

# EDUCATION FOR ALL IN SERBIA – DEVELOPMENT, PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES

*The paper is a brief study into the results in achieving the international goals of the Education for All Programme in Serbia – development, strategic documents, relevant statistical data, activities, agencies, priority areas and the results obtained by the end of 2005. The projects and measures designed to achieve the EFA goal in the adult education area are at the centre of the author's interest.*

**Key words:** adult education, EFA, Education for All, UNESCO, Ministry of Education

As one of the first steps for development of EFA plans and implementation in Serbia, EFA National Forum was established in February 2002, when an all-encompassing attempt was made to reform education in Serbia – all levels and all areas. Serbian Government made a commitment to EFA goals achievement and made some serious steps towards development of national EFA strategy. Forum members represented various partners (representatives from state authorities, educational institutions, nongovernmental and civic organizations, expert bodies and organizations, publishers and so on) and EFA goals and Forum members were promoted in public. EFA Forum started co-operation with National Council for Education reform, thus trying to link EFA striving with overall reforms in the field of education, but also with transitional processes in other areas of society.

The Forum developed National Strategy for achievement of EFA goals, directing the efforts toward:

- Awakening public concern for EFA goals fulfillment,
- Mobilization of international, national and local partners in programs networking
- Integration of EFA Goals into the National strategy of development
- Linking all actors and organization that could foster achievement of quality education for all

The EFA National Plan was also developed, marking two main streams toward EFA objectives realization:

- “Main” stream intended to enable achievement of EFA goals by overall education system reconstruction and reform, making EFA goals achievable by the all-embracing, deep changes in the educational path, structure and content. This was done within the several main pillars of educational reform:
  - Democratization, where several measures were taken in order to democratize the whole educational system, institutions and educational praxis; on the other hand in 2002 the school subject “Civic Education” was introduced into curricula for elementary and secondary schools;
  - Decentralization was connected to previous issue and was especially focused on measures related to finances, to delegate responsibilities to local authorities and local schools; More space and flexibility was allowed in curricula development in order to meet needs of local communities;
  - Developing new curricula at all educational and school levels, especially in secondary vocational education, in order to overcome the gap between school provision and labor market needs;
  - Quality assurance and development of standards and outcomes, which was mainly in charge of newly established Center for Evaluation,
  - Reconstruction of schools, especially in poor areas and areas damaged by war and bombing campaign, provision of educational facilities and learning materials,
  - Training of teachers, one of the main issues of educational reforms, where hundreds of courses were organized and several thousand of teachers were trained.
- The other, “correlative” stream gave priority to the most vulnerable groups:
  - Children and adults in special needs, who were targeted in The Strategy for Inclusive Education which was developed,
  - Displaced persons and refugees, social group increased especially during the war and bombing campaign, being also in the previous period an important target group for many international and non-governmental organizations,

- Adults in lack of basic and functional education, who were the concern of one of the expert groups of Ministry of Education and Sports,
- Early childhood care and education were central issues of the series of new developed programs for preschool education,
- Youth policy concentrated on several main topics: social issues, availability of information, mobility, peer education, primary prevention and inclusion in decision making processes.

Since social and economic situation in the period after 2000 was rather difficult, it was obvious that demands and needs in many areas were huge and not all the EFA goals could have the same priority, but some of them have to be pointed out at least at the very beginning. For that reason preschool education and adult education was given highest rank – former because of vulnerability and speacial importance of this target group, later because of its direk relevance for economic reform and for democratisation of political life and whole society.

Adult education and training became so a matter of permanent interest and central issues of several governmental and non-governemantal, local and international projects and programs. Ministry of Education and Sports gave a mandat to the expert group to develope a national strategy for adult education. Some of the expert's main proposal were directly linked to the EFA goals, such as:

- To enable real accessibility to literacy and basic education for adult population,
- To enhance the level and percentage of the adults with 2-A ISCED level,
- To bring into line adult education with quality standards for all,
- To create the system of functional basic adult education by combining and associating literacy and primary education with basic professional education and training.

