



Baseline Assessment for Disarmament Education in Asia and the Pacific Executive Summary

The United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education ([A/57/124](#)) builds upon and seeks to revitalize past disarmament education efforts, which it considered an integral part of peace education. Its main contribution is the 34 recommendations for action to be undertaken by Member States, UNODA and its regional centres and others. In July 2017, these recommendations were reaffirmed in the Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters ([A/72/185](#)) and calls for a reinvigoration of disarmament education activities. In May 2018, the Secretary-General launched his Disarmament Agenda in which he underscored the importance of increased disarmament education and training opportunities. Therefore, in 2019, in support of and in line with the above, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) conducted a Baseline Assessment of Peace and Disarmament Education needs in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan. The objective was to determine how best to support member states in order to enhance the effectiveness of Disarmament Education in the promotion of international peace, security and sustainable development.

Activities were carried out using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Seven focus group discussions and 146 one-on-one semi-structured interviews were complemented through offering a quantitative survey. A total of 302 individuals (133 female/ 169 male) representing 214 offices/organizations participated in the qualitative portion of the Assessment and 154 individuals (69 female/ 84 male) completed the quantitative survey. Participants included Government offices/Ministry representatives, various United Nation agency representatives, international non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations.

The Assessment itself proved to be a transformative exercise in Disarmament Education (DE) as preliminary notions of Disarmament Education were deepened through Assessment discussions. Initially participants explained that as disarmament and arms control processes are regulated to senior levels of government they do not understand how these are connected to conflict prevention mechanisms at community levels beyond Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programmes found within peace processes. Significantly, as conversations progressed and participants had space for deeper reflection there was an evolution of thought and almost all participants began to understand disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control as a precondition for peace. Participants also acknowledged the relevance of DE activities as it relates to various forms of peace, security and development programming. Participants agreed the lack of understanding of DE results in underestimating its value which, in turn, results in the exclusion of Disarmament Education activities, discussions and prioritization. All participants concluded that DE is critical to preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

Disarmament Education is considered vital to strengthening knowledge and understanding on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control with a variety of stakeholders; from government officers and political parties to public servants, both police and military, to civil



society, youth, media and teachers. Based on the participants perceptions and understanding alongside a review of existing structures for educational interventions the following priorities for Disarmament Education have been identified:

1. **YOUTH PROGRAMMING:** Programming and educational content must be created for youth, with youth. We need to work with youth to learn more how adolescents and young adults view peace and the usage of weapons. Responsible innovation and emerging threats posed by new technologies are a space for engagement to bridge youth interest in the subject of disarmament and arms control. Activities within current UNSCR 2250 Youth, Peace and Security programmes are an entry points for Disarmament Education activities.
2. **GENDER PROGRAMMING:** Weapons are associated with exaggerated perceptions of masculinity and power, therefore, it was highlighted Disarmament Education is critical to the prevention of violence against women and girls. DE is considered a means to help remove patriarchal, masculine views about arms and to promulgate new social norms. Educational activities should highlight issues on gender and how they relate, affect (positive and negative) both the understanding of disarmament and arms control as well as inform the design of activities and interventions.
3. **EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS:** Disarmament Education programmes targeting academics is a priority. This also applies at the institutional level in terms of content and programme creation for university level academic programmes. Disarmament Education training opportunities must extend to include peace and security practitioners in the development sector, including UN personnel, helping practitioners understand contextual and thematic correlations on how arms control can build sustainable peace, increase security and contribute to sustainable development.
4. **TRAINING POLITICAL PARTIES:** Armed violence is critically linked to political power, political transitions and political protests. Disarmament Education is considered a vital component to reduce armed violence associated with politics and to promote cultures of accountability, in relation to violence, amongst political leadership and groups. Disarmament Education activities linking peace and non-violence themes with leadership training and diplomacy skills strengthening is essential to promote healthy democratic debate and mediation around policy issues.
5. **MAINSTREAMING DISARMAMENT EDUCATION:** There is a need to mainstream Disarmament Education into peacebuilding and conflict prevention programmes especially within the scope of preventing violent extremism and counter terrorism activities through unpacking individuals' perceptions of weapons and armed violence. This is linked to cybersecurity and digital literacy programming focusing on education around the dangers of information communication technologies being weaponized, namely social media platforms, for recruitment and as a means to incite violence.



- 6. AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGNS:** To address the lack of understanding around current issues in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and their relation to peace, security and development it is critical to create awareness raising campaigns. These campaigns must be educational in nature and produced in various languages. Content needs to be adapted to regions, sub-regions and national contexts. These campaigns should include educational opportunities for media personnel, journalists, social media influencers and gaming leaders as media plays a critical role connecting government to people, as well as raising awareness about disarmament and arms control issues.

