

Strengthening Education in Nepal for Disarmament “Educating the Educators” in Disarmament Education

19-20 January 2023 | Kathmandu, Nepal

BACKGROUND

The importance of disarmament, non-proliferation and peace education has been continuously emphasized by the international community, as noted in the United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education ([A/57/124](#)) and the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament¹ (2018). In his agenda, the Secretary-General underscored the importance of disarmament education with a view to creating a platform for the sustainable entry of young people into the field of disarmament. The UNODA Disarmament Education Strategy² aims to operationalize the SG's vision to raise awareness and empower individuals with knowledge and skills that will contribute to disarmament. Among other priorities, the strategy places a strong emphasis on capacitating educators as an important means of delivering tailored and authoritative disarmament education to a wider population of students.

Accordingly, UNODA's Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) has conducted various projects and activities that support peace and disarmament education for the Member States in Asia and the Pacific, including, but not limited to, Nepal. Furthering its previous efforts in the region³, the Centre organized a two-day workshop targeting high school and university educators in Nepal, aimed at raising their awareness and identifying national and regional needs for a more effective dissemination of disarmament education. The project was carried out in cooperation with the Youth Thinkers' Society (YTS), a civil society organization in Nepal, with financial support of the Republic of Korea.

GOAL

With this project UNRCPD intended to achieve the following:

1. Gain an understanding of the level of disarmament education currently being delivered to students in secondary and tertiary education in Nepal;
2. Raise the awareness of educators in Nepal of the meaning and importance of disarmament education by providing basic knowledge on disarmament as well as on the available tools and opportunities to engage in disarmament issues that are provided by the UNODA;

¹ <https://unoda-epub.s3.amazonaws.com/i/index.html?book=sg-disarmament-agenda.epub>

² [UNODA education strategy.pdf \(un-arm.org\)](#)

³ Some of the representative works carried out by UNRCPD on peace and disarmament education can be found in the links: [Baseline Assessment for Peace and Disarmament Education in Asia and the Pacific](#) (2019) and [Peace and Disarmament Education Programme in Nepal](#) (2013-2015)



3. Build and nurture a network of educators at the national level by offering an opportunity in which knowledge and experiences on teaching disarmament education could be shared and discussed;
4. Identify potential areas of cooperation and support for future disarmament education activities by UNRCPD.

DATE

The workshop took place on 19 and 20 January 2023.

VENUE

The workshop was conducted in Nepal, Kathmandu on the premises of the UN House.

PARTICIPANTS

The workshop targeted high school teachers, university professors and civil society organizations in Nepal. In total, twenty high school teachers from fifteen high schools and eight university professors from universities around Kathmandu, and eight representatives from civil society organizations in Nepal attended the workshop along with two representatives from UNESCO Nepal (16 women, 22 men).

SUMMARY

The first day of the workshop targeted twenty high school teachers from fifteen high schools around Kathmandu. It consisted of four sessions that laid the ground for a basic level of understanding on disarmament and disarmament education, including its importance as a condition for the achievement of sustainable peace and development. It concluded with a group exercise in which participants were asked to share their ideas and views on how disarmament education can be better incorporated into their classes and the pre-existing national curricula on peace and disarmament to achieve an effective dissemination of disarmament education to their students.⁴ On the second day, the workshop took place in the form of a group discussion with a few representatives from civil society organizations in Nepal and eight university professors whose classes and research focus are on peace and conflict studies, international security, international development and other areas of social studies. Participants delved into deeper discussions on the status of current peace and disarmament education in Nepal and the prospects for further including this type of education in the future.

Session 1. Introduction: What is Disarmament Education?

⁴ Details of ideas and views proposed by the participants during the group exercise can be found in the Annex attached at the end of this report.



Ms. Rho commences the workshop by introducing the concept and the objective of disarmament education within the framework of the UN

In Session 1, Ms. Ji Yeon Rho, Associate Political Affairs Officer of UNODA/RCPD, introduced the concept of disarmament, disarmament education and their importance, along with the work carried out by the UN for their effective implementation. The [Disarmament Explainer Video](#) was used as a key tool in explaining the concept of disarmament. Ms. Rho also presented on the concept of 'disarmament education' implemented with the aim of reducing, controlling and

eliminating weapons by fostering a culture of peace, thus undermining militarism and promoting instead non-violent methods of dispute resolution.

