

Key Concepts & Principles from Guiding Documents on Disarmament Education

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Relevant excerpts can be found below for the following:

- World Congress on Disarmament Education – Report and Final Document (UNESCO House, Paris, 9-13 June 1980)
- United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education - Report of the Secretary-General (United Nations, 30 August 2002. A/57/124.)
- Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century
- Sustainable Development Goals

World Congress on Disarmament Education – Report and Final Document (UNESCO House, Paris, 9-13 June 1980)



[> download the report here](#)

The Final Report of the 1980 World Congress on Disarmament Education states that disarmament education should be guided by the following principles and considerations:

Relation of education to disarmament

1. Disarmament education, an essential component of peace education, implies both education about disarmament and education for disarmament. All who engage in education or communication may contribute to disarmament education by being aware and creating an awareness of the factors underlying the production and acquisition of arms, of the social, political, economic and cultural repercussions of the arms race and of the grave danger for the survival of humanity of the existence and potential use of nuclear weapons.

Definition of disarmament

2. For the purposes of disarmament education, disarmament may be understood as any form of action aimed at limiting, controlling or reducing arms, including unilateral disarmament initiatives, and, ultimately, general and complete disarmament under effective international control. It may also be understood as a process aimed at transforming the current system of armed nation States into a new world order of planned unarmed peace in which war is no longer an instrument of national policy and peoples determine their own future and live in security based on justice and solidarity.

Role of information

3. Disarmament education requires the collection and dissemination of reliable information from sources offering the highest degree of objectivity in accordance with a free and more balanced international flow of information. It should prepare learners, in the strictest respect for freedom of opinion, expression and information, to resist incitement to war, military propaganda and militarism in

general.

Relation to economic and political realities

4. Disarmament education cannot, however, confine itself to the dissemination of data and information on disarmament projects and prospects nor even to commenting on the hopes and ideals which inspired them. It should recognize fully the relationship disarmament has with achieving international security and realizing development. To be effective in this regard, disarmament education should be related to the lives and concerns of the learners and to the political realities within which disarmament is sought and should provide insights into the political, economic and social factors on which the security of peoples could be based.

Research and decision-making

5. In addition to reaching the general public, disarmament education has a more specific and equally crucial task of providing rational arguments for disarmament based on independent scientific research which can guide decision-makers and, to the extent possible, rectify perceptions of a potential adversary based on incomplete or inaccurate information.

Substantive approaches

6. As an approach to international peace and security, disarmament education should take due account of the principles of international law based on the Charter of the United Nations, in particular, the refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in domestic affairs and self-determination of peoples. It should also draw upon the international law of human rights and international humanitarian law applicable in time of armed conflict and consider alternative approaches to security, including such non-military defense systems as non-violent civilian action. The study of United Nations efforts, of confidence-building measures, of peace-keeping, of non-violent conflict resolution and of other means of controlling international violence take on special importance in this regard. Due attention should be accorded in programmes of disarmament education to the right of conscientious objection and the right to refuse to kill. Disarmament education should provide an occasion to explore, without prejudging the issue, the implications for disarmament of the root causes of individual and collective violence and the objective and subjective causes of tensions, crises, disputes and conflicts which characterize the current national and international structures reflecting factors of inequality and injustice.

Links with human rights and development

7. As an integral part of peace education, disarmament education has essential links with human rights education and development education, in so far as each of the three terms peace, human rights and development must be defined in relation to the other two. Moreover, disarmament education offers an occasion to elucidate emerging concepts such as the individual and collective rights to peace and to development, based on the satisfaction of material and non-material human needs.

Pedagogical objectives

8. Whether conceived as education in the spirit of disarmament, as the incorporation of relevant materials in existing disciplines or as the development of a distinct field of study, disarmament education should apply the most imaginative educational methods, particularly those of participatory learning, geared to each specific cultural and social situation and level of education. It aims at teaching how to think about disarmament rather than what to think about it. It should therefore be problem-centred so as to develop the analytical and critical capacity to examine and evaluate practical steps

towards the reduction of arms and the elimination of war as an acceptable international practice.

Values

9. Disarmament education should be based upon the values of international understanding, tolerance of ideological and cultural diversity and commitment to social justice and human solidarity.

