



Soka Gakkai International

Report on Disarmament Education Activities July 2014-June 2016

Soka Gakkai International (SGI) submits herewith a report on its disarmament education activities covering the period from July 2014 to June 2016 as an input to the Seventh Biennial Report of the Secretary-General on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education to be submitted to the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

Executive Summary:

Between July 2014 and June 2016, the Soka Gakkai International has conducted a wide range of disarmament education activities particularly focusing on educating the public and young people to foster a culture of peace, including showing exhibitions, organizing panel discussions and film screenings, and interfaith activities. For example, SGI co-organized the International Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition held in Hiroshima, Japan, in August 2015, in which participants deepened their understanding of the issue. The SGI has also worked together with other faith groups to raise public awareness about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons in the context of the moral and ethical dimensions.

SGI continued its People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition, a grassroots educational campaign launched in 2007 with the aim of building international public opinion against nuclear weapons. The initiative has encouraged local efforts in various countries, such as the Senzatomica campaign in Italy and Run for Peace activities in Malaysia.



What follows is a report on the SGI's disarmament education activities covering the period from July 2014 to June 2016:

International Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition (Recommendations 4, 13, 29a, 29b)

Together with other international peace NGOs, SGI co-organized the International Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition¹ held in Hiroshima, Japan, from 28-30 August 2015. The International Youth Summit gave the next generation of nuclear disarmament leaders the opportunity to experience first-hand the atrocities that took place 70 years ago and to commit to abolishing these horrific weapons of mass destruction. Additionally, the event helped preserve the living memories of *hibakusha*, and further inspired youth to ensure that the future is free from nuclear weapons.

▪ Three-day summit in Hiroshima (August 2015)

The Summit's goal was to build and enhance the network of the younger generation of leaders in the field of nuclear abolition and to create opportunities for future collaborations transcending strategic differences. Participants engaged in a two-day

¹ The outcome report of the Youth Summit is available at: <http://amplifyyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/youth-summit-outcome-report.pdf>.

working session, consisting of activities such as the tour of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Park, dialogue with *hibakusha*, and strategic discussions on themes related to the present and future of the nuclear abolition movement. The final day of the Summit was a public forum, where over 250 participants deepened their understanding of the issue, discussed what actions they can take in their own communities and heard from the UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth. The youth leaders also developed a Youth Pledge for Nuclear Abolition (<http://amplifyyouth.org/pledge/>) and a one-year action plan.

- **First Committee side event (October 2015)**

Outcome of the Summit was presented during the 2015 UNGA First Committee, as a side event entitled "Generation of Change: Encouraging Youth Action for Nuclear Abolition."² The event was sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations.

Amplify – Generation of Change (Recommendations 29a, 29b)

Based on the successful completion of the International Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition and seeing the needs and desire from the participants to continue working together for our shared goal of nuclear abolition, Amplify (<http://amplifyyouth.org/>), an international network of youth dedicated to nuclear abolition, was created, and the official launch of the network was held in April 2016 in conjunction with the May 2016 Open-Ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament in Geneva. Amplify representatives drafted and submitted a working paper³ on the importance of engaging youth in the OEWG and other nuclear disarmament discussions, emphasizing the importance of disarmament education. A representative delivered a statement on behalf of Amplify during the May session as well.⁴

Amplify supports young people's involvement, activities and actions for nuclear abolition. The network also aims to help empower young people who are new to this cause by providing information and resources to learn about the issues and to connect with other youth taking action.

People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition Campaign (Recommendations 3, 4, 12, 17, 22, 26, 29a)

The People's Decade (<http://www.peoplesdecade.org/>) is a grassroots educational campaign with the aim of rousing international public opinion against nuclear weapons and expanding the network who share the common goal to eliminate these weapons from this planet. In August 2006, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda proposed a UN decade of action by the world's people for the abolition of nuclear weapons to influence the debates among policy makers. In line with this idea, SGI launched the People's Decade in 2007, collaborating with various international and nongovernmental organizations committed to the anti-nuclear weapons movement. It has been engaged and supported by the SGI community worldwide since its launch.

² For a report of the side event, please visit: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/first-committee-side-event-on-generation-of-change-encouraging-youth-action-for-nuclear-abolition/>.

³ "Youth: a necessary stakeholder in nuclear disarmament processes." Submitted by Amplify - generation of change: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/094/93/PDF/G1609493.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁴ Full text of the statement is available at: http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Statements/12May_Amplify.pdf.

The activities and projects which have been conducted over the last two years include:

- **Exhibition: *From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace: Toward a World Free From Nuclear Weapons***

The *From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace* exhibition highlights the synergy between the goals of human security and disarmament, particularly nuclear weapons abolition. It also refers to personal dimensions of disarmament, suggesting that the issue of nuclear weapons provide us with an opportunity to make a change in our mindset to build a culture of peace overcoming a culture of violence.