Information on existing tools, publications, courses, and initiatives published and conducted by UNODA in the field of disarmament education was also shared, in line with UNODA's priority on producing and providing tailored and contextualized disarmament education contents that are accessible to beneficiaries, educators and training institutions. These included UNODA [factsheets](#), [disarmament education infographics](#), [disarmament explainer videos](#); [Disarmament Dashboard](#); [Disarmament Yearbook](#); Disarmament4Educators Initiative, [responsible innovation of artificial intelligence](#); and [Youth4Disarmament](#) Initiative.

Session 2. Humanitarian Consequences of the Use of Weapons: Weapons of Mass Destruction and Conventional Weapons

In Session 2, Mr. Aaron Junhoun Yoo, UNRCPD Deputy Director and Officer-in-Charge, elaborated on the humanitarian consequences of the use of weapons, specifically on weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, as the basis for a dire need for disarmament. Under the topic of weapons of mass destruction, devastating and long-lasting humanitarian consequences of the use and testing of nuclear weapons were examined in depth through the nuclear bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The increasing risks of use of chemical weapons and the potential consequences of the spread of diseases and lesions caused by biological weapons were highlighted the risks associated with these weapons.

The session further informed the participants on conventional weapons —



Mr. Yoo explores a wide array of international instruments that ban the development and use of weapons of mass destruction

the most common type of armament globally and the most used in conflicts historically. Landmines and cluster munitions were given as representative examples that cause long term effects even after the cessation of hostilities, due to remnant mines that result in obstruction of relief and reconstruction efforts, or because of the long-term effects of the indiscriminate and excessive injuries they inflict upon civilians.

Session 3. Disarmament in A Wider Context of Peace, Security and Development

Disarmament and arms control have strong interlinkages with many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as with cross-cutting issues such as gender and youth. Ms. Rho articulated the intersectionality of disarmament with other peace, security and development agendas whereby it reaffirmed disarmament as an underlying condition for sustainable peace and development and as means to ensure more diverse and inclusive approaches in its advancement. Under the framework of the Secretary General’s Agenda for Disarmament, she underscored the contribution of disarmament and arms control to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁵

The session also introduced the work of UNODA to engage youth into the field of disarmament. Ms. Rho introduced UNODA’s “Youth4Disarmament Initiative (Y4D)”⁶ launched to connect young people with experts to learn about current international security challenges, the work of the UN to alleviate these challenges and how to actively participate in the processes.



Participants are engaged in an activity to learn about the connection between gender and disarmament and arms control

On gender and disarmament, participants learned about different gender terminologies and misplaced gender norms in the context of disarmament and arms control through a physical activity. Concepts of gender, gender mainstreaming, gender norms and gender-based violence were covered together with deliberations on the meaning of ‘equal and meaningful representation of all genders’ in the disarmament and arms control community at the policy, legislation/regulatory and operational levels.

⁵ Further explanations on the linkages between disarmament and arms regulation and 10 SDGs are found in the Figure 1 (page 8) of the [Secretary General’s Agenda for Disarmament](#).

⁶ See [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#), [podcast](#) of the Youth4Disarmament Initiative.

Session 4. Civil Society Organizations in Disarmament

The session introduced the vital role of civil society organizations in bringing civilian voices to disarmament dialogues. In line with the objective of enhancing and diversifying partnerships to broaden the global impact of UNODA's work, the workshop provided a platform for engagement with civil society organizations on key issues. This was linked to the Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament, which called for strengthening partnerships and diversifying stakeholders, ensuring the full and equal participation from underrepresented communities, and empowering the next generation.

Representatives from the Centre for Social Change and the Action Group on UNSCR 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security in Nepal demonstrated various works carried out by civil society organizations on conflict transformation and peacebuilding in Nepal. The recent project by the Centre for Social Change demonstrated the use of art in drawing out frank and deep dialogues among high school students on peace, conflict, segregation, and violence. The representative from the Action Group on UNSCR 1325 (2000) in Nepal highlighted the role civil society organizations have played in influencing policy directions of the government by calling for the incorporation of international regulatory mechanisms into Nepalese legislation and by taking part in global and regional movements to champion such instruments.



