

# **Forschungsstelle Osteuropa an der Universität Bremen**

Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen

## **Changing Europe Summer School II**

### **“Crises and Conflicts in Eastern European States and Societies: Stumbling Blocks or Stepping Stones for Democratisation?”**

**Warsaw, 2 – 8 September 2007**

sponsored by the Volkswagen Foundation

[www.changing-europe.org](http://www.changing-europe.org)

### **Franziska Blomberg: Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Important Role of Youth Work within a Strategy for Successful Multi-track Democratic Consolidation**

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Publikationsreferat / Publications Dept.

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## 1 Abstract

When discussing the development of democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the Yugoslavian war of 1992–1995, many experts agree that the state still needs consolidation on numerous levels and civil society still needs support.<sup>1</sup> One of the population groups most affected by the conflict and its consequences are children and young people. In a phase of development, during which orientation and security are of utmost importance, they live in a society in which parents as well as teachers, and also other possible role models, have to cope with the aftermath of a conflict and the transition from a socialist to a capitalist system.<sup>2</sup> Seeing different developments, such as increasing migration among young people, the awareness is growing that a lack of attention to the development and promotion of qualifications and perspectives for young people can result in brain drain.<sup>3</sup> Another reason for the importance of youth work is, that young people can be easily mobilised by actors with particular interests. The present paper assesses under what circumstances youth work can contribute efficiently to stability and continued democratic transformation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Theories of stages of democratic consolidation<sup>4</sup> serve as categories for an examination of civil society's role at different phases.<sup>5</sup> Youth work plays a particular role in educating young people into democratic citizens. In this paper research samples from literature, expert interviews and participatory observation are used to illustrate possible shortcomings and strategies for improvement. As a general conclusion an unfavourable concurrence of a) a decrease in influence by civil society/youth work actors and “desencanto” and b) the fading out of programmes, funds, etc. by the international community can be observed. Two paths to counter the decreasing motivation for youth initiative are suggested: 1. a much stronger (de facto) emphasis on local ownership and the economy, in particular the labour market, and even more importantly, 2. more support for the social, professional and civic education of young people to prepare them for the continuous consolidation of their country.

## 2 Introduction

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a rather young European state: Only in March 1992 did it gain its independence from Yugoslavia. Not even a short month later, the country and its inhabitants were struck by a war. Put in very simplified terms, the conflict resulted from an escalating spiral of mobilisation of the (Orthodox) Serbian and (Catholic) Croatian parts of the ethnically mixed population by the governments of the neighbouring countries Croatia and Serbia. The third and largest population group, the (Muslim) Bosniaks soon also became involved in the ethnically motivated controversy. The armed conflict lasted until 14 December 1995 when the Dayton Peace Accord (DPA) was signed.<sup>6</sup> The treaty managed to put an end to the fighting, but it also had far reaching consequences concerning the political and institutional/administrative future of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter referred to as “BiH” from the Bosnian name ‘Bosna i Hercegovina’).

Today's administrative composition of the state is as complex as it is costly: the country is still divided into 2 entities, the “Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (FBiH) and the “Republika Srpska” (RS), which make up 51% and 49% of the territory respectively. Due to the frail political stability, the international community created the “Office of the High Representative” (OHR). This gives BiH the status of a semi-

1 Solioz, Christophe/Vogel, Tobias K. (eds.): *Dayton and Beyond: Perspectives on the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004.

2 Emrich, Steffen: *Jugendarbeit in Bosnien und Herzegowina*. Eine Studie im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amts, 2005.

3 Fischer, Martina: Introduction. Moving out of the Dayton Era into the Era of Brussels?, in: Fischer, Martina (ed.): *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton*. Berlin: LIT/Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2006, p. 24f.

4 Lauth, Hans-Joachim/Merkel, Wolfgang: *Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation*. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag in Revisionistischer Absicht, in: *Forschungsjournal NSB*, 1997 (vol.10), No.1, pp.12–34.

