff from these institutions involved in the project, should be intensified.

Response by EFP: We are in agreement with the recommendation. EFP-International and EFP-Balkans are actively seeking academic collaboration with BiH universities, and have developed a proposal for the offering of an accredited MA degree in Education for Peace based on a multi-campus configuration. The concept emerged based on initial consultations with senior officials at the University of Sarajevo and the OSCE Department of Education. This initiative is in the early phases of development, but constitutes a priority for EFP-International.

3.5 Collaboration with other NGO's

(REFP) Recommendation by the evaluation team: There was not much cooperation with other NGOs working with peace education in BiH, though there are several potentially interesting partners such as Civitas, Sezam, the Post-Pessimists, Education Builds BiH, and Cultural Container.

"Cooperation with other NGOs working within the field of peace education in BiH should be established and further developed."

Response by EFP: In principle, it is beneficial to collaborate with other local NGOs for the purpose of mutually supporting and coordinating one another's initiatives and for pooling available resources to achieve otherwise non-feasible goals, should the respective organization have compatible aims and methods. It must be noted, however, that there are virtually hundreds of NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with varying degrees of legitimacy and competency, as well as divergent objectives, many of which incite aversion or conflict of interests of one or another of Bosnian's ethnic groups. EFP, in principle, is ready and willing to collaborate with NGOs: a) who have compatible aims, b) whose areas of need and/or expertise correspond to what EFP requires and/or can offer, c) who can be accepted by each of the ethnic and religious groups in BiH without contention. Of course, even if these criteria are met, the collaboration must be feasible within EFP's project budget and schedule. With a view to these criteria, EFP has actively participated over the past four years in several educational NGO coordination initiatives on the part of OHR, OSCE and the European

Commission for Technical Assistance (EC-TAER), and networked with BiH-based NGOs in peace, security, civil society development, the arts and education.

3.6 Conclusions by SDC

Availability of computers is certainly a basic issue. While for the schools presently addressed by EFP, availability is by and large secured (80 % of schools are indicated to be in possession of computer hardware) difficulties may arise once the programme is to be disseminated to additional schools.

Other important points raised by the evaluators such as greater interactivity within e-learning units, along with increased collaboration with universities and other NGOs with a view to more intensely include the local context and resources, are shared by SDC.

As to the present state of programme implementation according to reports received and personal observations, EFP is well on its way to produce the output foreseen in the project document.

4. Chances of Sustainability: The Challenge of Integrating EFP into the Official Curriculum

4.1 (EVRE) The difficulty of mainstreaming EFP

The approach to mainstream peace education into the curriculum of all school-subject activities is a difficult one. Whether this is possible depends very much on how peace education is defined and what peace education activities are promoted. If the peace education activities are just promoted on certain occasions albeit within any subject, and the approach is one of educating about peace rather than for peace, it should be possible to do this within the present national curriculum reform.

4.2 (REFP) Steps towards policy integration of EFP

- Establish a BiH working group to define the integration proposal
- Identify a ministry to act as coordinator
- Addition of the proposal to the agenda of ministerial EISSG meeting
- Agreement at the ministerial EISSG meeting
- Implementation of the policy

EFP intends to pursue this course of action during the upcoming year.

4.3 Observations/Conclusions by SDC

The chances of sustainability are influenced by the readiness of Bosnian Authorities to integrate EFP into the official curriculum. Until present, no breakthrough has been reached in this respect. The project will have to consecrate major efforts along the lines described above if EFP is to be integrated into the official curriculum.

The programme will probably be dependent for some time on support by the International Community, especially for dissemination to further schools. We were informed that the partner intends to make efforts by contacting donor organisation to secure financial means for EFP in the medium term.