At the UNESCO conference “Lifelong Learning in Europe: Moving towards EFA Goals and the CONFITEA V Agenda” held in Sofia, Bulgaria, in November 2002, the expert group presented Priority fields in adult education in Serbia as follows:

- Functional basic adult education
- Vocational education and training
  - developing models for active employment

- developing centres for continuing vocational education and training
- Education for democratic participation
- Education for elderly people

The draft of implementation plan was also made, as well as proposal of priority projects – short term and long term.

Political changes in 2004 have brought about several changes area of education. Educational policy was shifted to school system, children and youth and several newly established institutions and organizations in charged for different aspects of adult education were either closed or merged on one. Teacher training, which was one of the main preferences of previous Ministry of education was drastically reduced and new umbrella law on education was passed, thus merging laws and legal regulations concerning separate educational levels.

Dynamik of reform was slowed down, its extent was reduced and paradigm shift led to neglectedness of idea of lifelong learning and whole adult education system.

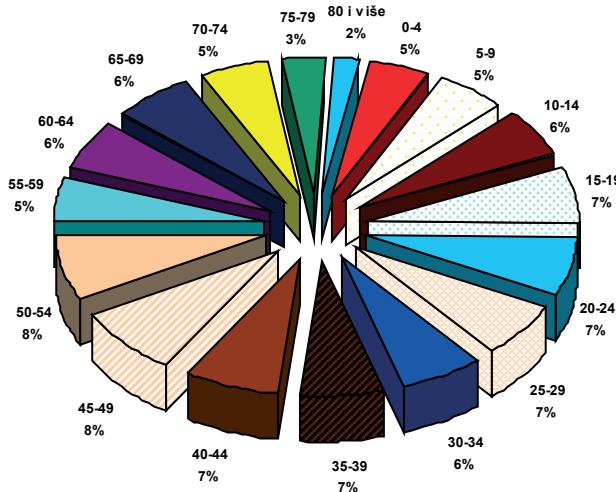
Adult education nowadays still represents an area where many players, local and international, are engaged, although it does not have priority rank in educational policy of Ministry of education. But it is an inevitable part of reforms, projects and programs in many other fields. Intensive regional and international cooperation fosters attempts to bring adult education and training up to date with European and international trends. For that reason, some players at national level are highly interested in reforming this sphere and “internationalization” of the problem, such as Ministry of Work and Employment, Ministry for Human Rights and Minorities etc. Their efforts are supported by numerous international organizations and projects, such as:

- CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization)
- EAR (European Agency for Reconstruction)
- World Bank
- Council of Europe
- IIZ/DVV (Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association)
- GTZ (German Technical Cooperation)
- ETF (European Training Foundation)

Projects and programs developed within this cooperation deal with the estimated priorities, that are clearly derived from some demographical data. At the same time, those data show that adult education is still critical point, where further measures are needed, not just for the purpose of achieving related EFA goal.

There are several groups of such data:

- Serbia is one of the oldest countries in Europe. Percentage of involvement of those aged over 60 in the total population increased significantly in recent time and the number of children and youth is decreasing. According to 2002 census Serbia, without Kosovo and Metohia, had 7,498.0001 inhabitants with the following age structure:



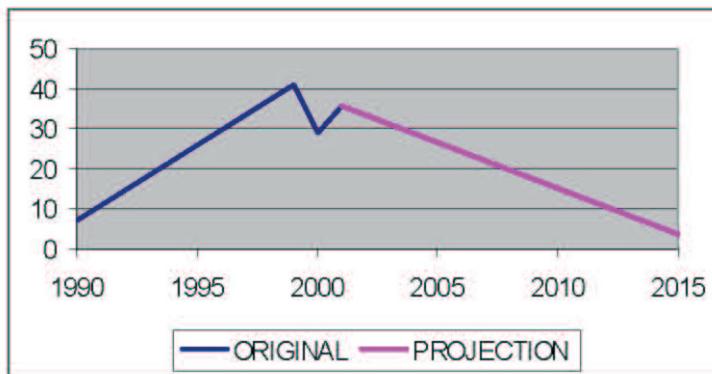
**Source:** Census 2002, Review per settlements, (Republic Statistic Bureau of Serbia) Republički zavod za statistiku Srbije, Beograd, pp.14-15.

