# Handout #5B: Conflict Sensitive Strategies for Domain 3: Teaching and Learning Focusing on Curricula Reform

**Instructions:** Working in your groups, review the article assigned to you and answer the following 3 questions. Write each answer to #1 and #2 on post-its. When you are finished with all the questions, ask one member to put the post-its with answers to #1 and #2 on the flipchart at the front of the class.

1. Write each conflict sensitive strategy mentioned in the article on a separate post-it note.
2. Write ways the reform could be more conflict sensitive on a separate post-it note.
3. List on your own paper the conflict sensitive strategies mentioned that could be applied to your working context.

If you need help brainstorming conflict sensitive strategies for your answers to questions #1 and #2, consider: the Conflict Sensitive Education Quick Reflection Questions for Domain #3 Teaching and Learning on pg. 33 and the additional strategies listed on pages 48-50 of the INEE Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education.

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# Article 1: Shaping education in Bosnia-Herzegovina



**News Source:** DW

**Title:** Shaping education in Bosnia-Herzegovina

**Date** 07.01.2014

**Author** Janine Albrecht / db

**Editor:** Charlotte Collins

**Permalink:** http://dw.de/p/1AmOb

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, both teachers and students find it hard to talk about the war, which many of them experienced, first-hand. German experts in designing textbooks are helping teachers find ways to address the topic.

"How can I tell students about our borders without automatically having to talk about the war?" asks Sibela Jevtic. She has taught geography and history in Banja Luka since 1993. Jevtic lived through the civil war here, in the north of what is now Bosnia-Herzegovina, and its absurdities were also apparent in her own family: Her father fought with the Serbs, her three uncles on the Croatian side. "I tell the students about my own experiences," Jevtic says, hoping that this approach will help the young people to keep an open mind. "War is not simply black or white.

The teacher and her students alike have deep-seated, painful memories of the war. Discussing the issue in school is extremely difficult, Jevtic says. But she firmly believes that addressing it is important, which is why she decided to participate in a project offered by Germany's Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI) aimed at designing new school textbooks that specifically deal with the civil war.

"We began to tackle recent history for the first time in 2008," Katarina Batarilo-Henschen explains. The teaching material doesn't deal with controversial war issues like the concentration camps and the Srebrenica massacre. Instead, it examines everyday life during that period, the GEI project coordinator says. Local authorities unanimously agree that, even today, that's as far as they can go.

Everyday life was the same for Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks during the war, so the students have shared memories. They all experienced what it was like going to school in wartime, or when food became scarce, or there was no electricity. Teachers in Sarajevo come to workshops to learn ways of discussing the war in class.

In cooperation with the German Foreign Ministry, the Braunschweig-based institute has been involved in the project for the past ten years, helping educators like Sibela Jevtic in Bosnia-Herzegovina to address the war in class. The institute cooperates with institutions and textbook authors worldwide to develop school books for crisis regions: for South Africa in the 1990s and, more recently, for the Baltic States, Georgia, Belarus and Ukraine.

GEI experts also helped compile a joint history book for Israeli and Palestinian students. Neither side allows it to be used in schools, but "the fact that the book exists at all, and that Israelis and Palestinians worked on it together, is a success," according to Georg Stöber, who heads the institute's Textbook and Conflict Department.

It's no easy feat to provide for a common examination of history in such regions, the textbook researcher says. Both sides harbor too many prejudices and too much pain. Stöber remembers launching the project in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats sat in separate groups and wouldn't mingle even during short coffee breaks. As the workshops progressed, it was important that they "no longer debated as Serbs, Bosniaks or Croats, but as university lecturers; their professional identities came to the fore. "Bosnia-Herzegovina initiated a textbook reform in 2003. Older teachers in particular found it difficult to allow for different perspectives of the war, Baratilo-Henschen says, adding that they were still heavily influenced by the Communist training for history teachers.

Active learning is an important element of teaching the Balkan Wars in class, says Melisa Foric. The historian and textbook author, a member of the European Association for History Educators (Euroclio), survived the four-year siege of Sarajevo as a child, and has been a part of the textbook reform team since its early beginnings. Foric would like to see a standardized textbook for all students in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but that is not yet on the horizon. The 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement split Bosnia-Herzegovina into many cantons, which led to a heterogeneous education sector with 13 education ministries. "There is no control over what is taught in the classrooms," the textbook author warns. But at least the war is now officially part of the curriculum in every canton but one.

