



## Omladinska informativna agencija Bosne i Hercegovine

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Review of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)

# Independent evaluation of the national youth policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina



### Independent report by:

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## Who are the young people of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

- By definition, young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are individuals between **14** and **29** years of age.
- It is estimated that in 2000, there were approximately 900,000 young people in BiH or **23 %** of the total population
- During the war and in the post-war transitional period, thousands of young people left Bosnia. According to estimation, 92.000 young people left Bosnia between 1996 and 2001 and in 2004 that number exceeded **120,000**
- The Bosnian youth makes up **20 %** of the entire electoral body

## Youth position and needs assessment in BiH

- **77%** of youth want to leave Bosnia, **24%** of which want to leave forever without return, while 18% have already taken concrete measures.
- Between **45%** and **60%** of youth are unemployed
- **80%** of youth is unsatisfied with educational system and they think is oldfashioned
- Most frequent reasons for Bosnian youth leaving are: 1. an inefficient educational system, 2. unemployment, 3. a lack of perspective and 4. an unstable political situation.
- Only **1%** percent of youth believe they can have an impact on politics
- **6%** of youth are members of a political party
- Less than **25%** of youth attend elections – the three most frequent reasons for absence during elections for youth are “there is nobody I can vote for,” “I am disappointed with the politicians” and “I am not interested.”
- Less than **6%** of young people are representatives in the legislative government in BiH at the state, entity and municipality levels and in 10 cantons
- Between **10 - 15** percent of all municipality councilors at municipality assemblies are persons younger than 30 years of age
- There are over **250** youth organizations in BiH, and statistics show that **9%** of youth are actively involved in them while **8%** volunteer in different organizations
- **48%** of youth in BiH regularly use contraceptives
- Use of free time for young people in BiH: in coffee-shops - **78%** of youth, actively participating in sports - **29%**, **15%** of youth regularly use the Internet, a great number of towns in BiH dont have a cinema and only **3%** of youth regularly go to the movies while **50%** of them have said to regularly read books
- More than half of young people in BiH (**55%**) have said to consume cigarettes regularly while **60%** of them frequently drink alcoholic beverages

## YOUTH POLICY IN BIH

Youth policy represents a relation of the government towards youth. In order to have a special strategy and programs, the country also needs to have certain mechanisms or governmental bodies for youth issues.

At the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina there is NO special institutional framework for youth issues. Youth issues are addressed by **the Ministry of civil affairs** (telephone: +387 33 221 074, [www.mcp.gov.ba](http://www.mcp.gov.ba)) and the office of **the Chairman of the Council of Ministers BiH** (telephone: +387 33 663 519, [www.vijeceministara.gov.ba](http://www.vijeceministara.gov.ba)), while **the Ministry of human rights BiH** (telephone: +387 33 445 082, [www.mhrr.gov.ba](http://www.mhrr.gov.ba)) contains the Council for children. Toward the end of 2004 a decision was made about forming the state's **Commission for the coordination of youth issues** that should have representatives of different state and entity authorities and youth organizations. The Commission should start working during the 2005.

Bosnia – Herzegovina has 2 entities (2 regions). At the entities' levels there are bodies for youth issues: **the Secretary for Sports and Youth** of the Republic of Srpska (telephone: +387 51 331 769) and **the Youth Centre** (telephone: +387 33 254 189) by the Federation's ministry of culture and sports.

At the local level there are officers for youth issues in a number of municipalities. Some municipalities also have committees for youth within the municipal council/assembly, or special advisory boards (for example Zenica, Laktaši, Novi Grad Sarajevo).

During a last couple of years different local and international gatherings/conferences were organized about specific issues considering youth and attended by youth leaders and representatives of the government. The most important of them were **the BH Youth parliament - BHOP** (for example the 1<sup>st</sup> BH Youth parliament held in the state parliament on June 11, 2002, when the Resolution about youth was agreed, later adopted by the “real” Parliament of BiH, the 3<sup>rd</sup> BHOP, March 2003, about the Medium-term Development Strategy for BiH (PRSP), the 6<sup>th</sup> BHOP about budgets for youth in FBiH, September 2003 or the 7<sup>th</sup> BHOP in the building of the People's assembly of the Republic of Srpska about youth centers, November 2003. More info at: [www.oiabih.info](http://www.oiabih.info)).