- Educational structure of the population aged 15 and over shows rather bad educational structure. It is obvious and relevant for EFA goal that some 50% of population have education at elementary school level and less of that.

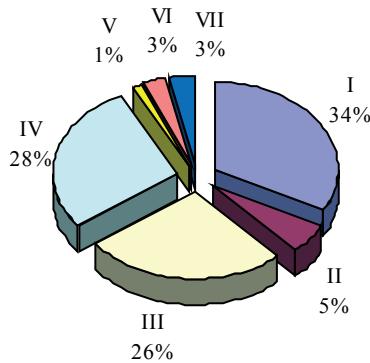
	1991		2002	
	N	%	N	%
Total in census	7007422	100	6321231	100
Without education	666819	9,5	357522	5,6
1-3 grades of elementary	205744	2,9	126127	2,0
4-7 grades of elementary	1439087	20,5	896847	14,2
Elementary education	1752672	25,0	1509462	23,9
Secondary education	2255782	32,2	2596348	41,1
Higher education	267226	3,8	285056	4,5
University education	354610	5,5	411944	6,5
Unknown	65482	0,9	137895	2,2

**Source: Stastitical Yearbook of Yugoslavia 2000, Federal Statistic Bureau, Belgrade, 2000, p. 61 and Unpublished data of the Federal Statistic Bureau**

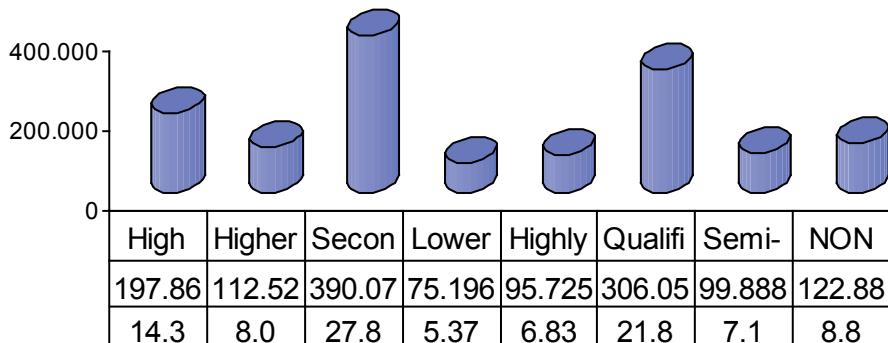
- Millennium Development goals report on Serbia 2002 gives an insight into proportion of population living with less than \$1 a day: “The share of poor population in total in 1990 was only 7,3%. But during 1990s the share of poor population increased dramatically and reached 40,9% in 1999. In 2000 the situation improved slightly. Still, in 2000 approximately one third of population of Serbia (2,8 million) was poor (with average monthly income lower than 30 USD). Among them, more than 18% (1,4 million) lived in extreme poverty with less than 20 USD per month. The situation is even worse as almost 700.000 refugees and IDPs are not included in these data. The poverty index increased from 14,1% to 36,5% in 2000. In the same period the poverty gap ration increased from 1,0% to 3,1% in 2000.“ (The Millennium Development Goals - How Much is Serbia on Track, 2002)



- The number of unemployed is dramatically rising, but their qualification structure (levels I - the lowest, level VII - the highest) shows also that their chances at labor market are extremely low and they are seriously in the risk of increasing poverty if their educational and qualification level stays the same.



- Even the educational structure of employed persons shows that proportion of qualified and non-qualified persons among employed people is significantly different of those in total population, which suggests that there are less chances for those workers to keep their jobs and positions in the world of work.



Source: Employees per education level 2003, Saopštenje ZP 12, Republički zavod za statistiku, Beograd, 2003, str.21.