5 Freise, Matthias: *Externe Demokratieförderung in postsozialistischen Transformationsstaaten*. Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004, p. 33.

6 See <http://www.oscebih.org/overview/gfap/eng/>, accessed on 04 March 2007.

protectorate. Even though the international community does not cease to emphasise the importance of the national autonomy of BiH,<sup>7</sup> the mandate for the OHR has just been extended until 30 June 2008. One of the consequences of the DPA that has frequently been criticised is the constant emphasis on the three nationalities,<sup>8</sup> which continues to make it difficult to establish a common, national identity.<sup>9</sup>

The consequences of the war are going to effect Bosnia and Herzegovina's political and economic development for decades to come.<sup>10</sup> Socially, as of now many peoples' lives are affected, and in 2004 the official unemployment rate was as high as 40% and the GDP still amounted to only 60% of the pre-war level.<sup>11</sup> Since the war, BiH has received more money per capita from international programmes and investments than Germany received from the Marshall-Plan after World War II.<sup>12</sup>

One of the population groups most affected by the conflict and its consequences are children and young people.<sup>13</sup> In a phase of development, during which orientation and security are of utmost importance, they live in a society in which possible role models have to cope with the aftermath of a conflict and the transition from a socialist to a capitalist system. A lack of attention to the development and promotion of qualifications and perspectives for young people can result in brain drain. Young people can also be easily mobilised by actors with particular interests. So it is extremely important, to support today's youth who are going to be the voters and government of tomorrow.<sup>14</sup>

### 3 Research Question

Many international actors in BiH are currently running youth programmes for the support and promotion of democratic values and active citizenship. Nevertheless, recent years have seen a dramatic decrease in activity and funding. The result is much restructuring and (unfortunately only now undergone) implementation of locally grounded institutions and organisations. At the centre of these reflections lies the question: *what prevailing circumstances need to be improved and how, so that youth work can contribute more efficiently to stability and continued transformation in Bosnia and Herzegovina?* Theories about the dynamics of democratic consolidation and the role civil society and in particular youth work play therein are contrasted with interviews about the fund-receivers' perception of possible improvements in the (democratic) situation in the country. When analysing literature and interviews, the parameters to consider are the context of the informants, as well as their ability to access and process information.

7 For instance see: UNDP Country Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2005–2009), 2004, p. 4. [http://www.undp.org/rbec/docs\\_2004/BIH\\_CPD\\_2005\\_2009.pdf](http://www.undp.org/rbec/docs_2004/BIH_CPD_2005_2009.pdf), accessed 29 April 2007.

8 One reason for this might be that the concept of "nation" in socialist rhetoric was very different to the western concept, which is in no way taken enough into account. For more see: Blomberg, Franziska: 'Kazakh only' auf dem Planeten der hundert Sprachen? – Reaktionen der kasachstanischen Bevölkerung auf die derzeitige Sprachenpolitik. European-University Viadrina: Unpublished M.A.-thesis, 2006, p. 32ff.

9 Vogel, Tobias K.: Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Challenge of Legitimacy. Bern: swisspeace. FAST Country Risk Profile Bosnia and Herzegovina: 2, 2006, p.6.

10 Emrich, Steffen: Jugendarbeit in Bosnien und Herzegowina. Eine Studie im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amts, 2005. Also available on the internet: <http://www.procorde.net/downloads/jugendarbeitbih.pdf>, last consulted 30 April 2007.

11 Bertelsmann Transformation Index Bosnia-Herzegovina. See: <http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/177.0.html?L=1>, accessed 05 May 2007.

12 <http://volksgruppen.orf.at/kroatenungarn/aktuell/stories/56412/>, accessed 02 June 2007.

