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## **The Importance of Education Systems in Post-Conflict Settings: The Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH)**

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Oral Presentation O11.4

**THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN POST-CONFLICT SETTINGS:  
THE CASE OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA (BIH)**

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This paper reviews the education system in post-conflict BiH in order to understand the role that education plays in promoting a successful reconstruction process. It is argued that, if education is not emphasized as a key component of this process, then divisions will continue to prevent successful reconciliation, thus hindering the long-term success of reconstruction efforts. Since reconciliation is particularly important in post-ethnic conflict settings, the focus of the paper is on these kinds of settings. The paper begins by framing the post-conflict setting: how does one start to rebuild a society in the aftermath of war, which institutions are most important to reconstruct, who are the primary actors responsible for reconstruction? With this background, consideration is then given to the framework within which the education system can be placed in the post-conflict reconstruction phase: what role does education play in society, what are the benefits of education with respect to other sectors that must also be rebuilt so that the end result is a civil society? Lastly, those obstacles that are currently preventing educational system reform in BiH are identified and the impact of the associated absence of reconciliation in BiH is discussed. It is concluded that, unless education is emphasized early in the post-conflict setting, particularly if it is not considered to be a key component of long term development, then reconstruction efforts are more likely to fail leading to a perilous future for a society emerging from war.