SGI’s contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific region in the context of SDG 4 and Target 4.7

Soka Gakkai International (SGI)

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This report has been prepared for the meeting of the Regional Committee in Asia-Pacific (RCAP) of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO) scheduled to be held on 29-30 May 2019 at Siam University, Bangkok, Thailand.

The work of the Soka Gakkai International can be best characterized as a quest for a world where a culture of peace is fostered by all through transformative education and learning promoted in communities around the world. Toward that end, we address global threats and challenges through easy-to-use educational tools to reach out to people across societies with a vision and resolve to inspire action.

SGI’s institutional aim is to contribute to peace, culture and education for the happiness and welfare of all humanity. We approach these three elements not in isolation but as closely and dynamically interconnected. Our efforts for peace can be traced back to 1957 when our organizational leadership issued a declaration to eliminate all nuclear weapons from the Earth. Since then, our activities have expanded to encompass sustainable development, human rights, humanitarian assistance, women’s empowerment and youth participation. We have focused on educational approaches in these issue areas and created various educational resources such as exhibitions, publications and short films with the consistent message that one person can make a difference. We employ a simple formula of learn, reflect and empower in our programs. This ensures that we learn the issue, reflect it in our own life to own it, and get empowered and empower others to take action. Our non-formal education activities take place at the community level in the countries where SGI operates nationally.

In view of our institutional priority on education, especially non-formal education and lifelong learning, this report is framed in the context of SDG 4, particularly Target 4.7, which covers most of the issue areas on which SGI operates. Please find below the list of SGI’s educational resources and projects which are within that target along with specific notes for Asia Pacific to each listing:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Seeds of Hope: Visions of sustainability, steps toward change

Created in partnership between SGI and the Earth Charter International in 2010 in support of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, this exhibition stresses our interconnectedness with the rest of the community of life and encourages viewers to overcome feelings of powerlessness with a message that a single individual can initiate positive change. The 24 panels are organized by the “Learn, Reflect, Empower” formula, along with one left blank with a simple tree design for viewers to attach their own statement of what they will do toward sustainability. An activity pack containing educational materials and ideas for activities for children accompanies the exhibit. The exhibit introduces the Earth Charter and links its individual principles to positive case studies. It is available in 13 languages including English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese and Japanese and has been shown in 40 countries and territories.

1 www.sgi.org/in-focus/2010/seeds-of-hope.html
In Asia Pacific:
It has been shown in Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines and Singapore.

**A Quiet Revolution**

This 30-minute film features three case studies of how individuals in India, Slovakia and Kenya have contributed to solving local environmental problems. It was produced by the Earth Council in 2002, in collaboration with UNDP, UNEP and SGI. Narrated by Academy Award-winning actress Meryl Streep and featuring interviews with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and other experts, the film urges individuals to take up the challenge of becoming active protagonists in the struggle to create a peaceful, sustainable world. Wangari Maathai and the Green Belt Movement are featured as a case study for Kenya. The film is available in English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Korean, Japanese and German.

In Asia Pacific:
It has been aired on TV in Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines and Sri Lanka, and has also been shown at other venues in Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Singapore and other countries.

**Mapting**

This mobile app was created in partnership between SGI and the Earth Charter International in 2016 to reach a wider audience, particularly youth, to facilitate the promotion and implementation of the SDGs. It invites users to take photos or videos of any act, project or idea that will help achieve the SDGs and share them on a world map, while also learning about the Earth Charter Principles related to each SDG. It has been introduced at the UN in New York, Geneva and Bangkok. It is currently available in English and Spanish.

In Asia Pacific:
It has been most actively used in India and Malaysia.

**Environment for Me and the Earth (Watashi to Chikyu no Kankyo in Japanese)**

This exhibition was launched in 2011 in support of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development as well as the UN Decade on Biodiversity. Organized by the Soka Gakkai in Japan, it has been shown over 60 places and viewed by 700,000 people in Japan.

In Asia Pacific:
It has been shown throughout Japan.

**Proposals on education for sustainable development**

The SGI President has put forward proposals for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 (Rio+10) and for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20), consistently highlighting the importance of the role of education in achieving a sustainable future for all.

In Asia Pacific:
The proposals have been made available in English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Thai, and disseminated widely.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Transforming Lives: The Power of Human Rights Education**

Launched in 2017 in commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, this exhibition aims to raise awareness of the vital role of human rights education in promoting dignity, equality and peace and in preventing human rights violations and abuses. The 25 panels present stories of how human rights education has led to transformation and empowerment in the lives of individuals and communities in Australia, Burkina Faso, Peru, Portugal and Turkey. This exhibition also

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3. [www.mapting.org](http://www.mapting.org)
4. [kankyo.tenji-kai.jp](http://kankyo.tenji-kai.jp)
examines what ordinary citizens and civil society organizations can do to nurture a culture of human rights. It was co-organized by SGI, HRE 2020, NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning, and the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training, with thanks to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is available in English and French.

In Asia Pacific:
It was presented at the 9th International Conference on Human Rights Education in Sydney, Australia in 2018 and has been shown in India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Singapore.

A Path to Dignity: The Power of Human Rights Education
This 28-minute film presents three stories illustrating the positive impact of human rights education among schoolchildren in India, law enforcement agencies in Australia, and women victims of violence in Turkey, and serves as a tool to raise awareness of the positive role that human rights education can play in realizing human rights. It was created in 2011 jointly by SGI, Human Rights Education Associates and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in anticipation of the adoption by the General Assembly later that year of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. Subtitled versions are available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Arabic and Japanese.