Having those data in mind, social and economic reality of Serbia too, authorities and experts developed several important documents, which are all directly or indirectly related and relevant for achievement of EFA goal concerning reduction of illiteracy:

- The encompassing Educational law (Ministry of education and sports, 2004), that includes adult education, specifying more the problem of basic adult education,
- Law on work and Law on employment (Ministry of labor, employment and social policy, 2003),
- National employment strategy (Ministry of labor, employment and social policy, 2004), where 10 guidelines of EU from 2003 are accepted,
- Policy of development of adult education in the Republic of Serbia (Ministry of Education and Sports Republic of Serbia, EAR-Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme of EU, 2004),
- Needs and Possibilities of Adult Education in Serbia (European Training Foundation),
- Policy and strategy of accreditation and certification in the secondary vocational education and the continuous education of the adults in Serbia (Ministry of Education and Sports Republic of Serbia, EAR-Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme of EU, 2004),
- Concept of vocational education and training in Serbia (Ministry of education and sport, 2004),
- Policy and Strategy Development for VET in Serbia (Ministry of Education and Sports Republic of Serbia, EAR-Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme of EU, 2005),
- Strategy for poverty reduction (Government of Serbia, 2002), where the third main strategic groups of activity includes measures to assure access to education of the most vulnerable and poor groups in the society, and investments in education are suggested as one of the main measures in poverty reduction – it should be increased from 3,6 % of GDP in 2003 to 4,5 % GDP in 2010
- The Report “The Millennium Development Goals – How much is Serbia on Track”, 2002 estimates that Serbia is on track or has already achieved approximately half of defined goals.

Except those important documents, some concrete steps have been made in single areas, related to adult education in various forms and contents.

### ***Education for elderly***

Since older people represent a very large group in the society, there were always attempts to meet their needs not just in area of social care and health, but also in education and learning. The first so called University for the Third Age was founded in 1989 at the People's University "Braca Stamenkovic." Since 2002 the project was broadened and further 6 Universities for Third Age were established at already existing adult education institutions. From 2002 to 2004 more than 2.000 older persons visited long term courses of very different content. Furthermore, they participated in numerous regional and international exchanges, meetings, conferences and fairs. Several publications and participation in European project on education for elderly (PEFETE) is additional proof that this target group needs to be further subject of educational measures.

### ***Education for democratic citizenship***

The complexity of post-war society, its intercultural and interreligious character demands educational strategies and measures aiming to:

- supporting democratisation of the society and active citizenship,
- awareness-raising, tolerance,
- supporting interculturalism and peace,
- prevailing prejudices and stereotypes,
- conflict prevention, fostering cooperation.

Recent period was marked by efficient implementation of existing programs and creation of new programs, measures and activities directly targeting the poorest and socially most vulnerable groups (children, the elderly, disabled persons, refugees and internally displaced persons, the Roma, the rural population and the uneducated), particularly in the least developed regions. Several programs of that kind were developed, strategic documents of the Government of Serbia and concrete projects, many of them in non-governmental sector, with significant support of Council of Europe and other international organizations. The list of main activities includes:

- Strategies and policy papers (such as: Strategy for Integration of Roma, **National Strategy for Refugees and Displaced Persons**, Documents about the Process of Stabilisation and Association with EU and others concerning European partnership),

- Developed curriculum for Citizenship education, which was included into the elementary school program for the first time. More than 5.000 teachers were trained for implementation of this program,
- Network of regional projects and cooperation, especially among countries of Southeast Europe and some EU countries,
- Accreditation of several NGO educational programs in the field of Education for democratic citizenship, peace and intercultural education, mediation etc.,
- Activities with different target groups: minorities, refugees, women, disabled, Roma,
- Events devoted to mentioned target groups and topics, such as big International conference „Education and Peace“ in 2004.

### ***Vocational education and training***

As almost all reports, strategic papers and plans suggest, achieving of EFA goals, Millennium goals, Poverty reduction strategy are directly connected not just with education, but with market need based educational provision, access to relevant vocational education, requalification, further education and training. Since reforms in economic sector were very dynamic, educational measures played an important role within all efforts, projects and programs. Some of the most important are:

- Several above mentioned national strategies and policy papers concerning the world of work, employment, market;
- Countless activities of international agencies and projects such as CARDS program, GTZ, ETF;
- Attempts made in order to support formal systems for adult education:
  - Developed network of 5 regional training centres,
  - Developed methodology for competency based curricula development and modular approach and ca 125 developed training modules,
  - Developed series of new labour market oriented vocational profiles

### ***Achieving EFA goals - Best practice example - Project "Functional basic adult education for Roma"***

Two years project Functional Basic Education for Roma, as one of the project of the Roma Decade, started in Serbia and Montenegro at the end of 2006. The project will be funded by Roma Education Fund, with Governments commitment for co-financing.

