

Tasks and directions for the Global Campaign for Peace Education

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Since its recognition as a significant terrain in the field, disarmament education has continued to remain *terra incognita* on the map of peace education. It has been both forbidden and forbidding territory into which only a few courageous educators have ventured. Peace education here refers mainly to the field as it is practised in the elementary and secondary schools and in institutions educating those who will teach in them. Peace studies, that area of the field now included among the social sciences in some universities, particularly but not exclusively private universities, is a somewhat different case.

In private universities where there is less public scrutiny of curricula, many still enjoying authentic academic freedom, there has been more room for exploration. However, while not unknown to peace studies, here too disarmament education has been exotic, rarely visited territory. This is still the general case, even in the face of what has been accomplished by the United Nations/International Association of University Presidents Commission on Disarmament Education, Conflict Resolution and Peace, demonstrating that disarmament issues can be responsibly integrated into most undergraduate and graduate fields of study. In those institutions that are the exception to this xenophobic perspective, the programmes have been of such stellar quality as to overcome resistance, even in institutions with far from adventurous attitudes toward non-traditional offerings. It is clear from these efforts that disarmament provides curricular substance that meets the highest academic standards, and more importantly, offers students a learning experience essential to a crucial responsibility of citizenship in a global political order, taking informed positions on issues of peace and security.

The first staking out of the terrain of disarmament education arose from an initiative of UNESCO at the behest of a charge issued in the Final Document of the 1978 Special Session on Disarmament. It was the convening of the World Congress on Disarmament Education in 1980. Probably in recognition of the lack of familiarity with the concepts and issues of disarmament among educators, even peace educators, the document defined the substantive parameters of the field.

For the purpose of disarmament education, disarmament may be understood as any form of action aimed at limiting, controlling or reducing arms, including unilateral 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 (Report and

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Final Document of the World Congress on Disarmament Education, UNESCO, Paris, 1980, section A, para. 2).

This paragraph is quoted in full here as the basis of the reflections and assertions to follow; first that the territory is no more forbidding than any other area of peace education, but rather that it was the acceptance of its being forbidden due to the historical circumstances of the time and the strategic and political developments which unfolded over the next few years, effectively declaring it 'off limits' or 'not in the national interest' in most countries where peace education was practised. (This is not to say that other forms of peace education have not also met with both scepticism and resistance.) With one brilliant but brief exception (the burgeoning of nuclear arms education in the spirit of the 1982 Second Special Session on Disarmament, and the surrounding fears of nuclear holocaust), the World Congress was more a closing than an opening of possibilities for disarmament education. Disarmament remained, with few exceptions, little more than an item on the list of topics included in peace education until the recent General Assembly resolution (55/33 E, November 2000) that has, through the current study, reopened the possibilities.

Disarmament, in those days, seemed forbidding to most elementary and secondary peace educators because they found the technical language and conceptualization of most aspects of the disarmament discourse beyond the possibility of comprehension by most ordinary citizens, much less by secondary school students, and certainly not by elementary school children. Yet, it is these very children who are now some of the citizens making judgements on security policies and, by acquiescence out of ignorance, give assent to one technological advance after another. Some who advocate disarmament education perceive this ignorance and consequent apathy to be a contributing factor to the technological spiral which has continued to increase the sophistication of weaponry over the two decades since those gathered at the World Congress asserted 'that it is urgent to take vigorous action in [disarmament education]' (Preamble of the Final Document, para. 2).

As peace educators, we have three reflections on this obstacle to disarmament education. First, insufficient attention was paid to the full substance of the *Final Document*, which placed disarmament

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education in a far broader context of peace education, specifying among other dimensions of the field, its relationship to human rights and development education. Those relationships still should comprise a significant component of the field, to be augmented by other dimensions such as environmental education and all the components of comprehensive peace education as it has evolved in the years since the World Congress. There were then adequate curricular routes to disarmament education, and there are even more now.

Second, clearly if there is any authentic intention to involve the citizenry in the discourse in a legitimate form of education and not just another political 'soap selling' campaign, then those with access to the substance of and data about disarmament need to find ways to make it more 'user friendly'. For without intelligent, responsible use of sound knowledge of the issues and problems, citizens can never be a constructive constituency for disarmament. We would argue that democratic process is as essential to viable progress in disarmament as authentic education is essential to democracy. To put it more directly, 'Without education for democratic discourse on disarmament, there can be no disarmament'.