Launched in September 2007, the exhibition has been shown in more than 230 cities in 31 countries and territories. It is available in English, Spanish, German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Thai and Nepali, as well as in Serbian and Macedonian with partial translations.

- **Exhibition: *Everything You Treasure – For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons***

The *Everything You Treasure* exhibition examines nuclear weapons issues from twelve different perspectives: humanitarian, environmental, medical, economic, human rights, energy, scientific, political, spiritual, gender, generational and security. It was launched at the 20th World Congress of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) in Hiroshima in August 2012 and has been shown in 57 cities in 14 countries and territories including such venues and opportunities as the Mexican Senate building in Mexico City (February 2015), City Hall of Walldorf in Germany (July 2015), Havana International Conference Center in Cuba (October 2015). The panels are available in 7 languages (English, Japanese, Spanish, Malay, Chinese, German and Korean).

- **DVD: *Testimonies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Women Speak Out for Peace***

In 2005, the Soka Gakkai Women's Peace Committee in Japan filmed interviews with 31 female war survivors from all over Japan. In 2009, eight of those interviews of *hibakusha*, or atomic bomb survivors, were compiled in a DVD that was translated into five languages: English, Japanese, Chinese, French and Spanish. It is available for view on the People's Decade website. It has been shown in various occasions including conferences, exhibition openings, and small group study sessions.

- **IPS/SGI joint media project**

Since 2009, the SGI and the Inter Press Service (IPS) have jointly undertaken a global media and communication project (<http://www.nuclearabolition.info/>) which aims to strengthen public awareness of the urgent need for nuclear weapons abolition by shedding light on the issue from the perspectives of civil society. The site provides in-depth reports by IPS correspondents and project partners from around the world, as well as columns by experts and disarmament-relevant news feeds.

- **Videoconference linking Spain and Japan**

Between July 2014 and June 2016, SGI-Spain helped organize three live video conferences between some high school students and local citizens in Rivas-Vaciamadrid, Spain, and atomic bomb survivors and high school students in Nagasaki, Japan (February 18, May 27 in

2015 and April 5 in 2016). The exchanges were held as part of the Peace-Net program, an initiative of the Nagasaki Peace Memorial Hall and Nagasaki Foundation for the Promotion of Peace, which uses online technology to promote peace education for those unable to physically visit the atomic bomb sites in Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

For instance, during the session in April 2016, some 70 students from Hipatia High School in Rivas-Vaciamadrid, Spain and 4 students from Kassui High School in Nagasaki, Japan had a fruitful exchange through video system joined by an atomic bomb survivor and a former Spanish Civil soldier.

- **People's Decade activities in the UK**

SGI-UK members have organized various educational events under the umbrella of the People's Decade. For instance, in August 2014 they arranged a screening of the film 'Hiroshima,' which won the award for best international feature film at the Berlin Film Festival in 1955 at the London Ikeda Peace Centre. There was also a talk and opportunities for dialogue – 50 people took part.

SGI-UK has also partnered with other organizations to raise awareness on disarmament among the public, such as attending an interfaith service of commemoration and commitment marking the 70th anniversary of the atomic bomb being dropped on Hiroshima & Nagasaki at the Friends House in London (August 2015) and hosting the *From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace* exhibition in the Martin Luther King multi-faith centre at the Aston University (September 2015).

- **People's Decade activities in Mexico**

SGI Mexico has organized educational activities including panel discussions on nuclear disarmament at the University of Tijuana (January 2015) and City of Tijuana municipal facilities (June 2015). The *Everything You Treasure* exhibit was displayed in 11 locations such as the Palacio de Minería in Mexico City in conjunction with the National Autonomous University of Mexico Model UN conference (October 2014) and the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs (July 2015).

- **Senzatomica (Italy)**

Senzatomica is SGI-Italy's grassroots campaign that promotes nuclear disarmament through an exhibition and numerous initiatives promoted by Senzatomica or in collaboration with other associations to inform and make people aware, especially young people, in order to spread a wave of actions for peace.

Over the past two years, from July 2014, the main exhibit *From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace* exhibition was organized in three major cities: Bari, Rome and Naples. The compact version took place in 24 smaller cities. During these 27 stops of the exhibition it was visited by over 160,000 people.

- **Soka Global Action (Japan)**

In 2014, the Soka Gakkai Youth Division in Japan launched the SOKA Global Action with the following three objectives: 1) abolish nuclear weapons to build a culture of peace; 2)

strengthen ties of friendship within Asia through cultural exchanges; and 3) further our reconstruction efforts following the Great East Japan Earthquake.