Considering the regional level, Bosnia and Herzegovina as the head of the Process for cooperation in Southeastern Europe (SEECF) organized in March 2004 **the Regional Youth Forum**, attended by the representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions from 9 SEE countries ([www.mvp.gov.ba](http://www.mvp.gov.ba)). In 2004 Bosnia and Herzegovina was the host of **the European Youth Peace Summit** with over 500 youth from around 40 countries ([www.wyyps.org](http://www.wyyps.org)) and also of a global gathering of youth from over 100 countries called “**Youth, Development and Peace**”, organized by the World Bank ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)).

## Youth organizations in BiH

There are over **250** youth organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those are non-governmental and non-profit organizations that were registered as associations at the level of the entities or the state. Youth organizations represent important institutions for additional education of youth, for their extra curriculum activities, for special services or the support (scholarships, student cards for discounts, international exchanges, youth travels etc.). Toward the end of the 1990s youth organizations themselves were pioneers in bringing down the walls between different ethnic groups at the Balkans through a number of gatherings of youth from all over BiH and former Yugoslavia (for example the School of peace in the period of 1997-2001)

General characteristics of youth organizations in BiH are that they are mainly financed by the international organizations with a very weak support from the state, and mostly by the municipalities, that is local authorities. Most of the organizations do not have their own offices and appropriate conditions for work; there is no any university program for youth workers and youth leaders are mostly educated through numerous programs of non-formal education. Many organizations are not specialized but oriented to different programs of additional education, workshops in human rights, nature protection, HIV/AIDS, drug addictions etc.

At the level of BiH there is no umbrella youth organization (national youth council) as in the most of European countries. Nevertheless there is a consensus about the existence of such a body and in the next period it will be formed. There are a number of organizations operating at the national level:

### **Youth information agency BiH (OIA) – [www.oiabih.info](http://www.oiabih.info)**

The leading organization in the field of youth information ([www.mladi.info](http://www.mladi.info)) and in the field of youth policy analysis and advocacy. OIA implements different policy activities, lobbying campaigns, projects of the capacity building of youth and youth information.

### **The Centre for the Culture of Dialog – [deb\\_cen@soros.org.ba](mailto:deb_cen@soros.org.ba)**

It has been operating since 1997 as the Soros debate program, attended by a couple of thousand youth from all over BiH. Today it organizes debate activities in over 40 high schools and a few universities. It produced over 100 TV debates of youth at the Public broadcasting service and publicized a number of documents and textbooks about debating, critical thinking etc.

### **Helsinki citizens' assembly and Youth Network BiH – [www.omladina-bih.net](http://www.omladina-bih.net)**

Two organizations, the Helsinki citizens' assembly of Banja Luka ([hcalido@inecco.net](mailto:hcalido@inecco.net)) and HCA Tuzla ([hcatuzla@inet.ba](mailto:hcatuzla@inet.ba)), coordinate jointly the Youth network BiH with 148 members and organize a number of seminars, youth educations, conferences etc.

### **World university service (WUS) - [www.sus.ba](http://www.sus.ba)**

It was established in 1999 and is today the largest resource organization for supporting the high education in BiH, as well as for students themselves. Centers ACCESS in Sarajevo and EXIT in Banja Luka operate as part of WUS.

### **Organization for sexual and reproductive health of youth**

There are info centers and educational peer programs in the field of sexual and reproductive health as part of a number of local youth organizations, with support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In Bihac Demokratski centar Nove Nade (the Democrat centre New Hopes) ([www.dcnovenade.com](http://www.dcnovenade.com)), in Brčko Vermont, in Mostar Mladi Most (the Young Bridge) ([mladi-most@bih.net.ba](mailto:mladi-most@bih.net.ba)), in Banja Luka Kastel ([www.kastelbl.org](http://www.kastelbl.org)), in Sarajevo XY ([www.xy.com.ba](http://www.xy.com.ba)). More info at [www.youthpeer.org](http://www.youthpeer.org). There is also an organization called the Youth against AIDS group in Sarajevo ([www.mps.ba](http://www.mps.ba))

**South East European Youth Network (SEEYN) – [www.seeyn.org](http://www.seeyn.org)**

SEEYN is a regional network with 18 members, organizations, and its headquarters in Sarajevo. Member organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina are Youth Communication Center Banja Luka (OKC) - [www.okcbl.org](http://www.okcbl.org), the Youth Center Livno - [www.see youth.info/cml](http://www.see youth.info/cml) and the Youth Information Agency BiH (OIA).