Finally, there is a significant gender dimension to this obstacle, which is, as well, conceptual. A large percentage of elementary teachers and many secondary teachers are women, while disarmament like armed security is still pretty much the purview of men. Research on women's ways of knowing as well as studies of the language and conceptualization of weaponry show these forms of thinking

are of a type that men more than women are educated to practice. So the gap between those initiated into the discourse and the uninitiated replicates many of the aspects of the gender gap that exists in most policy areas related to peace and security. Working with educators and civil society is one way that the disarmament establishment can bridge that gap. Education and civil society are both 'equal opportunity' areas in the matter of gender.

We believe that a serious collaboration between disarmament experts and peace educators is essential to opening the learning roads to 'general and complete disarmament under effective international control'. As active advocates of the Hague Appeal for Peace and its call for the abolition of war, we see nothing less than general and complete disarmament as the ultimate goal of disarmament education. One of us having been introduced to this idea in her early years as a peace educator through the curricular use of the Clark-Sohn Plan for 'World Peace through World Law' and other such model proposals for a disarmed world, and both of us believing that the cultivation of the imagination is essential to an education for peace, we advocate education for the evaluation, even the design of proposals for disarmament as constituent to disarmament education. We agree that positive visions of a transformed 'world order of planned unarmed peace' can inspire educators and learners alike to struggle with the cognitive tasks of learning to disarm by learning about disarmament. One of the aims of the Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education¹ is to provide educators with curricular tools to cultivate such visions and to develop the critical capacities to evaluate proposals purporting to lead toward the transformation, among them proposals for disarmament.

Disarmament as curricular content for the Global Campaign for Peace Education

The Global Campaign for Peace Education was launched at the Hague Appeal for Peace Civil Society Conference held in the Netherlands in May 1999. The Conference, which attracted 10,000 participants from all world regions and a wide array of citizens movements for peace, human rights and global economic justice, adopted a set of fifty proposals directed toward achieving a culture of peace. The *Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st Century* asserted that education was essential to the achievement of all the goals it set forth and called for 'education for peace, human rights and democracy' as the first of its fifty proposals.

The Campaign, affirming the purposes and approaches articulated in UNESCO's *Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy*, seeks to assure the implementation of the framework adopted by the ministers of education of UNESCO member states at the General Conference in 1994. It also seeks to reaffirm the conclusions of the *Final Document* of the World Congress on Disarmament Education. These goals are pursued through programmes in teacher preparation, resource development and dissemination, and education of educational institutions and authorities to the urgent need for peace education to be integrated into the standard curricula of elementary and secondary schools throughout the world.

A major area of our work on the Global Campaign for Peace Education is placing disarmament at the very heart of the new phase of peace education the Campaign seeks to usher in. While we intend to use the foundation, even some of the pedagogy and materials devised by the early explorers in disarmament education, we are not going back to our roots so much as growing from our roots. Infusion of the substance of disarmament into the content of peace education is a top priority in the Campaign's work in curriculum development and teacher training. There are a number of curricular approaches currently being developed.

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One is in the areas of what we refer to as the structures and institutions of peace calling for the development of the conceptual knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to the comprehension and assessment of substantive issues of disarmament. Another relates to values and perceptions conducive to the development of a culture of peace, a primary goal of the *Hague Agenda for Peace*. These two areas are analogous to what earlier UNESCO documents referred to as education *about* disarmament and education *for* disarmament. A third addresses the relationship between disarmament, human security and a culture of peace as a means of integrating the cognitive and affective realms of disarmament education, and to cultivate creativity and a sense of political responsibility and efficacy among learners.

In this third area, we plan to use problems and issues of disarmament as the basis of an inquiry into the civic and political framework in which to develop a culture of peace, posing the hypothesis that achieving disarmament is the primary institutional requirement to develop a culture of peace and to establish the foundations for comprehensive human security. In the learning sequence we envision, consideration of this hypothesis will provide the core of an inquiry into possibilities for change and action for change. Such inquiries we see as essential to the requirements of civic education for a global society. Preparation for participation in global civil society has been a major concern of the Peace Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University for a number of years. This effort is both analogous and complementary to the emphasis of the pedagogy of preparation for democracy employed by the Human Rights Chair of the University of Buenos Aires. We agree that disarmament education is uniquely suited to these pedagogic purposes and are pursuing it in the common endeavours we are sharing with other educators in the network of peace education centres the Campaign is building throughout the world.

The first two areas of the traditional approaches to education *about* and *for* disarmament are integral to the teaching manual, *Learning to Abolish War*, designed at the Peace Education Center at Teachers College, now being refined through a year of field use with the co-operation of other centres in the network and the team of graduate students who assisted us in the manual design. The manual uses the *Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st Century* as a conceptual framework for teaching some of the main content and for training teachers in some of the most effective methods in peace education.

