

## **1. Erna Brodlic**

### ***“Students-Victims of Corruption”***

#### **Introduction**

Many important problems in every country are connected with the corruption. If I think about what made me choose life of the students and the corruption presented in, the answer would be: I am informed about this topic more than any other that is connected with the corruption. I am aware that the corruption in students' lives is not likely to be taken into consideration, or even to get rid of it, like some other problems maybe are. But, every problem, even single one, is equal in worth. And since each country's future is in the hands of young and well educated people that is one more reason to take care of them.

But it is impossible to discuss about the corruption in one sphere of the life. The connection between these spheres is the base for any consideration. Also, when we talk about the territory of former Yugoslavia, as the region where the corruption is caused by the consequences of the war and on a very high level, it is necessary to analyse it from political aspect. So, the corruption has to be considered as the complex structure of problems in all the fields.

The reason of the situation today in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be found in bad economic situation and lack of a good law system after the war. Hard financial situation that occurred in all the spheres of the life has forced the people to change their lives that way. People started to use their positions and corruption spread around extremely fast. Big part of the money that was intended to reform post-war situation went to 'wrong hands'. Just group of the people made a profit from it and the majority has atoned. Beside domestic people, there are some suspicions that big number of strangers is included in this kind of jobs.

*Here are just key sentences from A Comprehensive Anti-Corruption Strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the booklet written by Office of the High Representative(OHR), Sarajevo:*

“After the war, corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina flourished, hindering the development of a free market economy and the transition to democracy. (...) The citizens of BiH are the real victims of fraud and corruption as they receive fewer government services while paying relatively higher taxes to offset the losses caused by illegal activity.”

It outlines real position of the people, as well as the students living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That's why every man, woman and child in this society has an interest in getting rid of the corruption.

The fact is that it is also present in the countries where there was no war, but on very lower level. Let's say Finland is the country with 95 % of protection of the law, then people there would think 95 times before taking a bribe. But in the countries where the law is not regulated well, as it is the case in Bosnia, people encroach on the various things when they see they are allowed to. The conclusion would be: All the people in the world could be corrupted, but the price is different.

#### ***I. Voice of the Students***

After I've decided to analyse educational sphere and corruption presented in, I paid attention to some things that earlier wouldn't cross my mind. What I have noticed is that the students are aware of the situation present, but many of them don't know how to fight it. All students would rather be watching everything from a side because they think they are weak comparing to professors or political leaders. But it is not strange. I have also been among this

group of young people who didn't know they could fight for their rights, but after a while my mind came up with so many ideas about how my future could be better.

From the February this year, students started to publish their own newspaper called *Omnibus*. On the 23.01.2001. , LOV (*Lokalno omladinsko vijeće* -Local Youth Council) is established and it gathers all youth organisations around Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of the things they are going to fight for is: students' rights at universities. That is a good start: public publishing of the problems, which is a good step for the future of young people.

Unfortunately, there are more bad articles and critics written in *Omnibus*. They are saying about the real student's life at University of Sarajevo. The situation is not more different at other universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*"Professor, how much is the book?"* is the title of one article from *Omnibus*. In essence, it is written that there are professors from all faculties, who use the opportunity as authors of the textbooks, to require from students to buy new books for exams, even if they have the old one. It is usually the case with professors, whose subjects are more important. So, if you don't have the book with you, you will not pass the exam. What has caused it? Permanent life standard of well-educated teaching staff is so low, their compensation for the work is inadequate and they are forced to improve their lives no matter if they are causing damage to students. As the supplement there is the table with the names of professors and their books at all faculties in Sarajevo. Aren't the teachers expected to be persons that students can learn from and whom they can trust to? The students need to stop being financial sources for the teachers!

*"...I really don't see what is the sense of forcing own textbooks, except it leads to private business."* said professor Zdravko Grebo. *"The big question is who owns the University and the faculties."*

In this period in our area an old socialistic regime is changing into privatisation. It makes confusion with universities also. These are just the key sentences he said about the reality of universities in interview for *Omnibus*.

*"Student's cash laundry"* is the title of next interesting theme where the question is: *"Are the students' offices really source of illegal operations and real 'laundry of money' "*? The answer is yes. *"Almost all students' offices in Sarajevo are just institutions for 'laundry of money'. Maybe 'laundry of money' is a hard word, but it is about various irregularities in works (irregular payment, etc)"*, said Emir Kadric, director of Students' centre, in interview for *Omnibus*. That is one more proof of corruption settled between students.

