

"During all our visits [...] the most memorable encounters were those with the youth and students, impressive young individuals who are trying to shape their future against bleak economic prospects in societies which have only begun to come to terms with their past."

Foreword to the Report of the International Commission on the Balkans, April 2005.

Few knowledgeable observers doubt the critical nature of the challenges and choices that continue to confront Bosnia and Herzegovina, nor their implications for Europe as a whole. Education is a key issue. Confidence within families and among the young can only be generated by quality, reliability and opportunity. There is no time to lose.

President of the UWC
Her Majesty Queen Noor
of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan



Honorary President of the UWC
Nelson Mandela
Former President of South Africa



INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION IN POST-CRISIS SOCIETIES

The United World Colleges and the International Baccalaureate Organization
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Mostar



Sarajevo



Banja Luka

The United World Colleges (UWC)

There are ten member colleges in Wales, Singapore, Canada, Swaziland, the United States, Italy, Venezuela, Hong Kong, Norway and India. They are unique in bringing together scholarship students aged 16–19 from across the world for pre-university education, irrespective of race, religion, politics and the ability to pay. Selected entirely on personal merit, they live in residential communities for two years. They follow the rigorous programmes of the International Baccalaureate Organization, allied with equally demanding programmes in community service, cultural activities and outdoor pursuits that prepare them for lives of active social responsibility and civic leadership.

The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO)

The IB Diploma programme is taught in over 1200 schools in 110 countries across the globe. The Diploma gives access to the world's leading universities. The curriculum has had a profound influence on educational reform in many countries. It is a benchmark for academic excellence, enlightened educational practice, and effective cooperation between teachers and schools in all five continents.

Founded in the "Cold War" years of the 1960's, UWC and IBO are separate organizations but have cooperated closely and derived enormous mutual benefit in their shared task of advancing the cause of international education. This is however the first time they have formally joined together to launch a new pioneering initiative.

Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Recent history, politics, distrust and fear have combined to deprive the young people of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the education they need if they and their country are to achieve a successful integration into European society.

Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a formidable challenge to the idealism and leadership of the international community. All those responsible for reconciliation and reconstruction, and especially the citizens of the country itself, have a right to call on the experience and resources of international education.

Mostar

The town's old Gymnazium was established in 1878. In 1991, it had more than 1100 pupils. It was one of the finest schools in the country. In the war it was destroyed, along with the famous bridge, less than five minutes' walk away. The bridge has been rebuilt. For the Gymnazium, physical restoration is not enough. It deserves to become once again a model for quality and leadership in education.

Working closely with the authorities in Mostar, the UWC and the IBO have developed the following plan:

- * To create an IB group in the Mostar Gymnasium for local students from all ethnic communities.
- * To enrol with the local students scholarship students selected by committees of the United World Colleges in Central and South East Europe and beyond, including Europe and North America.

- * To support these endeavours through the appointment initially of international teachers, experienced in both the IB and the UWC.
- * To secure the long-term future with a systematic and ambitious programme of training for local teachers.

Sarajevo

In 2000 the Druga Gymnazium became the first school in Bosnia and Herzegovina to introduce the International Baccalaureate. The school has welcomed the UWC-IBO proposal to strengthen its programme with enriched opportunities for teacher development and the recruitment of a number of experienced international teachers.

Banja Luka

The leading Gymnazium in Banja Luka has for some time wished to introduce the IB Diploma. The UWC-IBO initiative will make this possible through the appointment of international teachers, the improvement of the school's resources, and the provision of bursaries to ensure that IB students can be selected on personal merit.

The Wider Impact

The provision of the same curriculum and school leaving diploma in Mostar, Sarajevo and Banja Luka will represent for the first time since the war the possibility for members of all national groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina to learn together in the same classroom. At the same time, and reflecting the long-established practice of the IBO, national traditions and cultures will be fully respected through specific instruction in mother tongue language and literature.

Close professional cooperation between the teachers in all three schools will be fostered very strongly. Service and activity programmes of UWC-IBO students will engage larger communities at the schools and in the neighbouring societies. Teachers and students from other schools will benefit from the experiences of the three schools through the partnership programmes.

The IBO currently runs training workshops for some 20000 teachers annually across the world. This expertise will become available to teachers throughout Bosnia as a direct result of this UWC-IBO initiative. Among other benefits, such as insights into educational practices in other countries, they will bring access to enhanced professional qualifications through the IB workshops themselves and through other centres of teacher training in Europe.

In time, these three schools, and the teacher training programmes associated with them, will develop into a regional centre for international education at the secondary level. This will be a major step forward for the entire region of South East Europe.