



VOICES

Disarmament and non-proliferation education

Recent developments and the way forward

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Even though the 2002 UN resolution on non-proliferation education received wide support, its implementation in the form of specific programmes lags behind, writes Elena Sokova from the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. A growing interest in nuclear issues combined with the desire for a strengthened mandate reinforce her belief that high-quality disarmament and non-proliferation education should be comprehensive, sustainable, and truly global.

The overall aim of disarmament and non-proliferation education is to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to allow them to work towards the achievement of enhanced national and international security at lower levels of arms and ultimately general and complete disarmament under effective international control. The empowering role of education in promoting and advancing disarmament has been recognized since the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament issues in 1978.

In 2002, the UN General Assembly (resolution 57/60) endorsed the UN Secretary-General's Report on Disarmament and Non-proliferation

Education (A57/124), which contained 34 specific recommendations aimed at the promotion and implementation of the disarmament and non-proliferation curricula at various levels of education. While the resolution received wide support, its implementation has been lagging behind. For example, only nine member states submitted their reports in 2012.

Several developments over the past two years, however, indicate enhanced interest in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation education, particularly in the nuclear sphere, and give hope that this interest could to be sustained and expanded.

In April 2010, the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington DC in its communiqué and work plan noted the importance of education and training in strengthening nuclear security. In May 2010, the Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in its Action Item 22, called on member states to fully implement the recommendations of the 2002 study (A57/124) and acknowledged the role of education in achieving a

world without nuclear weapons. A range of new educational initiatives to promote a nuclear-weapon-free world were also launched in 2010-2011, spanning a broad spectrum of efforts by international organizations, academic institutions and think tanks.

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In March 2010, a group of universities, research centres and other educational organizations gathered in Vienna to formalize the creation of a network to promote nuclear security education. The International Nuclear Security Education Network (INSEN) was established under the auspices of

the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and now includes over 60 universities from all geographic regions. Members of the network jointly develop teaching materials and programmes, update each other on their academic and extra-curricular programmes, and share best practices and resources.

The launch of the Capacity Development Initiative (CDI) by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) in 2011 is another major contribution to educational and training efforts in the nuclear disarmament sphere. A series of introductory and advanced level courses held in Vienna have covered the political, legal, technical and scientific aspects of the Treaty and its associated verification regime. The CDI is a timely and welcome development in strengthening capacities at the national, regional and international level to ensure full implementation and verification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to further promote arms control and disarmament values and norms. It is also gratifying to see that the CDI's courses are designed to reach hundreds, if not thousands, of students and professionals by supplementing in-class instruction with on-line streaming and other e-learning tools and by employing the train-the-trainer approach.

A GROWING INTEREST IN NUCLEAR ISSUES

Several academic degree programmes on nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear security, and similar issues have also been launched over the past two years, including Masters-level degree programmes at King's College in the UK, the Monterey Institute of International Studies in the USA, and Tomsk Polytechnic University in Russia. Over a dozen prominent universities added new courses in this area and plan to introduce certificate and full Masters programmes. These include a consortium of six European universities that have agreed to allow students to transfer relevant academic credits from one school to another.

Interest in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation among students and young scholars continues to grow and is reflected in the enrollment numbers and the proactive role the new generation plays in promoting these issues. Of particular interest was the establishment in November 2010 in Vienna of a global network of young scholars and practitioners — the International Network of Emerging Nuclear Specialists (INENS), which unites professionals with policy and technical backgrounds from many countries and continents.

ENSURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION EDUCATION

These 2010-2012 developments are extremely important, but they should not be taken as a signal that the global community can pat itself on the back and declare 'mission accomplished'. On the contrary, the momentum created by both the recognition of the importance of the issue at the highest government level and the headway in various academic and professional development programmes, are only the initial steps in making high-quality disarmament and non-proliferation education comprehensive, sustainable, and truly global.