One of the main substantive dimensions of this resource is the disarmament strand of the *Agenda* and the specific recommendations it makes to achieve progress toward disarmament. These recommendations offer some specific current proposals that students can describe as indicators of cognitive understanding, research further so as to learn how to acquire information for making informed decisions on public issues, and assess as means to developing the critical skills necessary to making those decisions as constructive as possible. Informed decision-making and critical assessment are two of the most important capacities of democratic citizenship. Since most countries claim to educate for civic responsibility, we seek to make the case that most countries could achieve this educational goal through disarmament education.

The manual also outlines a basic inquiry into phases of the learning and the changes that might enable global civil society to make a significant contribution to achieving 'a new world order of planned, unarmed peace'. The inquiry would lead the students through a diagnosis of the problems inherent in a highly militarized international system, a critical assessment of alternatives, envisioning their own frameworks for a disarmed world (a technique long advocated by futurist peace researchers such as Elise Boulding), and planning coherent strategies for moving toward their vision through a series of practical steps such as those proposed in the *Hague Agenda*. These, of course, are all teaching techniques best suited to secondary education.

However, the manual takes a developmental approach to peace education, offering methods and materials suitable to all grade levels, that we also advocate for disarmament education.

A developmental approach to education for disarmament

We believe that peace education can be integrated into all subject areas at all grade levels. Indeed, given world circumstances we would argue that it not only could be, but it should be so integrated as a central purpose of education. The overarching goal of the Campaign is to work for the worldwide inclusion of peace education as a standard part of the curricula of all schools.

Since we would carry much of this argument into disarmament education we would advocate the same comprehensive and developmental approach. For elementary and middle schools, most of the emphasis is on education *for* disarmament, and laying the foundation for education *about* disarmament. We know that some of the techniques that focus on the substance of disarmament can be adapted in simpler forms to the middle grades, which could be a transition stage. But it should also be a stage in which the normative and perceptual aspects are firmly grounded.

The perceptual is very important; some would argue essential. If disarmament and peace are seen as possibilities, being seriously pursued by those such as the older students who are studying and designing proposals for a disarmed world, younger students will also approach these studies with a perception of disarmament as not only desirable but possible, worth working for, worth learning for. For many years peace education has used the presentation of non-violent alternatives to armed conflict, and cases in which peace has been achieved and maintained over long periods to demonstrate to learners that peace is possible. Now the task before us is to demonstrate that we can learn how to make it probable in our own time and in our own circumstances, or at the very least to take some practical steps in the direction of peace.

Cases of North America and Western Europe can be studied as 'disarmament among and between neighbours' as a prelude to study of regional agreements and proposals for disarmament. The various disarmament treaties, recast in form and language for curricular purposes, the backgrounds and issues involved in their negotiation, and their effectiveness could be introduced in secondary grades. Curricula for elementary grades already developed to teach children about contractual agreements could be adapted to use in disarmament education. The point is that students of all ages can learn that disarmament is possible, and that learning to help to achieve it is an important civic responsibility.

A second concern of the perceptual is how students see the world and those with whom they share it. Reasoned arguments as to how disarmament can advantage a particular nation or group or how armed conflicts and arms trade harms some more than others might be constructed by secondary students, demonstrating to whom and how disarmament might offer benefits. However, the development of a perception of the world that leads to seeing disarmament as a global good that could benefit all, and of a view of such global benefits as desirable, are normative tasks. These perceptions, too, must be subject to reasoned, as well as normative, assessment. Some of the values espoused in the United Nations normative documents, and those espoused in the various UNESCO policy documents such as the *Declaration on the Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy* (1995) could be among the values brought to the assessment.

It can be demonstrated to students that co-operative, common security, involving a large measure of disarmament is in many respects more effective than competitive national security, but there must be a predisposition to believe that the security of others has value to even begin the

consideration of common security through disarmament. This predisposition is best developed at the elementary level in which the foundations of social values are laid.

Here the utility of the relationship of disarmament education to human rights and development education pointed out in the *Final Document* of the World Congress on Disarmament Education come into play. Peace education has long used concepts and standards of human rights as the indicators of the conditions of peace, what peace researchers refer to a 'positive peace'. So, too, peace educators have created lessons based on the argument in the Preamble to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that, '... it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law'. Violation of human rights is a cause of armed conflict and protection of human rights is protection of peace. But a commitment to and understanding of human rights and their relationship to disarmament and peace must be cultivated if human rights are to serve their purpose. Disarmament is understood to be desirable because it contributes to the realization and protection of human rights.