Representatives from civil society organizations in Nepal explain their contributions to promoting peace and preventing armed conflict

Session 5. Group exercise on How to Introduce Disarmament Education to High School Students in Nepal

Session 5 consisted of an interactive exercise, where participants were given an informational packet and a variety of training materials. They were tasked with assessing the present state of disarmament education in the Nepalese high school curriculum, identifying entry points for the integration of disarmament education and relevant cross cutting issues within and outside of the regular high school curricula, designing creative ways to introduce disarmament education to Nepalese high school students and fostering conducive conditions for students to pursue their interest in disarmament affairs. Participants were grouped by the subject area in which they teach to brainstorm ideas and present them to the wider group. The matrices that summarize the ideas presented and discussed as relevant to the workshop's topics are given in the Annex attached to this report.



Participants discuss areas of convergence in which disarmament education can be integrated within formal and non-formal education in Nepal

Session 6. Focus Group Discussion with Educators in Tertiary Education: How to Strengthen Education in Nepal for Disarmament

Key points that were raised and discussed by participants are listed below. The points below summarize the opinions of participants of the workshop and thus should not be generalized to be considered as a representation of the entire national or regional context. It also does not necessarily reflect the views of the UN.

Peace and disarmament education in Nepal

- The urgent need for peace and disarmament education was brought to the forefront of national attention since 2007 when Nepal embarked on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants engaged in the civil war.
- Since then, the education on peace and disarmament matters has directly and indirectly been taught in several tertiary level educational programs in Nepal, mainly as a multidisciplinary field. Most relevant topics fall under the label of conflict and security

studies and are taught within the framework of peace studies, national and international security, global governance, international human rights and transitional justice and reconciliation. Dialogue, negotiation, and mediation cut across these topics as common strategy for conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding.

- Among others, Tribhuvan University, Institute of Crisis Management Studies, Nepali Army Command and Staff College, and Armed Police Force Command and Staff College are leading educational institutions that teach peace and disarmament education as part of or in conjunction with broader international security and development subject matters. Outside Kathmandu area, the provision of relevant courses in higher education are significantly lower with only a couple of graduate schools located in the mid-west of the country offering MA in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies.

Challenges for an effective implementation of disarmament education in Nepal

- Systematic impediments that degrade quality education such as the extreme politicization of education, deprioritization of education among other national agendas and brain drain of competent youth were marked as fundamental issues that preclude the effective implementation of disarmament education in Nepal.
- Despite local and grassroots efforts seeking to promote peace and disarmament at different levels of education, the lack of continuity and its limited reach have rendered efforts inefficacious; the challenge is compounded by contradicting national legislations and policy directions. The enactment of new legislations and enforcement of new policies that do not conform with international humanitarian law and human rights, and thus disarmament education strikes students as unrealistic, demotivating them to pursue higher education in disarmament.
- The disparity of integration of peace and disarmament education between public and private schools was noted as another challenge. The quality of education being higher in private schools than public ones at primary and secondary education level in Nepal, a significant number of the former provide peace education through various subjects and activities, whereas the opportunities are rarely provisioned in the latter.

Recommendations for the way forward

- **The localization of peace and disarmament education** to address specific political, social, and educational conditions intrinsic to the country can help gain traction especially from young people and motivate them to take part in disarmament processes. Catering to the needs and conditions of the country enhances the connection of disarmament issues to the people whereby peace and disarmament education becomes a more applicable and relevant tool to finding possible solutions to some of the deeply rooted social problems. In the long run, this may also contribute to closing the gap between what is taught in disarmament education and the lack of its reflection in the political reality.
- **Vocational and non-technical education** was raised as a possible channel with a low entry barrier that can allow disaggregated peace and disarmament education based on different levels of age, need, and interest. Through these channels, tensions and conflicts among different student groups attributing to different ideologies and beliefs could be addressed in tandem.

