

Bosnia and Herzegovina



23.5% Population aged 25-34 with a tertiary degree ^a

0.9% Percentage of immigrant stock (% population) ^b

19.3% Population below the poverty line ^c

11.6% Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) ^d

Average TIMSS/PIRLS scores (4th grade) ^e
Center point: 500

NA **452** **459**

Reading **Math** **Science**

Average PISA scores (10th grade) ^f
OECD average

403 **406** **398**

487 **489** **489**
Reading **Math** **Science**

NA public spending in education as a % of GDP ^g

0.12 billions allocated in NPRR ^h

19		Upper secondary school General (23 %) Vocational (77 %)
18		
17		
16		
15	Compulsory schooling	Primary & lower secondary school (Common track)
14		
13		
12		
11		
10		
9		
8		
7		
6		
5		Pre-school
4		
3		

General features

Educational system

Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is compulsory for 9 years, and starts at age 6. Figure 1.2 summarizes the structure of the educational system. Pupils enrol in primary school and stay in the same school until they are 15. The Agency for Primary and Secondary Education tried to implement a common core curriculum (CCC). However, there were political objections against the harmonization of curricula, and the degree of compliance to CCC is not known at this stage²⁰. Compulsory education is free and open to everybody. School is taught in the three official languages: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. Secondary school available tracks are (i) a general academic track, which lasts 4 years and (ii) a vocational track, which lasts 3 or 4 years.

Governance and funding

There are 14²¹ different authorities in charge of education in BiH²²: (i) the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Srpska (ii) the ten cantonal ministries of education in the Federation of BiH and (iii) the Department for Education of the Brčko District of BiH Government. The Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH (MoCA) and the Agency for Higher Education and Quality Assurance, Center for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education and the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education act as coordinating bodies of the ministries. The educational system is mostly public, with few private educational institutions. Financing is mostly public, depending on the jurisdiction²³.

Performance

Students in BiH had a lower performance than the OECD average in all the PISA subjects (maths, reading, science). Moreover, a smaller proportion of students reached a minimum level of proficiency in reading (46% versus 77 % of OECD), maths (42% versus 76% of OECD) and science (43% versus 78% of OECD) and a negligible percentage of students were top performers in these disciplines.

Girls outperformed boys in reading of around 30 points, but scored similar to boys in mathemat-

ics and science.

The score gap between economically disadvantaged students and advantaged students is 58 points, lower than the OECD average (89 points). Socio-economic status explained 8% of the variation in performance in mathematics and 7% of the variation in performance in science, a number lower to the OECD average (14% for maths and 13 % for science). 13% of disadvantaged students managed to be in the top quarter for reading (compared to 11% of disadvantaged students).

Absenteeism is higher than OECD average: 47% of students missed a day of school and 45% arrived late in the preceding two weeks of the PISA test.²⁴

Job expectations differ among high-performing students in mathematics or science: only 1% of girls expects to work in ICT compared to the 11% of boys. Girls are more likely than boys to expect a job in a health-related profession (33% versus 13%). Socio-economic status seems to play an important role also when it comes to ambitions: among high-achieving students, a high percentage (14%) of disadvantaged ones expected not to complete tertiary education, compared to roughly 3% of the advantaged students²⁵.

Key policy challenges

The extremely decentralized jurisdiction, poses a severe challenge to achieve state level coordination and strategic alignment in educational policies. This results in inefficient spending and unclear strategic planning, hampering the overall quality of education: the high level of decentralization, combined with weak practical coordination results in uneven education policies, emphasis on the national group of subjects, and lack of valid external evaluation of students' achievements after primary and secondary school.

The quality of vocational training in Bosnia and Herzegovina is among the worse in the Balkan area²⁶: it is outdated, fragmented, and difficult to reform due to weak governance. In a recent survey, 50% of students said they are dissatisfied with what they learnt in secondary education, and more than one out of four states that the acquired skills are not in line with the ones requested

²⁰Bosnia and Herzegovina Review of Efficiency of Services in Pre-University Education. World Bank (2019). Funded by the EU

²¹Realizing education's promise in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The case for investing in children and youth, World Bank Blog

²²European Committee of the Regions, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Education

²³Key Features of the Education System - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eurydice (European Commission)

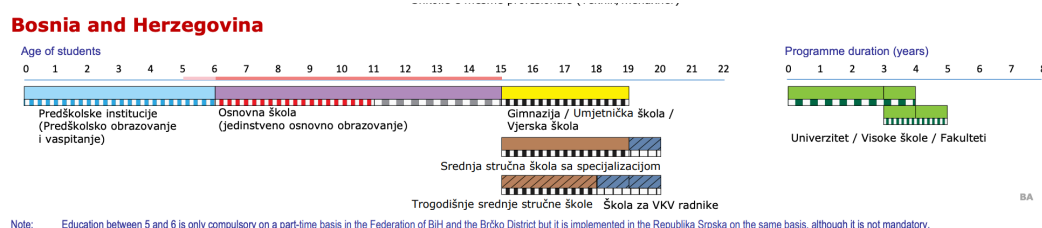
²⁴<https://measurebih.com/uimages/Overview20of20Main20Challenges20in20Primary20and20Secondary20Education20in20BiH.pdf>

²⁵PISA 2018 Results. Bosnia and Herzegovina Country note

²⁶Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Bosnia and Herzegovina

²⁷Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate). Available at:

Figure 1.2: Educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Source: Eurydice Website: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/>

in the labour market. This contributes to a very high youth unemployment rate (32.9%²⁷)

The lack of monitoring mechanism to assess the overall quality of education is a significant barrier for effective policy making. Educational statistics are scattered and fragmented²⁸, and often lack useful detailed information at student or teacher level. Similarly, pedagogical institutes lack the capacity to support teachers' professional development.²⁹

Increasing support and training of teachers is pivotal to increase quality of the system. Teachers' salaries are in line with public sector salaries (roughly 25% higher than the private sector), but are commensurate to qualifications and years of experience, instead of performance. There are low perspectives for professional development, with very weak in-service training. Better management and support of teachers' workforce should be a priority in order to increase quality of education³⁰

Recently enacted policies and investments

In the past few years BiH tried to reach a good level of school participation and made some encouraging advancements in order to ameliorate the educational system: it integrated the Common Core Curriculum Based on Learning Outcomes (CCC) and participated in international assessments of student learning, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018 and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2019. However, political hostility against harmonization of curricula and decentralization of the responsibility for curricula and textbooks hindered both the implementation of the common curricula and the compliance monitoring.³¹ In general, further effort is required to enact an efficient and effective strategic planning in education. Stronger coordination among parties to streamline decision making and implementation of sound monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are required to advance quality and equity of the overall educational system.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS>

²⁸Monitoring and evaluation support activity. Bosnia and Herzegovina. USAID (2017)

²⁹Bosnia and Herzegovina. Review of Efficiency of Services in Pre-University Education. World Bank Group (2019). Funded by the European Union.

³⁰idem

³¹Bosnia and Herzegovina Review of Efficiency of Services in Pre-University Education. World Bank (2019). Funded by the EU