“Vow for Peace” Forums, which invite *hibakusha*, atomic bomb survivors, to share their experiences, have been held in approximately 50 locations covering almost every prefecture in Japan, with 6,000 youth participants. Some of the events are intentionally kept small to promote active exchanges and interactions amongst participants. A DVD of *hibakusha* testimonies have also been shown in different localities. As a result of such efforts, more young people are coming to realize the stark reality of the diminishing number of *hibakusha* and feel the strong urgency to work together in solidarity so that concrete outcomes toward nuclear abolition can emerge while the *hibakusha* are still alive.

- **Run for Peace initiative (Malaysia)**

Run for Peace (RFP) is a non-competitive event held biannually to create awareness on peace and healthy lifestyles among the community. The RFP2015 took place in 19 locations around the country between September 6 and 20, with approximately 90,000 participants. Organizers hope to awaken people to the importance of taking actions for peace and creating a culture of peace in the community.

- **Young Plants of Peace initiative (Thailand)**

Young Plants of Peace aims to foster global citizens who can understand others, build trust and harmony in society, and cultivate a culture of peace in Thailand and the Southeast Asian region. Through this initiative youth members of SGI Thailand have organized seminars, workshops and a peace festival.

- **Our New Clear Future (USA)**

In 2011, the SGI-USA Student Division launched Our New Clear Future, a grassroots movement aimed at creating a groundswell of public consensus which will serve as a foundation for the abolition of nuclear weapons by 2030. This movement is based on Second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda’s declaration for the abolition of nuclear abolition in 1957. The network of Student Division campus clubs across the nation host a variety activities including: hosting exhibitions, performances, panel discussions, and collaborating with other groups on campus to bring awareness and start discussion in the community.

One of the key activities between July 2014 and June 2016 was Youth Peace Expos (March 2015), where local organizations held exhibition viewings and dialogues, with over 12,000 people in attendance. At each Peace Expo, members collected signatures for a petition calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons which reads in part: “We, the youth of America, pledge our commitment to expand the network of young people in support of a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, as a step toward ridding such weapons by the year 2030.” Youth collected 8,500 signatures calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons and delivered them to Ms. Virginia Gamba, then Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

In August 2015, the SGI-USA released its national anthem for nuclear abolition, “Revolution in You.” The music video, which has over 30,000 views, was written by SGI-USA Student

Division members and features Susan Urabe, a *hibakusha*.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KQ-fc9ltjE>).

Faith Perspectives on the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (Recommendations 5, 12, 29a)

The SGI has been working together with other faith groups to raise public awareness about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons in the context of the moral and ethical dimensions in order to help combat the negative effects of a culture of violence to promote a culture of nonviolence and peace

▪ **Interfaith panel in Vienna**

On December 6, 2014, as part of the Civil Society Forum held prior to the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, SGI, ICAN and the World Council of Churches (WCC), in cooperation with Religions for Peace, organized an Interfaith Panel titled “Faiths United Against Nuclear Weapons: Kindling hope, mustering courage.” The panel, held in the Jesuit Hall of the Aula der Wissenschaften, brought together activists and experts from both religious and secular communities to discuss moral and ethical perspectives of the nuclear weapons debate.

▪ **Interfaith statements at disarmament fora**

SGI has worked with a group of faith-based organizations to issue a series of interfaith statements highlighting the moral and ethical imperatives for the abolition of nuclear weapons, at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons⁵ (December 2014), the 2015 NPT Review Conference in New York⁶ (May 2015), and the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on nuclear weapons in Geneva⁷ (May 2016).

▪ **Working paper to OEWG**

SGI submitted a working paper “Nuclear Weapons and Human Security” (A/AC.286/NGO/17)⁸ to the OEWG in Geneva in May in order to raise awareness about the necessity of shifting the security discourse surrounding the nuclear weapons issue. Pointing out that there is a universal impulse to avoid suffering and harm, it states: “We all have an intuitive sense of the unique value of our individual being. To the degree that we can realize that others must feel the same way, we can sense the reality of their suffering and embrace their dignity. Such empathy makes genuine dialogue possible. And dialogue is the most certain path to realizing our shared quest for the authentic experience of security.” SGI delivered statements^{9,10} during the panels in the OEWG, introducing the working paper.