13 Referring to the "Youth in Action" Programme run by the European Commission, „Youth“ is defined as persons between the age of 13 and 30 years. European Commission: Youth in Action 2007-2013 Programme Guide. [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/yia\\_programme\\_guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/yia_programme_guide_en.pdf), 2006, p. 9. Accessed on 3 February 2007.

14 Emrich, Steffen: Jugendarbeit in Bosnien und Herzegowina. Eine Studie im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amts, 2005.

## 4 Theoretical Background: Young people and Transformation

The break up of the former Warsaw Pact caused a new wave of literature about democracy and how it can be promoted. There are different definitions of what a “good democracy” is supposed to look like. Most agree when they see one, but the minimum or ideal criteria are not as clear. The most widespread and accepted definition of democracy is minimal and procedural: Democracy is a regime that is characterized by *free elections, universal suffrage, change of governments and respect for civil rights*.<sup>15</sup> This definition enables many countries to be categorized as democracies, but does not impose strict western criteria and recognizes numerous and new versions of democracy.

While the number of constitutional democracies has risen in real numbers since research about this was conducted in 1980, the percentage of democracies that display malfunctions on one or more important subsystems has increased relatively over the past 25 years. Between 1990 and 1998 both the real number of “coherent democracies” and the number of “non-coherent democracies” (combining democratic and autocratic characteristics) rose significantly. However, during the same time, the ratio of “coherent autocracies” among the countries that were part of a study conducted by Rusanna Gaber decreased by 50%.<sup>16</sup>

### 4.1 Democratic Consolidation on Different Tracks – Advantages and Limits

The war in BiH was only ended by establishing structures which are to support the necessary stages of transition towards a consolidated democracy. Several authors<sup>17</sup> mention the importance of civil society during transitional and transformational processes.

In everyday language, the concepts of transition and transformation are often used synonymously. For a clearer analysis of these processes, however, it is important to distinguish between:

- “*Transition*”: change from a concrete form of a non-democratic regime to a concrete form of a democratic regime (thus focusing exclusively on the changes in the political sphere). The exact beginning and end of a transitional case are clearly discernible as “the interval between one political regime and another” (even though developments may be complex and their outcomes sometimes unclear).<sup>18</sup>
- “*Transformation*”: A change in the entire societal system. During one interval in time several interdependent processes undergo change, which signifies radical and extensive change for all societal subsystems. In many cases, the most fundamental changes concern a change of the economy from planned to liberal, and of the political system from dictatorship/autocracy to democracy.<sup>19</sup>

Considering the case of BiH and the changes on all the levels of politics, economy, society, and therefore all subsystems of society as a whole, it can clearly be said that it can be classified as a case of transformation.

15 On the minimal aspect of the definition see e.g. Dahl, Robert A.: *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971. On the procedural aspect see Huntington, Samuel P.: *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, p. 9. For more about the practical functions see Merkel, Wolfgang/Puhle, Hans-Jürgen/Croissant, Aurel/Eicher, Claudia/Thiery, Peter: *Defekte Demokratie*, Bd. 1: Theorie. Leske + Budrich: Opladen, 2003, p. 47.

16 Gaber, Rusanna (2000): *Demokratie in quantitativen Indizes: Ein mehr-oder eindimensionales Phänomen?*, in: Lauth, Hans-Joachim u.a. (ed.): *Demokratiemessung. Konzepte und Befunde im Internationalen Vergleich*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2000, p.120.

17 For instance: Lauth, Hans-Joachim/Merkel, Wolfgang: *Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag in Revisionistischer Absicht*, in: *Forschungsjournal NSB*, 1997 (vol.10), No.1, pp.12–34.

18 O'Donnell, Guillermo / Schmitter, Philippe: *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, 4th edition. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 6.

19 Wolf, Michael: *Transformation als Systemwechsel – eine modelltheoretische Annäherung*, in: Arndt Hopfmann / Michael Wolf (ed.): *Transformation und Interdependenz. Beiträge zu Theorie und Empirie der mittel- und osteuropäischen Systemwechsel*. Münster: Lit Verlag, 1998, p. 45ff.