Amira Sokolovic, the student at University of Sarajevo, investigated for *Omnibus* something about engagement of professors:

*"Who atone that professors are more occupied with politics, than with teaching?"* Exactly: students! There are so many professors who do many functions beside the role of the professor. They are occupied in sphere of politics, or at many faculties at the same time, so it is impossible to be good in all of them. Do we need our teachers to be good, or maybe excellent, as persons who should be as our models? Unfortunately, they are not. They miss some lectures; they have no time for consultations with students. Some of them even don't go to the faculties, just when they need to get their payment. Is it fair?

Students' dormitories in Sarajevo, for the students who are coming from other towns, are in a bad situation. There is one interesting thing I've read in *Omnibus* in the interview with Abdulah Hodzic, director of the dormitory *Nedzarici*. The part of housing for students in dormitories is paid by canton where the student comes from. The student has to pay the rest. On the question:

*"Why the housing in dormitory got more expensive?"* director said:

*"Because the canton reduced the participation. Now, the cantons are paying 100 KM per student, earlier it was more."*

"How much?" asked Aida Secic, who interviewed him.

"I don't know exactly." he said.

How is it possible that the director of dormitory doesn't know such an information? Who should know if not him? Reading this dialogue, this fact made me suspicious. That is the question of law. Who controls his work? Maybe someone who also has benefit from it.

UN uses one of dormitories in Sarajevo and they are paying for it. The students don't have the information who receives the money from them and what is the money used for.

That is the example of students' dormitory, but the "chain" is much longer than it seems. "Co-operation" on all levels with the same interest has made a long "chain" of the corruption.

Very often between students you can hear the sentence: "Lucky him, he has Daddy!" I personally don't agree that power of parents is the only way for success. If you are ambitious enough, you will have the place you earn yourself. But, it is also interesting that university place, dormitory place can be paid. What should be criteria for studying: own abilities, or abilities of powerful of the parents or the money? There are some indications that during the war many diplomas were bribed, and also that some exams can be paid yet. Taking the bad economic situation into consideration, it is not strange. If the institutions would care more about the existence of teaching staff, than they wouldn't need even think about some irregular things.

This year in Sarajevo and Banja Luka has been hold Student forum 2001, organized by Balkanforum-UiO. There were about 60 participants from all over the Balkan and from Norway as well, who organized everything. It is written the Memorandum, as conclusion of discussing: *Reforming the Education System*. All the students agreed that they are passing through the period of reconstruction of education system from old socialistic to a regime of western countries. But, they also emphasized the corruption as one of the problems. Here are some of points they mentioned:

- Student representation should be based on democratic system and democratic elections and not on grades, personal relationships, or other irrelevant criteria.

- All students have the right to just, objective and public examination.

- Students should have the right-possibility to evaluate their professors.

- Professors should be available for consultation with students. Consultation with students should be included in the job-description of the professors.

- High attention should be paid to academic staff in order for them not to take advantage of their position.

#### **Summary:**

- Students are building the societies of today and tomorrow. Therefore it is of great importance to ensure that the conditions for higher education are as good as possible.

*Seeing and respecting students as one of a country's most important resources, is the best way a society can secure a positive and prosperous future for itself.*

They also emphasized problems about housing, equipment and facilities, food and restaurants and students' discounts. If the money, that is intended to improve conditions of students' lives, goes to 'right hands', all these problems could be reduced. Who governs with that money intended to students? Regulating new law students could be protected of the corruption and expand their rights.

"A government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, aware of the fact that the corruption is a huge limitation to economic and social development of the country, asked from World Bank to make a diagnostic study of corruption that could help to develop an anti-corruption program." This was just an introduction of the booklet *Diagnostic Study of the Corruption-Bosnia and Herzegovina* that World Bank prepared. One of the main sphere that was considered in this booklet was the sphere of education together with the corruption in the

Health, Law system, Police etc. That is one more proof that the corruption in education is to be considered at the same level as the corruption in any other sphere of life.

## **Summary**

When you analyse all these facts, it seems like normal thing that so many young people are looking for the way out of this country in order to find better opportunities for themselves. More than half of young people, 62% of them (report from UNDP, September 2000) agreed to leave the country and try to get their education somewhere else. Studying in the difficult economic situation as it is now is hard enough for these young people and any financial difficulty repulses them to study. Some expenses that are beard by students could be left out, if the organisation and control get on higher level. Is the corruption that motivation every young man or woman needs to search for higher knowledge? Or it is better way to change something in way of working of the University, as well as of the institutions that are responsible for it? This country needs well-educated and young people to be the leaders of the future, something needs to be done to stop everyday growing corruption and prevent these people from leaving. What is going to happen to the country they are leaving? Is it good solution to let young generations to leave and the same time the corruption settle forever?