⁵ <http://www.sgi.org/content/files/in-focus/2014/HINW14-Statement-Faith-Communities.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.sgi.org/content/files/in-focus/press-releases/NPT-Joint-Statement-2015.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.sgi.org/content/files/resources/ngo-resources/OEWG-Joint-Statement.pdf>

⁸ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/090/66/PDF/G1609066.pdf?OpenElement>

⁹ [http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/8B9C86FECE34214FC1257FB8004D613E/\\$file/2016May+Panel+III_SGI.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/8B9C86FECE34214FC1257FB8004D613E/$file/2016May+Panel+III_SGI.pdf)

¹⁰ [http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/F53B97F97EC78D5EC1257FB8004D8CAA/\\$file/2016May+Panel+IV_SGI.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/F53B97F97EC78D5EC1257FB8004D8CAA/$file/2016May+Panel+IV_SGI.pdf)

SGI Annual Peace Proposal (Recommendations 4, 12)

Since 1983 SGI President Daisaku Ikeda has been issuing annual peace proposals to share his thoughts and recommendations on a wide range of issues with the international community. Disarmament issues, particularly nuclear disarmament, have been most frequently, consistently and extensively discussed throughout the years.

In 2015, Ikeda proposed shared action toward the realization of a world without nuclear weapons, including a new institutional framework for nuclear disarmament, based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the adoption of a nuclear weapons convention. In 2016, he proposed his idea on strengthening the institutional framework to prevent the proliferation of conventional weapons, which exacerbate humanitarian crises and contribute to incidents of terrorism around the world, as well as ideas for the OEWG in Geneva to address the concrete legal measures toward the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

Building a Culture of Peace

The SGI has been actively supporting the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243) through a range of educational and outreach activities. These have included exhibitions, lectures, workshops and conferences.

- **Culture of Peace Resource Centers and Distinguished Speakers Series** (Recommendation 12)

SGI-USA has opened the Culture of Peace Resource Centers in its community centers in New York, Santa Monica, Chicago, Honolulu, Washington, D.C. and San Francisco, with the aim of promoting a culture of peace. The Culture of Peace Distinguished Speaker Series has been held regularly since 2007. Speakers have included Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the UN; Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, former UN High-Representative for Disarmament Affairs; Betty Reardon of Teachers College Peace Education Center; and David Krieger, President of Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

- **Pocket-size Booklet and Bookmark for promotion of a Culture of Peace** (Recommendations 2, 4, 12)

The SGI has produced a pocket-sized booklet of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace as well as a bookmark of the definition and eight action areas of a culture of peace. These materials have been widely distributed.

- **Women's Forums for a Culture of Peace** (Recommendation 12)

The Soka Gakkai's Women's Peace Committee and the Young Women's Peace and Culture Conference in Japan have been organizing fora, exhibition and publications promoting a culture of peace.

- **Victory Over Violence** (Recommendations 2, 4, 5, 6, 12)

Launched by SGI-USA in 1999, Victory Over Violence (VOV) is a grassroots initiative to help promote a culture of peace and nonviolence among youth. Youth facilitators who make

presentations in schools have been trained, and over 5,000 grassroots discussions have been held. Over 1 million individuals have signed a “Victory Over Violence” pledge to lead nonviolent lives. VOV actively supports the United Nations Culture of Peace initiative, sustainability initiatives such as the Earth Charter and nuclear abolition. VOV activities have been taken up by SGI organizations and partnering institutions around the world. For instance, Salem State University Library hosted the Victory Over Violence exhibition from Nov. 16–19, 2015. In addition to the exhibition, the three-day events featured a faculty/staff panel discussion titled “The Origins of Violence.” Students from the Intercultural Leadership Program led readings, discussions, and dance and musical performances.

Partnerships to Engage Youth (Recommendation 29a)

SGI has worked with other organizations to facilitate youth engagement in various contexts of international disarmament fora.

- **Peace and Planet “Youth Track”**

As part of the International Planning Group and Conference Planning Committee of Peace and Planet, a civil society mobilization effort towards the 2015 NPT Review Conference, SGI supported the coordination of the “Youth Track” to plan activities geared toward educating young people about the NPT process and nuclear weapons disarmament at large. Youth coordinators were also invited to speak at Pace University prior to the mobilization.

- **2015 NPT youth delegation**

In partnership with Ban All Nukes generation, SGI helped coordinate a youth delegation to the 2015 NPT Review Conference. In total, 13 youth from the US and UK participated in plenaries, side events, and briefings with UN officials and government representatives. Two representative of the delegation made a statement¹¹ during the civil society presentation.

- **Side event at the 2015 NPT**

In conjunction with BANg, SGI cosponsored a side event entitled “Challenging the Status Quo: A Generation Rising for Peace, Justice, and Nuclear Abolition” during the 2015 NPT. Its outcome report, “10 Ideas for Engaging Youth in Nuclear Disarmament,” was presented to Ms. Virginia Gamba, then Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.



Soka Gakkai International (SGI)

SGI is a Buddhist association with more than 12 million members in 192 countries and territories. It has had consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1983. Headquartered in Tokyo, the SGI maintains UN offices in New York and Geneva.

¹¹ Full text of the statement is available at: http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2015/statements/1May_BANg.pdf.