Disarmament education

Education is a critically important element of sustainable peace. Disarmament and non-proliferation education focuses on reducing, controlling, and eliminating weapons of all kinds in order to undermine militarism and prevent armed conflict and armed violence. It is a cross-cutting form of education that reinforces and learns from conflict resolution, communication, cross-cultural understanding, tolerance of diversity, non-violence, economic justice, gender equity, environmental preservation, demilitarization, development, human rights, and international humanitarian law.

Many civil society organizations that work on issues of disarmament and non-proliferation include education as part of their mandates. Some organizations prioritize education as their key task. Governments and NGOs alike have long recognized the importance of education, especially for youth, in bringing about effective change in the world.

After two years of preparation, the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education was submitted to the First Committee of the General Assembly at its 57th session on 9 October 2002. The study builds upon and seeks to revitalize past efforts at disarmament education, which it considers an integral part of peace education. It tackles new elements such as the growth in the significance of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and small arms, as well as gender perspectives on security issues. Its main contribution was the 34 recommendations for action to be undertaken by governments, regional organizations, the UN and other international organizations, municipal and religious leaders. It also seeks to establish close collaboration between the experts and civil society, including educators and academic institutions mainly at the secondary and tertiary levels of education.

According to the study, "The overall objective of disarmament and non-proliferation education and training is to impart knowledge and skills to individuals to empower them to make their contribution, as national and world citizens, to the achievement of concrete disarmament and non-proliferation measures and the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control."

Materials and resources

UN study on disarmament and non-proliferation education, United Nations, 2002


Disarmament and Nonproliferation portal at the UN Cyberschoolbus

UN Office for Disarmament Affairs: Disarmament and peace education resources - includes videos, presentations, publications, contests, and more.

Hibakusha Stories passes the legacy of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to a new generation, and empowers them with tools to build a world free of nuclear weapons.
Peace Boat US is a non-governmental and non-profit organization working to promote peace, human rights, equitable and sustainable development, and respect for the environment throughout the United States and the world through international educational programs, including onboard conferences, workshops, face-to-face encounters, and field studies. Peace Boat US upholds The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century, including the promotion of the nonviolent prevention and resolution of conflict among nations and peoples, and the development of a culture of peace.

Reaching Critical Will's Disarmament Education Kit is an education toolbox for activists around the world. It provides basic fact sheets and background information on a range of nuclear issues for activists to use as tools in broader education work on the nuclear industry.