This relationship as well as the relationship to development education (seeking to sensitize students to the extent and nature of world poverty) are both woven into the *Hague Agenda*, which calls for a transfer of military expenditures into the meeting of human needs and advocates the strengthening of international humanitarian and human rights law. While the text of the *Agenda* is

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not used in the curricula we recommend for elementary and middle grades, its spirit informs what we advocate for teaching for the achievement of the goals of the strands on human rights and on conflict transformation in which lessons on alternatives to violence and skills of conflict resolution are recommended.

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A comprehensive concept of disarmament education

The *Final Document* of the World Congress on Disarmament Education speaks briefly of teaching methods, without examples such as those mentioned above, foreseeing possibilities for a wide-ranging pedagogy of disarmament education, adaptable, as is the Global Campaign's developmental approach to the wider field of peace education, to all grade levels and all subject areas ('Pedagogical Objectives', sec. A, para. 6). It also lists numerous topics and areas of substance that should be comprehended in disarmament education ('Substantive Approaches', sec. A, para. 8). While the list offers some basis for conceptualizing a coherent, comprehensive approach, it is basically nothing more than a laundry list of what might go into disarmament education curricula. The document provides many significant guidelines, but it does not offer the kind of conceptual map necessary for the development of good curricula. Neither does it provide for any integration of pedagogy into the list of substantive topics through which the knowledge, skills and values for the comprehension and application of the substance might be learned. A coherent, comprehensive, conceptual approach we believe offers the best possibility for the development of curricula and pedagogies of disarmament education that can be widely adaptable to diverse educational conditions,

yet share a common core substance and purpose necessary to making education a significant factor in the achievement of disarmament.

A comprehensive approach is well suited to the need and, we would hope, the intention to disseminate disarmament education throughout the school systems of the world. It is a way of assuring that there will be enough commonality in all the multiple variations that worldwide dissemination calls for. Such an approach does not exclude variety nor lack room for multiple interpretations of the teaching-learning process, rather it encourages them as a way to further develop the general field. It also provides a platform for dialogue among educators with common concerns but very different circumstances. By comprehensive we in no way mean homogenized, a point that was essential to our approach to the development of *Learning to Abolish War*. We believe that variety and diversity are attributes of good peace education and that the same would hold true for disarmament education.

Our concept of disarmament education is that it is an integral and essential part of peace education with its own substantive integrity and specific methods that fall within the realm of peace education pedagogies, but are tailored to the particular problems and issues of disarmament with its own specific teaching methods integrally related to the substance. While we recognize that much peace education methodology is readily adaptable to disarmament education, we believe that the importance of the field merits the kind of comprehensive planning and development of methods and materials that can manifest its unique role and place in peace education. Particularly important, in our view, is the introduction of disarmament education into teacher education, calling not only for the development of materials and methods, but also for the inclusion of appropriate substance, introduction of the materials and training in use of the methods of disarmament education into teacher education courses. We hope that some peace educators in teacher education institutions will take up this task.

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Conclusion: disarmament education is essential to the new phase of peace education

It is evident that we believe the primary promoters of disarmament education are current peace educators who would agree that education for global civic responsibility should be a major focus of peace education in the new phase of the field that is emerging with the Global Campaign. Peace educators are among those in the teaching profession most inclined to see the need for disarmament education. They may need some help in seeing the viability of what previous generations of peace educators have found forbidding and forbidden. However, by opening discussion on the three points we posed to account for the problem of its being forbidding, by presenting them with the kind of conceptual comprehensive approach we have advocated, and providing opportunities for them to develop and/or be trained in appropriate methods, they could be the vanguard of a movement to bring disarmament into the school curricula as an integral component of peace education.

Involvement of those now offering peace education as the first to be enlisted in efforts to establish and strengthen disarmament education could also provide agents for encouraging international co-operation among educators, and a source of support to and solidarity with those disarmament educators who may, for a few years, still be minorities in their own professional communities. The Global Campaign will be seeking to cultivate such co-operation. It is our hope that some of the collaborative efforts the Campaign is encouraging among peace educators from various

countries will be in the area of disarmament education. We will continue to include disarmament education in teacher-training workshops, collect relevant curricula and make them available to educators through the network of peace education centres, post disarmament education lessons on the Hague Appeal for Peace web site, and address questions of disarmament education at Campaign events such as the International Institutes on Peace Education.

The world needs disarmament, and so does peace education. We hope to have the material means and the co-operation from disarmament experts and peace educators working together to bring disarmament fully into peace education—so that it may actually make its very significant potential contribution to the achievement of disarmament. The land of disarmament education is no longer completely unknown. This is the time for peace educators to venture into it.

Note

- 1 <http://www.haguepeace.org>