The main idea of functional basic education implies simultaneous acquisition of elementary education and the initial vocational instruction and training, that is, obtaining the first qualification. Project aims to develop both programs for elementary comprehensive education and for vocational training, both leading to recognized certificates, whereby the main principle is to develop target group and labor market oriented curricula.

Main partners on the project, which is going to be implemented as the pilot program within the legal regulations for elementary schools, are:

- Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy
- National Council of the Roma
- Ministry of Education and Sport
- Adult Education Society

Strong cooperation is planned with following partners:

- Ministry of Work and Social Policy
- Ministry of Human and Minority Rights
- National Employment Services
- Poverty Reduction Office
- Elementary schools
- Regional training centers
- Local NGOs with experiences in Roma projects
- Local community

Problems the project wishes to address :

- Low level of literacy, general and professional education of Roma
- Variety of barriers for their inclusion
- High dropout
- Low enrolment into secondary education
- Huge gap between Roma needs and education systems offer
- Poor quality second -chance education
- Low Roma's motivation for education

Further aims of the project are to create and develop system of functional basic education of adults which will provide them better access to basic education and represent the second chance for Roma people, but even more enable them inclusion into the system of education and above that social inclusion and integration. Project tries also to increase their motivation for acquiring elementary and professional education, to reduce dropout rate in basic education and to increase employability among Roma. The project will thus contribute significantly to the poverty reduction and to achieving EFA goals in Serbia. Based on the projects results, it might be possible to suggest the model of functional basic education for further group of adults, especially for various marginalized groups, with the new legislative framework.

As the main activities developing two new curricula (for general and for vocational education) at the level of VII and VIII grade are planned, further on their piloting in 10 schools in several cities in Serbia, where there is significant Roma population, with ca 250 second-chance young adult students without completed basic education. Throughout project implementation a network of Roma coordinators will facilitate communication between Roma community and education institutions and motivate second-chance youth for education, trainings for teacher in implementation new curricula and in modern teaching methods adapted to the specific target group.

Expected outcomes should benefit achieving EFA goals in following way:

- By developing flexibel, qualitative, recognized and sustainable model of functional basic education for Roma, reducing their drop-out percentage and incresing their level of literacy and education, as well as their access to education and learning, improving at the same time their employability and chances on the labor market,
- By developing such model of functional basic education that could be easily adapted for other vulnerable, marginalized, neglected or deprivilaged groups, such as other national minorities, women,
- By developing mehanisms and ways for institutionalization of functional basic education, improving the whole system of classical elementary schools for adults, giving thus chance to all population of adults without completed basic education and without any or relevant vocational quilification.

The implementation of EFA strategy, both as „main stream „ and „correlative stream“ face various obstacles. For instance, changes, e.g. slowing down of overall reforms and especially of the dynamik of reforms in educa-

tional policy makes the possibility of achieving EFA goals in foreseen time very questionable. There are some measures and projects striving to that aim, but there is no systematic approach. The fact that EFA goals were included in several various strategies in different areas seemed as very positive at the beginning, since it could have made contribution of almost all actors to the EFA goals possible. But at the same time it was a danger, because slowdown in some areas did jeopardise the achieving of EFA goals.

The dynamik and character of transitional changes (economic, political, social) will directly influence achieving of EFA goals, and that development is not easy to be foresseden.

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# OBRAZOVANJE ZA SVE U SRBIJI – UNAPREĐENJE, RAZVOJ I AKTIVNOSTI

*Rad predstavlja kratku studiju rezultata u ostvarivanju međunarodnih ciljeva programa „Obrazovanje za sve“ u Srbiji – razvoj, strateška dokumenta, važne statističke podatke, aktivnosti, nosioce, prioritetna područja i postignute rezultate do kraja 2005. godine. U centru interesovanja autora nalaze se projekti i mere posvećene ostvarivanju EFA cilja u području obrazovanju odraslih.*

**Ključne reči:** Obrazovanje odraslih, EFA, Obrazovanje za sve, UNESCO, Ministarstvo prosvete