Based on O'Donnell et al.<sup>20</sup>, Lauth/Merkel defined different stages of democratic transformation and the role civil society plays therein. In reality, of course, the boundaries between the stages are not as clear-cut as they are described in terms of categories for analysis:

- *Liberalisation*: The elites in power in an authoritarian system try to increase their legitimacy and thus their power by carefully opening the political system and granting new rights to citizens. In many cases, this divides government as well as citizens into reformers or hardliners. Usually, at this point civil society gets more support and becomes significantly more active and influential, often playing a key role in articulation of demands for new freedom.
- *Democratisation*: Democracy becomes institutionalised. In most examples, a certain degree of authoritarian structures and old power repartition are still intact. Thus, it is said, this phase lasts from “deinstitutionalisation” of the old system to “reinstitutionalisation” of the new democracy. The different political/social actors have the most options for action. As soon as a new government and offices are created, the new elites and power structures establish themselves.
- *(Democratic) Consolidation*: Transition has successfully been accomplished when the temporary structures founded during regime-change have been transformed into stable structures. This includes the appointment of actors to political offices and a situation where political decisions follow democratically legitimate and previously and clearly defined procedures.<sup>21</sup>

It is not unusual that after civil society actors have been very active and supported by large proportions of the population, there is a phase of “desencanto” (=‘disenchantment’). After resources and power have been redistributed and the dynamics of change have been slowed down and moulded into more stable institutional structures, change becomes slower. A large decrease in hope and motivation are the potential consequences.<sup>22</sup>

When trying to assess, where BiH stands today politically, the answer is bound to be rather complex: as mentioned above, at this point BiH has still not fully re-gained its independence as a sovereign state. There have been reforms concerning political institutions and representation, the legal system, administration, education and other domains. However, it can quite surely be assumed that BiH currently finds itself in a late state of democratisation, showing some first symptoms of consolidation. To what extent and in what ways the support by the international community is actually promoting development towards an independent and stable democratic state is still controversial.<sup>23</sup>

## 4.2 Youth Work as one of the Paths to Democratic Consolidation

In order to facilitate analysis, there has been a growingly substantial body of literature on analytical categories in which societies on the whole might be sub-divided. Reimann proposes following three tracks: formal government (Track One), expert policy networks (Track Two), and civil society-based processes (Track Three).<sup>24</sup> In particular, in highly fragmented, post-conflict states like BiH it is highly useful to consider (potential) different developments on different levels. Moreover, it seems that in order to efficiently

20 O'Donnell, Guillermo/Schmitter, Philippe C.: Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, Vol. 5. Tentative Conclusions about uncertain Democracies. Boulder/Col.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, p. 3.

21 Lauth, Hans-Joachim/Merkel, Wolfgang: Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag in revisionistischer Absicht, in: Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen, 1997 (vol.10), No.1, pp. 12–34.

22 Croissant, Laurel/Lauth, Hans-Joachim/Merkel, Wolfgang: Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation: ein internationaler Vergleich, in: Merkel, Wolfgang (eds.): Systemwechsel 5. Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation. Opladen. 2000, pp. 9–49.

23 For a detailed overview see: Solioz, Christophe/Vogel, Tobias K. (eds.): Dayton and Beyond: Perspectives on the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004.