Sectors of society concerned

10. Disarmament education should be the concern of all sectors of society and public opinion. Indeed, schools, non-formal and informal education circles such as the family, community organizations and the world of work, universities and other research centres and information media, all have a part to play in this task. Educators and communicators should strive to develop the most appropriate and effective language and teaching methods for each situation. The challenge is all the greater as the stakes are so high.

United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education – Report of the Secretary-General (United Nations, 30 August 2002. A/57/124.)



[download the study here](#)

The 2002 UN study on disarmament and non-proliferation education provides the following definition of contemporary disarmament and non-proliferation education and training:

6. The overall purpose of disarmament and nonproliferation education and training is to impart knowledge and skills to empower individuals to make their contribution, as national and world citizens, to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Such education offers tools for taking steps to enhance national and international security at lower levels of armaments and reinforces the connections between peace, comprehensive security and sustainable development in an increasingly interdependent world.

7. The objectives of contemporary disarmament and non-proliferation education and training are:

- (a) To learn how to think rather than what to think about issues;
- (b) To develop critical thinking skills in an informed citizenry;
- (c) To deepen understanding of the multiple factors at the local, national, regional and global levels that either foster or undermine peace;
- (d) To encourage attitudes and actions which promote peace;
- (e) To convey relevant information on and to foster a responsive attitude to current and future security challenges through the development and widespread availability of improved methodologies and research techniques;
- (f) To bridge political, regional and technological divides by bringing together ideas, concepts, people, groups and institutions to promote concerted international efforts towards disarmament, non-proliferation and a peaceful and non-violent world;
- (g) To project at all levels the values of peace, tolerance, non-violence, dialogue and consultation as the basis for interaction among peoples, countries and civilizations.

8. Disarmament education is broadly focused on the need to reduce armaments with a view to their complete elimination as a means of reducing both the likelihood and the severity of armed conflict. Disarmament education focuses on the process of disarmament itself, the steps to achieve it and the positive effects that disarmament has on socioeconomic development. This approach may touch upon conflict resolution or examine the causes of war and the interaction between technology and warfare. It also emphasizes approaches to reducing and eliminating violent conflicts of all kinds. This type of educational programme is often pursued within academic fields such as peace studies, conflict resolution and strategic studies, among others.

9. Non-proliferation education is a significant subset of disarmament education. While the long-term goal of disarmament education is the reduction and elimination of all forms of armaments and warfare, nonproliferation education is oriented towards the prevention of the further proliferation of all weapons, in particular weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. It contributes to the attainment of disarmament goals on a sustainable and global basis. Both disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. Education and training in this field should reflect this interrelationship.

10. Disarmament and non-proliferation education and training draws upon, contributes to and mutually reinforces education for conflict resolution, communication, cross-cultural understanding, tolerance of diversity, non-violence, economic justice and gender equity, environmental preservation, demilitarization, development, human rights and international humanitarian law. If it is to retain its relevance to the security requirements of peoples and States, disarmament and non-proliferation education and training must not be viewed in a vacuum but rather integrated into that broad perspective. A global disarmament and non-proliferation culture cannot be accomplished easily or quickly. A sustained effort is required to build communities of disarmament and non-proliferation specialists and concerned individuals. Member States, international organizations, academics and NGOs are essential actors in this long-term effort. Its success will depend on a partnership that includes each of these communities and the provision of adequate financial resources.

Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century



[download the Hague Agenda here](#)

In addressing the root causes of war and toward promoting a culture of peace (strand 1), the Hague Agenda identifies education for peace, human rights and democracy as an essential strategy:

In order to combat the culture of violence that pervades our society, the coming generation deserves a radically different education - one that does not glorify war but educates for peace and nonviolence and international cooperation. The Hague Appeal for Peace seeks to launch a world-wide campaign to empower people at all levels with the peacemaking skills of mediation, conflict transformation, consensus-building and non-violent social change. This campaign will:

- Insist that peace education be made compulsory at all levels of the education system.
- Demand that education ministries systematically implement peace education initiatives at a local and national level.
- Call on development assistance agencies to promote peace education as a component of their teacher training and materials production.

Sustainable Development Goals



[access the sustainable development goals here](#)

Sustainable Development Goal 4 focuses on ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and the promotion of lifelong learning. Target goal 4.7 emphasizes education for peace.

Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.