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# Article 2: Bad News for New Curriculum (Uganda)

**News Source:** The Independent

**Title:** Bad News for New Curriculum

**Date:** 1 October 2012 14:21

**Author:** Ronald Musoke

**Permalink:** http://www.independent.co.ug/news/news-analysis/6646-bad-news-for-new-curriculum

This is an abbreviated text.

Arecent move by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) to overhaul the O-Level curriculum and have it in use by 2015 has drawn mixed reactions. Most education experts agree that reforms in the education system are long overdue but they complain that the apparent haste and lack of consultation in this important job — one of the most critical in transforming Uganda— might lead the education sector in a wrong direction.

“By all means, I do support the curriculum reform because we are in an information age; some subjects are more relevant than others, but consultations are very important,” says Fred Masagazi, the dean of the School of Education at Makerere University. He says knowledgeable people within the public and education sector are complaining because they were not consulted about the reforms. To him, curriculum reform means a total change in the education system, and should involve parents, teachers, MPs, political parties, religious leaders, students so that they own the process from the onset.

Masaazi’s views are backed by UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education, which says a curriculum change must involve a diverse range of stakeholders and ensure relevance of the education by focusing on context, and global, national and local perspectives. He is also concerned about the speed of rolling it out nationwide.

**Past mistakes**

Peter Sibukule, the deputy headmaster of Kololo SSS supports the overhaul of the O-Level curriculum because, he says, the current one has been too theoretical and devoid of skills. “If something new is being introduced, teachers should be able to know to avoid past mistakes.” He recalls how the government recently introduced the teaching of Information Communication Technology and Swahili in Ugandan secondary schools only to be met with a glaring lack of expert teachers. The education ministry then plunged itself in crisis management by enrolling a few teachers for its retooling programme.“ The proposal is talking about learning areas such as science instead of physics, biology and chemistry; but how safe am I as a teacher of these individual subjects? We are not sure about our job security,” he says.

Renowned educationist and MP for Kalungu West, Joseph Ssewungu also believes the problem with Uganda’s education system is not the curriculum. Ssewungu refers to a set thematic lower primary school curriculum that ran into trouble shortly after the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) hurriedly launched it in 2007 in a bid to improve reading and basic arithmetic. The thematic curriculum is built around using the mother tongue as the language of instruction in lower primary; P1-P3. Other areas reviewed included physical education, religious education, and the art of writing. It was thought this would improve learning and build the children’s confidence.

Instead, according to a recent investigation by The New Vision newspaper, parents rejected it because studying in the local language weakens the child’s ability to read and write English, which in turn weakens the child’s general learning abilities. The New Vision investigation found that about 50% of primary schools are not using the new curriculum because the NCDC has failed to train teachers and provide related textbooks and teachers’ guides. As a result, implementation of the new curriculum across the nation has been haphazard, with pupils being subjected to both the old and new curriculum.

Mulumba Mutema, the assistant coordinator of the Curriculum Assessment and Examination Programme (CURASSE) at NCDC is responsible for the new curriculum. Mulumba says a number of stakeholders; such as District Education Officers, Principals of national teachers colleges, alongside the team writing the curriculum have been working over the last year. He said public consultations have also been held. He says more sensitization will follow soon and this will target political leaders, NGOs, faith groups, opinion leaders in the education sector, parents and the students. He says fresh ideas on the new curriculum can still be sent to the NCDC.

He says the reform is part of the Universal Post-primary Education and Training Project, which is partly being funded by a US$150 million World Bank loan to the government. It is being implemented by NCDC with technical support from Cambridge Education—a UK based education consultancy. The loan is to finance reform of lower secondary education curriculum, examination and assessment. It includes associated teacher education and reorienting the subject content to include pre-vocational knowledge and skills. Interestingly, however, the 40-months project which started in October 2011 ends in early 2015; the time when the new curriculum is actually supposed to be rolled out. Question: Why are the funders of the project not curious to hang around and see the outcome of the labor and funds?

**Labor market demands**

Uganda’s education system comprises non-compulsory pre-school for three to five-year olds, followed by seven years of compulsory primary education for six-12 year olds. Advancing students aged 13-16 then do four years of lower secondary education (O-Level), followed by two years of upper secondary (A-Level). Successful A-level graduates go to university or to a range of other tertiary institutions while the rest drop-out. Unfortunately, most are not absorbed into the labor market and Uganda has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world at over 80%. Uganda’s drop-out problem is big. Despite statistics showing that up to 70% of those who drop-out must find jobs in the agricultural sector, the education sector outside of university puts most emphasis on health, education, commerce, and technical schools. A survey of tertiary institutions reveals 10 health institutions, and only two agricultural colleges.