At the entity level, there is an umbrella organization in the Republic of Srpska **the Youth council of RS (OSRS) - [omladinskisavjet\\_rs@yahoo.com](mailto:omladinskisavjet_rs@yahoo.com)** that participated in 2004 in the adoption of the Youth organizing act in RS.

You can read more about the status of youth organizations in BiH in the Report about the youth sector from 2003, OIA (Document SIROP3), and the data base/directory of youth organizations can be found at [www.mladi.info](http://www.mladi.info).

## **Researches and Documents on Youth BiH**

In the last five years there have been several researches and needs assessments on youth of Bosnia-Herzegovina conducted and documents published. All of them have been used in this Evaluation Report.

- **UNDP: Human Development Report on Youth in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2000**
- **UNICEF: Regional Monitoring Report on Children and Youth, 2000, 2001, 2002**
- **UN Agencies: Youth Report 2003 – Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2003**
- **IBHI/WB: Youth Initiative Assessment, 2003**
- **Proni Institute: Report on Youth in FBiH, Republic of Srpska, Brcko District, 2003**
- **OIA: Youth Organizations in BiH, (SIROP 3) 2003**
- **WB: Young People in South East Europe – «From Risk to Empowerment», 2004**
- **WB: Building Youth Policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2004**
- **OIA: Policy Brief on Youth Participation in BH Elections, 2004**

## Youth Information Agency Bosnia-Herzegovina (OIA)?

**Youth Information Agency (OIA)** is a non-governmental and non-partisan organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina, acting in the whole country as an independent institute for youth policy development with goal to improve the position of young people and their participation in society.

Through its 3 sectors, i.e., **Info service**, **Youth Policy** and **Capacity Building**, and the headquarters in Sarajevo together with regional offices in Banja Luka, Bihac, Mostar, Zenica and Zvornik, OIA cooperates with over 50 governmental bodies and more than 200 youth organizations in BiH, in the region of South-East Europe as well as with a number of international organizations and young people in general.

OIA was created in 2001 through Joint Youth Program (ZOP) of the **Open Society Fund BiH** founded on the basis of the Foundation's Strategy and UNDP Human Development Report in BiH – Youth 2000.

In BiH OIA represents the following regional programs: **youthNET** and **youthEXchange.SEE**, it is a member of the South-East European Youth Network (**SEEYN**) and the European network **UNITED**. OIA is the national partner for BiH of the European Youth Information and Counseling Agency (**ERYICA**). In 2004 OIA became Action Partner of the **OXFAM International Youth Parliament** from Sidney.

OIA is a leading think tank in the field of youth policy in BiH:

- OIA influenced about **50** institutional changes in the field of youth policy
- OIA has become a member of around **10** advisory bodies for youth at all state levels (e.g. representing State Government at 32<sup>nd</sup> CDEJ meeting in Council of Europe, Board Member of the State Government for organization of Regional Youth Forum, as well as Executive Board for the European Youth Peace Summit)
- OIA was leading on behalf of OSF the Youth Policy Working Group of the international community in BiH (with some **20** international organizations involved) in 2003
- OIA published reports and policy analysis on youth issues that were later quoted and used at many meetings, seminars and other publications (e.g. Special Report on Youth Policy Development (issues 1-5, 2002-04) on: Governmental Youth Bodies, Youth Policy at Local Level, Youth NGO Sector BiH, Policy Brief on Youth Participation at Elections and Decision Making 2004 etc.)
- OIA provided consulting for different international organizations: **UNDP** (Human Development Report 2000 and Youth Report 2003), **World Bank** (Youth Policy Report 2004, Young People in South East Europe 2004 "From Risk to Empowerment"), **Council of Europe** (BH Conference: Promotion of Youth Policy from Local to State Level 2003), **UNICEF** (Project design for Mapping the Peer Education in the Youth Field 2004), for **Balkan Children and Youth Foundation** (Balkan Youth Forum 2003 and 2004), **German GTZ** (Workshop on Youth Policy at Local Level for Government of Kosovo, 2004), **Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation** (Evaluation of 6 youth centers in BiH, 2004) etc.
- OIA has organized nine **BH Youth Parliaments** on different youth policy topics at state level with more than **300** participants from governmental and NGO sector
- OIA had **1.500** media appearances in more than **120** media on youth issues

[www.oiabih.info](http://www.oiabih.info)

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