- **Reinforcing contextualized narratives on success stories, best practices, and the ways forward** in disarmament matters can empower people, especially youth, when learning disarmament education. While a reflection on past conflicts is an integral part of peace and disarmament education, such narrative has been pervasive in the context of Nepal, oftentimes evoking political fatigue and disconnecting people from an open and meaningful dialogue on peace and security. To avoid this, successful peace and disarmament efforts carried out in Nepal and forward-looking agendas that suggest the next steps or different approaches to address the evolving needs of younger generation can be articulated to create novel and positive narratives.
- **The incorporation of disarmament education to the national curricula and development of an adaptable curriculum plan** by the national, municipal,⁷ and local level stakeholders **using materials and pedagogical tools developed and recommended by the UN** were noted as realistic and most effective way to promulgate disarmament education, especially in primary and secondary education. Participants requested follow-up workshops of this kind by UN agencies to supplement the shortage of institutional capacity and resources in Nepal.

⁷ In Nepal, local governments are entrusted to design educational curricula up to 12th grade — final stages of secondary education. Considering this educational programming system, the [Municipal Association of Nepal](#), an umbrella organization representing entire municipalities of Nepal that works with different tiers of government, was highly recommended to be considered as a future partner for collaboration, which can allow access to a wide network of local governments and educators in charge of editing high school curricula in public schools.

Annex – Session 5 Matrices from the Group Exercise on How to Introduce Disarmament Education to High School Students in Nepal

Matrix I Regular Subjects in Nepalese High School Curriculum

Nepal's current high school curriculum	Subjects of convergence of intervention	Entry points for disarmament education	Targeted activities including pedagogical methodologies	Actors involved
English	Literature	Incorporate disarmament promoting literature in the curriculum; Incorporating witness accounts/victim testimonies on consequences of the use of weapons	Read books about the World War I & II, Nepal's Civil War, etc. Collaborate with NGOs and the UN on curriculum development Research and discuss the texts based on topics of war and armed conflict and their impacts on people's lives	National authorities from the Ministry of Education and the curriculum development committee English language and literature teachers
Nepali	Nepalese History Nepali language and literature	Teach the consequences of armed conflict in Nepalese history, and legacies of the use of weapons; Identify poems and books in Nepali literature that express the experience and emotions of people who are victims of the use of weapons (e.g., war, all kinds of armed violence, crimes, etc.)	Case studies of historical events seen from the lens of people who suffered from armed conflict/violence Read books on Nepalese history of armed conflict Incorporate current news coverage (e.g., War in Ukraine)	Teachers
Social Studies	Establishment and evolution of the UN in the context of modern conflicts	Teach the founding spirit of the UN following the aftermath of the World War II and its role and endeavours to maintain and foster peace and security	Visit UN organizations as part of academic excursions and discuss their contributions to peacebuilding and disarmament Discuss the role of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) in	Social studies teachers must be aware of the role of the UN and its agencies; UN and other international organizations at the national and

			assisting the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the Nepalese Civil War	regional level must be available to offer guidance to, and work collaboratively with, schools.
	Causes and effects of the two World Wars	Understand the causes and effects of the World War I & II, focusing on humanitarian consequences of the use of weapons	Design research questions and conduct research on the humanitarian consequences of the use of different weapons during World War I & II; Student-led presentations; Read testimony of survivors; Use visual materials including movies, photos and videos	Social studies teachers
	Peace movements	<p>Teach about peace and development and how peaceful ways of conflict resolution are fundamental for its achievement</p> <p>Understand the tools and techniques of resolving conflicts in non-violent ways</p> <p>Teach importance of inclusivity and resilience in pursuing peace and development</p>	<p>Drama, street plays, flash mobs to spread awareness on peaceful ways of conflict resolution, peace and development</p> <p>Development of local curriculum befitting to local customs, history, and culture</p>	National and local authorities in charge of the curriculum development, teachers, students, NGOs, parents
	Moral education	When teaching about moral values and behaviour, include: norms and values, teachings of Asian philosophy, help and volunteerism, non-violence, peaceful ways to resolve conflict and disarmament	Assign students to conduct research on the indigenous practices of the Nepalese community, and identify socio-cultural norms and values that are in line with the values of disarmament and peace	Teachers; religious, spiritual, and social leaders