24 Reimann, Cordula: Towards Conflict Transformation: Assessing the State of-the-Art in Conflict Management – Reflections from a Theoretical Perspective, in: Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation. Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 2003, p. 6. For further reading on a more detailed approach see: Diamond, Louise/Mc Donald, John, Ambassador: Multi-Track Diplomacy. 3rd edition. West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1996, p. 4ff.

co-ordinate initiatives and funding, the efficient support of civil society needs to be promoted by a constantly reviewed combination of measures on different tracks in society.<sup>25</sup>

The youth work sector as part of the civil/public sphere belongs to Track Three. On many occasions, young people are described as still being not completely imprinted with prejudices after a conflict.<sup>26</sup> Even though this might be true to a certain degree for some views on the world, it seems indeed more likely that young people are less neutral in their judgement on persons of different background than often thought. As children learn a language or intellectual and social behaviour, they are also adapting views on what is right or wrong – including values about the world and people around them. As much as this helps them to orientate their actions, it also transports prejudice and social or ethnical bias.<sup>27</sup>

Particularly in BiH young people are traditionally not perceived as an active stake-holder by society. At the same time, young people are strongly affected by the socio-political outcomes of the transformation processes in the region. Youth work is important to prepare young people for the necessary changes to come, to impart democratic values and to strengthen their own role in society.<sup>28</sup> In post-war BiH, the ongoing confrontation of views on past and present politics renders it all the more important to educate young people on the ability to process and judge information soundly. Only thus can responsible and democratic action be the result, which is essential for a democracy stable enough to risk critical questioning and changes.

When writing about “the” youth sector, it should be pointed out that it is a sector with a wide variety of initiatives, interests, field of activity and so forth. The pluralism (already existing and still developing in this sector) is a hope that in the near future a generation used to initiative, diversity and critical thought will determine the country’s issues.<sup>29</sup>

## 5 Methodology

The paper explicitly combines practical experience and academic literature. Expert interviews from international, national, and local experts, as well as governmental and non-governmental institutions/ NGOs will be considered. Literature on civil society and the role it can play in (post-socialist) transformation processes, theories on youth work, nation-building in multi-ethnic states and on the role of different expectations and approaches by competing actors will build the basis for the analysis. Other important sources are various papers, reports and essays.

Qualitative methods are given preference as the complexity of the topic demands inquiry into the context and interconnection of experiences and choices of the persons interviewed and the data serving as a basis for this research needs to be carefully and thoroughly examined. Expert interviews and participatory observation, supported by information from recent specialised literature, compose the data from which the conclusions of this study are drawn. Concerning the validity of the results, it is widely known that on the internet there is a large quantity of information – but “good information” is not always easy to find and distinguish from opinion pieces. As the aim of this paper is to draw a conclusion about the general tendencies

25 Vogel, Tobias K.: *Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Challenge of Legitimacy*. Bern: swisspeace. FAST Country Risk Profile Bosnia and Herzegovina: 2, 2006.

26 Fischer, Martina/Tumler, Julie: *Möglichkeiten der Förderung einer „Peace-Constituency“ in Bosnien-Herzegowina: Ansätze der Jugend-, Bildungs- und Kulturarbeit*. Eschborn: Berghof Forschungszentrum für konstruktive Konfliktbearbeitung, 2000, p. 6f.

27 Bush, Kenneth D.; Saltarelli, Diana: *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*. UNICEF, 2000. Quoted from Perry, Valery: *Reading, Writing and Reconciliation: Educational Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. European Centre for Minority Issues, Working Paper No. 18. Flensburg, 2003, p. 5.

28 Emrich, Steffen: *Jugendarbeit in Bosnien und Herzegowina. Eine Studie im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amts*, 2005, p. 5ff. Also available on the internet: <http://www.procorde.net/downloads/jugendarbeitbih.pdf>, last consulted 30 April 2007.

29 Emrich, Steffen: *Jugendarbeit in Bosnien und Herzegowina. Eine Studie im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amts*, 2005, p. 39. Also available on the internet: <http://www.procorde.net/downloads/jugendarbeitbih.pdf>, last consulted 30 April 2007.

of views on the situation and needs for improvement in the youth sector, even strongly biased opinions in this regard can be useful information. The same of course applies to personal interviews.