In Asia Pacific:
It is yet to be shown at any formal venues; however, is available in those languages spoken in many countries in the region.

GENDER

Women and the Culture of Peace
Launched in 2002, the exhibition presented the concept of a culture of peace and the role of women in its promotion. It was produced and run by the Soka Gakkai’s Women’s Peace Committee and attracted 1.2 million visitors until 2015.

In Asia Pacific:
It has been shown throughout Japan.

Young Women’s Stories—Fostering Leadership
Leadership belongs to everyone and is a self-motivated process to bring forth our full human potential. This online project is designed to share stories of young women from diverse backgrounds and regions of the world taking leadership. It serves to inspire action and transformative change.

In Asia Pacific:
Young women from India, the Republic of Korea and Singapore have joined the project.

A CULTURE OF PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE

Building a Culture of Peace for the Children of the World
Launched at UN Headquarters in 2004, this exhibition has been shown in a number of countries including the United States, Bolivia, Canada, United Arab Emirates, India, Jordan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, Spain, Sri Lanka and Switzerland. It introduced the concept of a culture of peace and illustrates the importance of building it at all levels of society. It serves to support of the International Year, International Decade and Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

In Asia Pacific:
It has been shown in Malaysia, New Zealand, Palau, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

Culture of Peace Forum
The Soka Gakkai Women’s Peace Committee in Japan has continued this Forum since 2002 to promote a culture of peace in communities throughout the country. Over 500 forums have been held with the total participation of some 550,000 people from local communities where

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7 www.power-humanrights-education.org/film
nearly 2,000 individuals shared their experiences of living a culture of peace. The presenters included children as well as wartime survivors.

**In Asia Pacific:**
It has been held throughout Japan.

**Children and a Culture of Peace: For the Sake of Children’s Happiness**
Launched in 2006, this exhibition presented children’s issues in connection with the concept of a culture of peace. It was produced and run by the Soka Gakkai’s Women’s Peace Committee and attracted 1.2 million visitors until 2015.

**In Asia Pacific:**
It has been held throughout Japan.

**Culture of Peace Distinguished Speaker Series**
The SGI-USA has opened Culture of Peace Resource Centers in New York, Santa Monica, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Honolulu and San Francisco as part of its efforts to promote a culture of peace. The Culture of Peace Distinguished Speaker Series has been held since 2007 by the Resource Centers around the country. Speakers have included former UN Under-Secretary-General Anwarul K. Chowdhury; Professor Jeffrey Sachs of the Earth Institute at Columbia University; Betty Reardon of Teachers College Peace Education Center; former child soldier Ishmael Beah; and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Betty Williams.

**In Asia Pacific:**
The series has been held in the United States only; however, events on a culture of peace have been organized in a number of countries in Asia Pacific.

**Victory Over Violence**
Launched in 1999, this grassroots initiative is to help promote a culture of peace and non-violence among youth. Youth facilitators who make presentations in schools have been trained and over 5,000 grassroots discussions have been held. Over a million people have signed a "Victory Over Violence" pledge to lead nonviolent lives. Started in the US, it has spread to New Zealand, South Africa and Cambodia.

**In Asia Pacific:**
It has been held in Cambodia and New Zealand.

**People’s Decade for Nuclear Abolition**
This grassroots movement was launched in 2007 with the aim to increase the number of people who reject nuclear weapons, based on the conviction that civil society and people must be the protagonists creating a groundswell of demand for nuclear abolition that will influence decision-makers. It has created a number of initiatives including the two exhibitions: “From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace” and “Everything You Treasure”. The video “Testimonies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Women Speak Out for Peace” has been shown in nearly 10,000 venues to over 100,000 people. SGI youth have conducted six-country surveys including the US and UK on attitudes toward nuclear weapons among youth. Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) testimonies have been published in several books including “Hiroshima and Nagasaki: That We Never Forget”.

**In Asia Pacific:**
The exhibitions have been shown in Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The testimony video has been shown in Japan. The surveys were conducted in Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Malaysia.

**GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**

**SOKA Global Action**
Soka Gakkai youth in Japan launched this campaign in 2014 to foster global citizenship among youth by addressing three priorities: 1) advancing the culture of peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons 2) strengthening ties of friendship within Asia through dialogue and cultural exchange and 3) furthering our

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10 www.vov.com
11 www.peoplesdecade.org
12 www.sokayouth.jp/sga.html
reconstruction efforts following the Great East Japan Earthquake.

In Asia Pacific:
The full campaign has been conducted in Japan while the second priority area above has involved university students from China and the Republic of Korea.

Lecture on Education for Global Citizenship*

The SGI President delivered a lecture titled “Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship” at Teachers College, Columbia University in 1996, sixteen years prior to the launch of the UN Global Education First Initiative, which set fostering global citizenship as one of its three priorities. He identified wisdom, courage and compassion as the essential elements of global citizenship and called for “a world summit, not of politicians, but of educators”, which was organized in 2016, twenty years hence, by those inspired by the lecture.

In Asia Pacific:
The lecture text has been made available in English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Korean, and disseminated widely.

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Non-Formal Education Measurement Project

SGI and the Centre for Environment Education (CEE) jointly conducted a pilot study to measure the impact of a non-formal education tool in 2017 and published a final report titled “Seeds of Hope: A measurement study”, which was presented at a side event of the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2017.

In Asia Pacific:
The pilot study was conducted in three cities in India. A follow-up study is to be conducted at a later time to further the findings.

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* www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/resources/works/lect/lect-08.html