			<p>Exercises to learn about important practices of eastern cultures that are in line with peaceful ways of resolving conflicts, sustainable peace and disarmament</p> <p>Assign projects to understand and respect different religions as part of promoting values of respect and tolerance</p>	
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)	Science and computing	<p>Educate on responsible innovation</p> <p>Talk about past discoveries/inventions that have been weaponized or used for military purposes and their effects on people's lives and livelihoods</p> <p>How technology can be used to promote intercultural understanding</p>	<p>Assign research projects on responsible and irresponsible innovation</p> <p>Offer presentations on the creation of nuclear weapons, research for biological and chemical weapons, etc.</p> <p>Invite professionals from sciences/technology/mathematics to talk about responsible innovation in their field</p> <p>Using technology to learn about other cultures and utilize as an avenue to be exposed to different perspectives</p>	INGOs, practitioners in the field to provide introductory sessions and share expertise, teachers

Matrix II – Electives or Extracurricular Activities for High School Students in Nepal

Outside of High School Curriculum	Point of convergence or areas of interest	Entry points for disarmament education	Targeted actions including pedagogical methodologies	Actors involved
Art and music club	<p>Music</p> <p>Art</p>	International music/art to celebrate diversity	Case studies of musicians and artists that transformed their	Students, schools, teachers, and parents

		<p>Music/art about war to teach the effects of the use of arms against people</p> <p>Techniques of emotional expression and usage of art/music as healthy coping mechanisms for negative emotions</p>	<p>experience of conflict or violence into art</p> <p>Explore the art of different ethnicities in Nepal to promote inter-communal understanding</p> <p>Teach art/music techniques that promote the expression of feelings</p> <p>Use war/armed violence related art and music as a conversation starter to help students discuss sensitive issues around disarmament, conflict, and peace</p> <p>Lyrics composition and song contests on peace and disarmament</p>	
School excursions	Crime and delinquency; its relationship with inequality and marginalization	Understand how inequality, lack of educational and social opportunities and low barrier to access weapons can be the breeding ground for crimes and delinquencies	Read or listen to case studies of former prisoners to understand the possible effect of inequality, deprivation of educational and social opportunities, lack of peace education and critical thinking, and easy access to weapons as a catalyst for armed/violent crimes, sexual offenses and cybercrimes	Students, schools, national and local NGOs, teachers, and parents
Rural village visits	Understand and learn Nepalese history, culture, and tradition from the standpoint of others, different ethnicities	Learn how people are differently involved in and impacted by weapons, armed conflict and security based on their gender, ethnicities, social status, and other factors	Interview villagers on their experiences of the war to learn the Nepalese Civil War from different perspectives, including different impacts and results on inhabitants of urban/rural areas and different ethnic groups	Students, local NGOs, village schools, teachers

		<p>Study histories of intercommunal violence</p> <p>Appreciate the diversity of Nepalese culture and learn how to respect and accept differences</p>	<p>Interview villagers on their traditions and discuss among peers similarities/differences between rural and urban inhabitants</p> <p>Visit rural schools or establish exchange students programme</p>	
Global citizenship clubs	UN and internationally recognized days/weeks/months on global issues	<p>Discuss the origins and objectives of global campaigns to promote global values</p> <p>Create enthusiasm and interest in the field of disarmament</p> <p>Create a campaign to advocate for nuclear disarmament in Asia</p> <p>Teach about the gendered effects of the use of weapons during gender equality campaigns</p> <p>Talk about the environmental effects of the use of weapons during environmental campaigns</p>	<p>Activities or contests on slogan writing and poster making</p> <p>School wide art exhibitions on specific issues</p> <p>Fundraising for different campaigns</p> <p>Excursions to peace and disarmament related centres/institutions/museums/exhibitions</p> <p>Presentations by survivors of armed violence and NGOs and government officials working in relevant fields</p> <p>Organize parades to advocate for and raise awareness on peace and security related global issues</p> <p>Assign each student to pick a date/campaign they would like to pursue and design activities</p>	Teachers, students, parents, NGOs, experts, government officials from the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the national as well as provincial level, and other peace and disarmament practitioners
Language and culture clubs	Intercultural learning	Teach the value of diversity and the beauty of diverse cultures	<p>International pen pals</p> <p>Establish exchange programs with schools abroad</p>	National and international schools must be interested in cultivating