## 6 Empirical Results Available: The Situation of Youth Work in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Soon after the war ended in 1995, new NGOs mushroomed all over BiH. According to Isemt Sejfića, a total of 8,000 NGOs were officially registered in BiH during the period from 1992–2001 and around 30,000 projects addressing a range of social issues (democratisation, women's rights, etc.) were initiated.<sup>30</sup> Numerous funds for the region were distributed and international organisations, other countries, NGOs, etc. started running a multitude of programmes. Nevertheless, experts from international and administrative positions in and outside the country, as well as from local and grassroots initiatives, still voice discontent about the state of the country and youth work today.<sup>31</sup> In this section of the paper, several clusters of information (the topics were taken from an apparent concern by organisations and individuals regarding these issues deduced from statements and writings) will be listed and later interpreted in section 7 of this paper. The examples, of course, do not represent a complete picture of the field. The findings cannot be generalized, but should suggest what needs for improvements in the field have been identified.

### Much action will lead to much result

Isemt Sejfića, lecturer at the University of Tuzla, states that in Bosnia a really mature “civil society” still has not been able to emerge. He would rather describe the field of action as a “civil sector”, not yet truly embedded in society as a whole.<sup>32</sup> Another unfavourable result was, as in various cases of post-conflict assistance, that the information needed for co-operation with the local experts risked becoming focused on a few known persons, who in turn could redistribute information, projects and money in a way that was not controllable and possibly open to abuse.

### Structures of co-ordination between different fields or work and different organisations

On many occasions a lack of co-ordination between different actors is deplored. Even though the OHR in BiH was supposed to co-ordinate initiatives by the civil society (including young people) this goal is far from being completed, assuming comments on this can be believed. There seems to be a particular gap between the different views of international and local organisations on the causes and effects of this situation. One representative of an international monetary fund expressed concern about the high turnover of personnel in many of the NGOs and that several occasions projects were not funded due to a lack of trust in the new persons. A member of a Bosnian NGO explained that the changing was only caused because funding for projects was uncertain, and there were hardly any funds to pay for infrastructure or salary on behalf of the organisation. The result was that most young activists, by the time they had acquired enough expertise, left in favour of better paid employment.<sup>33</sup>

30 Seifija, Isemt: From the „Civil Sector“ to Civil Society? Progress and Prospects, in: Fischer, Martina (ed.): *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton*. Berlin: LIT/Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2006, pp.125–140, p. 125. Referring to Grupa autora: *Lokalna samouprava je vase pravo*. Tuzla: Agencija lokalne demokracije, 2002a, p. 5.

31 Emrich, Steffen: *Jugendarbeit in Bosnien und Herzegowina. Eine Studie im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amts*, 2005, pp. 37f. Also available on the internet: <http://www.procorde.net/downloads/jugendarbeitbih.pdf>, last consulted 30 April 2007.

32 Fischer, Martina: Introduction. Moving out of the Dayton Era into the Era of Brussels?. In: Fischer, Martina (ed.): *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton*. Berlin: LIT/Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2006, p. 17.

33 Conference on Regional Co-operation by the German-French Youth Office, Sarajevo, 12 December 2006.

## Local ownership

Still today, many programmes establish criteria for funding that is not clearly understandable from the point of view of the addressees. Some donors' sometimes get the impression, that some projects are run in order to assure the income of the employees of the NGO, less for a political or social purpose, which of course cannot be generalised.<sup>34</sup> Gajo Sekulic argues, that this way a "surrogate civil society" lacking any social legitimacy has emerged.<sup>35</sup> As a consequence, truly specialised experts and expert organisations for fields of practice are rare. Yet, many are very skilled when it comes to writing demands for funds ("application prose").<sup>36</sup> Another (classical) problem (in the field of international (development) assistance) is that international staff often only stay on a limited project basis and local staff are not always well informed when their projects change directors. Thus a large amount of factual and practical knowledge and contacts are lost. Another point is that critical reports are rarely publicly available (because everywhere a certain success is expected of projects in order to justify the distribution of funds). There have been some initiatives to bring together different actors in order to discuss possible "good" and "bad practices", but the interest in sharing certain information seems rather low.<sup>37</sup>