Disarmament and non-proliferation issues should become much more prominent in academic institutions, both in undergraduate and graduate schools. Despite the increase in the last decade of such programmes and courses at several universities, these issues are still far from being part of the regular curriculum in the fields of humanities and sciences. The availability of dedicated disarmament and non-proliferation programmes and courses falls short of demand and needs, particularly when geographical factors are taken into account. In many countries, including

Over 450 participants from 91 countries attended the CTBTO's Capacity Development Initiative Intensive Policy Course in Vienna, Austria, from 16 to 20 July 2012.



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those with strong historical support for disarmament, the number of scholars and faculties teaching these issues is usually in low single digits, if not zero.

The shortage of knowledgeable government experts and practitioners in the area of arms control and disarmament, however, cannot be changed through academic coursework alone. Professional development and other training activities are another necessary component of this multifaceted approach. A true partnership between academic and professional development programmes is also required. In this respect, the developing partnership between the CTBTO's CDI and a number of universities that allow transfer of academic credits for CDI courses, is a step in the right direction and should be strengthened further.

IMPORTANCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE DISARMAMENT CURRICULUM

As some of the already existing programmes prove, disarmament and non-proliferation education should embrace various aspects related to the subject, including policy, history, science and technology, social and legal issues. It does not mean that all of these issues need to be equally addressed. The right balance would depend on the main focus of the programme and its audience. However, it is very important that technical specialists are exposed to policy issues and it is similarly important for those studying social science to be aware of key technical concepts underpinning policy decisions.

The recent progress in academic and training courses with a focus on nuclear issues, particularly in the area of nuclear non-proliferation, verification technologies, and security of nuclear materials, needs to be matched with programmes that have a more robust focus on nuclear arms control and disarmament issues. Other

weapons, including chemical, biological, and conventional arms, also need to be part of the comprehensive disarmament and non-proliferation curriculum.

CAPACITY-BUILDING AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The capacity and capabilities for offering academic and professional development programmes differ considerably across the globe, particularly in developing countries. Countries and organizations with expertise and resources should make a concerted effort to extend their programmes to regions that are lacking them. Wherever possible, representatives from developing countries, including women, should be encouraged to participate, and young people should have the opportunity to be engaged.

Experts in arms control and disarmament with first-hand experience, however, are in short supply in both developing and developed countries, including nuclear weapon States. The old generation of scholars and practitioners increasingly complain that very few younger experts are coming to replace them. To an extent, this void developed after the end of the Cold War, when many colleges and universities stopped focusing on these issues as the possibility of a nuclear exchange between East and West was no longer imminent. Efforts focusing on training the trainers, particularly for university professors and other instructors, could remedy this situation. These programmes have a multiplier effect and are crucial for building national and regional capacities and for ensuring the sustainability of these efforts.

A LASTING COMMITMENT AND THE NEXT STEPS

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's words that "education is quite simply, peace-building by another name" are not just a catchy phrase. Education is truly a key building block on the path to peace and security. However, the impact of education is sometimes not immediately obvious or easily measurable. To make a lasting difference, various educational and

training activities require substantial, long-term commitment and investment.

A number of measures could be undertaken to secure such a commitment. For example, the role of the United Nations and its Office for Disarmament Affairs should be strengthened, particularly with regards to the promotion of education and capacity building among Member States and regional organizations, as well as the coordination of existing efforts by various UN bodies and other international organizations.

A strengthened mandate would:

- Empower a more comprehensive approach to education
- Take advantage of complementary programmes across a variety of governmental and non-governmental efforts
- Help avoid gaps
- Bring additional much needed attention and resources

In this regard, it might be desirable to establish an international disarmament and non-proliferation education fund under the auspices of the UN to ensure that substantial resources are made available on a continuous basis, particularly for regions in need.

It might also be helpful to appoint a prominent international figure to become a global disarmament and non-proliferation education ambassador, as well as increase the role of UN regional offices in advancing this agenda. Other measures to raise the salience of the issues could also be explored. The moment is ripe, and the international community should take full advantage of the momentum created over the past two years.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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is the Executive Director of the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. Prior to coming to Vienna in June 2011, she worked for 14 years at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, a graduate school of Middlebury College (USA). From 1981 to 1992 she worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR/Russian Federation.