		Share messages of peace with people from all over the world		students' global citizens and cultural knowledge; Teachers and parents should support the value of these activities and programme and encourage interest of students
Yoga and meditation	Recognize the emotional importance of mindfulness Learn the importance of peace in Eastern philosophy and in learning yoga/meditation	Teach the importance of mental health and ways to handle negative emotions in a peaceful manner as a starting point to understand peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms Teach the acceptance and proper expression of one's vulnerability and building of emotional intelligence as essential parts of self-care for girls and boys that can help prevent violent ways of communication and actions in their communities and homes	Practice yoga/stretching and body awareness first thing in the morning Practice mindfulness and meditations during stressful periods Have counsellors and support staff available to help students going through difficult times by teaching them breathing, stretching and meditation techniques for calming the body and mind	Yoga instructors, teachers, and school management
Sports	Team sports	Teach emotional awareness and sports as a healthy coping mechanism for emotional distress – as an alternative to violent expressions Team building and teaching the skills of cooperation and	Include lessons on sport and emotional well-being Include teambuilding activities that focus on cooperation, trust, and reliance on others Teach tools of dialogue to resolve disputes in teams and discuss how this can	Coaches, students, parents

		<p>peaceful conflict resolution</p> <p>Watch competitions between nations and learn to understand sports as a way of intercultural communication</p>	<p>be applied in the real world</p> <p>Watch and participate in international/cross-cultural competitions as a way of opening up conversations on tolerance, respect and cross-cultural understanding</p>	
Creative Writing Club	<p>Themed poetry and short story competitions</p> <p>Assignment to write based on the style and theme of assigned reading</p>	<p>Explore and deal with the inner feelings of students, both to help teachers gain a better understanding of how to introduce coping mechanisms and support, and of students to process difficult experiences and emotions</p> <p>Read peace and conflict, war and violence related literatures</p>	<p>Create poem wall in schools</p> <p>Themed writing contests</p> <p>Spoken word poetry open mic nights</p> <p>Present stories and poetries that include peace and disarmament elements and use them as a way to help students have conversations about these topics and their roles in the society</p> <p>Study literatures that talk about various conflicts around the world and have students write their own work</p>	<p>School boards and organizers with a wide network of various schools, teachers, professionals in literature and writing, students, parents</p>
Travel	<p>Travel to different places in Nepal to explore the remnants of conflicts</p>	<p>Learn about legacies of conflict to help students understand the importance of disarmament</p>	<p>Interview relevant people and experts</p> <p>Learn about landmines and the repercussions</p> <p>Learn about disarmament and peace efforts by local communities</p> <p>Learn about the causes and effects of the conflict</p>	<p>Local travel organizations, local communities, NGOs, schools, and teachers</p>
Drama Club	<p>Writing and acting plays</p>	<p>Explore the legacies and impact of conflict</p>	<p>Script writing contests</p>	<p>Drama teachers,</p>

		<p>and the use of weapons through plays</p> <p>Watch plays set in environments of, or based on, armed violence</p> <p>Study actors who perform in, or directors that produce, plays or movies that promote the value of peace based on their personal experiences of conflict and armed violence</p> <p>Explore the role of plays in promoting social change</p> <p>Use drama to cope with difficult emotions, build team spirit, promote critical thinking and question traditional social norms and values</p>	<p>Watch relevant plays and movies</p> <p>Exercise self-expression through acting</p> <p>Examine and speculate on the society and question values of militarization, armament, violence, etc.</p> <p>Put on shows for other students to promote values of disarmament</p>	<p>schools, and parents</p>
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The above matrix is a compilation of ideas of participants during the group exercise and does not necessarily reflect the views of the UN.