## Perspectives for young people

Recently, an increasing number of statements have demanded more rights in self-determination and politics. De facto though, many obstacles, political, social, financial, etc. stand in the way of establishing a vivid landscape of well-functioning, pluralistic youth-work organisations/projects. International organisations are aware of this problem and aim at solutions for this.<sup>38</sup> The above mentioned deficits in local ownership affect the perceived perspectives for young people. In general it has been found that perspectives and the impression that one can have an impact on socio-economic well-being have large consequence for the extent to which young people (and humans in general) feel empowered to influence their own life and future, which has a large impact on motivation or disappointment.

In 2005 the official unemployment rate was as high as 40%.<sup>39</sup> Research conducted in 2000 revealed that around one out of three of those without jobs was younger than 27, and two out of three were below the age of 35.<sup>40</sup> An interview partner stated that her sister preferred to work as a cleaning lady in the office of the OHR to working in the profession she had been trained (middle school teacher) because the salary was much higher.<sup>41</sup> Even though statistics about young people wishing to emigrate seem to suggest that many would not oppose a good working opportunity abroad, the real act of emigration often proves less likely.<sup>42</sup> Still, in the past months and years, the author has witnessed a particularly high number of activists and

34 Emrich, Steffen: Jugendarbeit in Bosnien und Herzegowina. Eine Studie im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amts, 2005, p. 36. Also available on the internet: <http://www.procorde.net/downloads/jugendarbeitbih.pdf>, last consulted 30 April 2007.

35 Grupa autora: Lokalni NVO-sektor u BiH, problemi, analize, preporuke. Sarajevo: IBHI, 1998, p. 42. Cited in: Seifija, Ismet: From the "Civil Sector" to Civil Society? Progress and Prospects, in: Fischer, Martina (ed.): Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton. Berlin: LIT/Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2006, pp. 125–140, p. 135.

36 Emrich, Steffen: Jugendarbeit in Bosnien und Herzegowina. Eine Studie im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amts, 2005, p. 51. Also available on the internet: <http://www.procorde.net/downloads/jugendarbeitbih.pdf>, last consulted 30 April 2007.

37 This was stated, for example, by one of the employees of the German Embassy in Sarajevo. Interview 14 December 2006.

38 See for example: UNDP Country Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2005–2009), 2004, p. 2. [http://www.undp.org/rbec/docs\\_2004/BIH\\_CPD\\_2005\\_2009.pdf](http://www.undp.org/rbec/docs_2004/BIH_CPD_2005_2009.pdf), accessed 29.04.2007.

39 Fischer, Martina: Introduction. Moving out of the Dayton Era into the Era of Brussels?, in: Fischer, Martina (ed.): Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton. Berlin: LIT/Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2006, pp. 11.

40 IBHI/UNDP: Human Development Report Bosnia and Herzegovina, Youth. Sarajevo: Independent Bureau of Humanitarian Issues and United Nations Development Programme, 2000.

41 Interview with an NGO activist in Sarajevo on 8 December 2006.

42 Emrich, Steffen: Jugendarbeit in Bosnien und Herzegowina. Eine Studie im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amts, 2005, p. 15. Also available on the internet: <http://www.procorde.net/downloads/jugendarbeitbih.pdf>, last consulted 30 April 2007.

professionals in the BiH youth sector that happily accepted grants or employment in Western European countries.<sup>43</sup>

## 7 Interpretation of the Results and Conclusion: What Youth Work can or cannot contribute to Democratic Consolidation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Since January 2007 the successor states of Yugoslavia have been surrounded by the European Union. A controversial and possibly acrimonious debate concerning the future status of Kosovo has been ongoing for years. Stability in South Eastern Europe is as important as it is fragile. There is the risk of a decrease in incentives for the implementation of reforms in the region in the fields of state building, democratization and the economy if EU membership seems to be out of reach for a long period of time. Up to now, the information gathered suggests that much remains to be done in order to consolidate democracy. It is not surprising that the youth-work sector is facing numerous difficulties. There is little money for long-term costs, such as rent for offices, etc. Many young well-educated people wish to leave the country, and civic education still faces numerous hardships. Looking at the level of democratization and the current economic situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a definite need for the implementation of effective tools and for an increased combination of measures on the different tracks can be observed.

