

Workshop IV

The Voices of Nagasaki and the Youth Who Will Inherit Them

Date: November 3, 2013 14:00-16:30

Venue: Nagasaki City Peace Hal

Participants: About 150 people



President of the 11.3 Executive Committee

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I am a member of the 11.3 Executive Committee of Workshop 4. The members who initiated and implemented work were altogether 20 in number. Some of them are university students in Nagasaki University, Junshin University, Nagasaki University of Foreign Studies, and also high school students, totaling 20. Starting from the planning, we have done by all these university students .Professor Tomonaga, the chairman of the Organizing Committee said we could anything we wanted to do.

The objective of Workshop 4 was to share a 'sense of impending crisis' and a 'can-do attitude' and to stimulate both young people and adults alike towards taking action. A 'sense of impending crisis' refers to the sense of impending danger surrounding the lack of awareness with regards to the current status of nuclear weapons. A 'can-do attitude' refers to the attitude that, moving forward, we can create our own future and that we are capable of creating a world without nuclear weapons. Regardless of whether participants are young persons or adults, when it comes to events related to nuclear weapons, potential participants have been known to say that these are 'difficult', 'have an ambiance that makes participation difficult' or 'even if I do my best, nothing will really change.' The objective of Workshop 4 allowed even someone who did not have much awareness about

nuclear weapons to, by participating in this event, came to understand the sense of impending crisis in the current state of nuclear weapons, with everyone, including young persons, adults and those with little interest in nuclear weapons, believing that they can change the status quo.

In order for us to achieve the objective, we gave three presentations in Workshop 4. The first was the result of a consciousness survey of university students about nuclear weapons. We carried out the survey to 510 students. The result of the survey was presented based on 510 students; 70% of the respondent students said, "Yes, we are interested in nuclear weapons." But "Do you think the nuclear weapons will be gone?" To that question, 90% said "No, it will not go away." We presented the result of the survey to let the audience know about the status and awareness level of the students.

Next, we performed a play to show the current situation of the nuclear weapons. We set up three roles in the play; the Red State is a Nuclear Weapon State, the Yellow State relies on the nuclear umbrella and the Green State is promoting the abolition of nuclear weapons. They are attending a fictional international conference to discuss the treaty to ban nuclear weapons suggested by the Green State. We focused on each country's point of views and its advantages. Through this play, I believe many young people were able to understand more about the nuclear weapons.

Finally, we went into the discussion. The theme of the discussion is "Towards 2015, what kind of action do you think is needed?" 2015 is the 70th anniversary of atomic bombing and there will be the NPT Review Conference to be held. In the discussion, we created several groups, which consisted of six people to discuss for 30 minutes. Then we changed the members of the groups by lottery and discussed for another 20 minutes.

Some of the opinions are: we need to make a reform in education, young people should take an action and communicate the status of the nuclear weapons to the others, also young people want to make friends with the foreign countries' friends and communicate this message to the others.

After the group discussion, then in leading up to 2015, the question was raised to the individuals: what can you do or what would you like to do? We asked them to write down; 150 people were participants in this workshop. Therefore, we collected 150 targets by 150 individuals for 2015. We put them on the big papers and we shared those wishes leading the way to the bright future together.

We have only set a target, an objective. Our workshop will be evaluated when each individual was able to implement their objective they have set. Only after that we think our meeting would become success.

I guess you can say that our generation of young people will be the last generation to hear directly the messages of the victims of the atomic bombing. As our survey indicated, even though this generation of university students has a vague concern with regards to nuclear weapons, roughly 90% feels that eliminating nuclear weapons is simply not possible.

In other words, the future depicted by the younger generation who will be responsible for things moving forward does not appear to be all that bright. Nagasaki has seen a variety of activities aimed at peace. However, active participants have been few, with more people opting for a passive form of participation. It seems that most participants just never speak their opinions, or are never able to do so. To be perfectly honest, at first, I myself was like this. In order for young people, including adults, as a whole to really put forth their best effort to eliminate nuclear weapons, I believe that we have to change this state of affairs. As the generation that will be bearing the responsibility for the future, young people need to more strongly assert their opinions, regardless of the content of these opinions. Some examples of such opinions might include such questions/thoughts as 'Why do some countries maintain nuclear weapons even though they know that nuclear weapons are bad?', 'What can we do to get rid of nuclear weapons?', 'I think it's okay to have nuclear weapons' and the like. For Team Nagasaki and its membership made up of adults and young people, it is important to put some thought into what kind of approach to have towards the nuclear weapons issue.

It is with this meaning that, through the discussions, I feel that the theme of 'Looking Forward to 2015, What Can You Do?' is critically important for all ages. Moving forward, I think it is important to debate what we can do to create a bright future that transcends different age groups. My hope is that young people can more strongly assert themselves to help create a brighter future.