When analysing the current situation of support for youth initiatives, certain deficits, not only particular to BiH, can be observed: an increasing number of pluralistically diverse initiatives, associations and individuals are (becoming) active. On the one hand, this leads to an increasingly rooted youth work sector. On the other hand though, as was illustrated above, it is not the numbers of projects, but the quality that should be and finally proves decisive. As more and more donors are slowly pulling out of the country, the goals wished for by the population are that donors assure necessary information and knowledge to continue the work towards democratic consolidation and other improvements to be passed on to their Bosnian successors.

Connected to the topic of ownership is a sometimes lamented supposed lack of interest in political issues. Sometimes even ironic remarks about “projectomania” are made. At the same time, a growing number of young people express a sort of “democratisation-fatigue” and lack of influence on political issues.<sup>44</sup> This can well be explained along the lines of Merkel/Lauth’s approach to system change and the loss in influence civil society experiences towards the consolidation of democracy (“desencanto” to be found in several remarks).

In a speech before the UN Security Council Schwarz-Schilling (the High Representative in BiH until the end of June 2007) expressed his concern about this.<sup>45</sup> Today’s youth politics in BiH will determine how democratic and peace-promoting the country, which is only now becoming increasingly independent, and with it South Eastern Europe and the European Union after all, will be. When empowering the local level, prudent judgement is needed in order not to confuse liberal rights with neglect.<sup>46</sup> As a conclusion, international actors need to concentrate much more on a sound exit-strategy, and co-ordination and inter-

43 Statements about this were heard on several occasions during seminars, conferences and visits in the region between 2002 and 2007.

44 Fischer, Martina: Introduction. Moving out of the Dayton Era into the Era of Brussels?, in: Fischer, Martina (ed.): Peace-building and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton. Berlin: LIT/Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2006, p. 25.ff

45 Speech by the High Representative and EU Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Christian Schwarz-Schilling to the UN Security Council. New York: 16 May 2007. See: [http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/press/presssp/default.asp?content\\_id=39780](http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/press/presssp/default.asp?content_id=39780), accessed 20 May 2007.

46 Van Til, J: Mapping the third sector: Voluntarism in a changing social economy. New York: The Foundation Center, 1988.

faces between the international, national and local level.<sup>47</sup> The minimum criteria should at least be “do no harm”. Only thus can realistic hopes for a positive long-term effect of international support be developed into functioning projects.<sup>48</sup> Luckily, actors in the region, for instance the UNDP, are already attempting to include them in their roadmap.<sup>49</sup>

It will be important that experts on transitional development attentively see the development and necessary steps to take in order to support moments of doubt and to support motivation for the further consolidation of the country.

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47 For more see Nelson, Nici /Sue Wright (eds): *Power and Participatory Development*. Intermediate Technology Publications: London, 1995.

48 Emrich, Steffen: *Jugendarbeit in Bosnien und Herzegowina*. Eine Studie im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amts, 2005, p. 49ff. Also available on the internet: <http://www.procorde.net/downloads/jugendarbeitbih.pdf>, last consulted 30 April 2007.

49 UNDP Country Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2005–2009), 2004, p. 3. [http://www.undp.org/rbec/docs\\_2004/BIH\\_CPD\\_2005\\_2009.pdf](http://www.undp.org/rbec/docs_2004/BIH_CPD_2005_2009.pdf), accessed 29.04.2007.