Chapter 3
The Role of Education in Reducing the Threat of Nuclear War

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ABSTRACT
We are currently witnessing big problems and conflicts that plague our contemporary society. It is our right and as well as obligation to ask ourselves whether mankind is in danger. Regardless of the fact that a certain country does not possess nuclear weapons, it can be affected by consequences of a nuclear attack. Therefore, the question of nuclear security is important for the whole international community. In that sense, it is important to develop educative projects in the field of nuclear security in all countries, through additional training of lecturers, both for university programs and faculties, as well as for training that would be organized on different levels for various interested groups.

INTRODUCTION
As part of an extremely expensive and immense nuclear project, “The Manhattan Project,” the USA made the first atomic bomb and tested it on July 16, 1945. The eyewitnesses, the people who were aware of the project, and soon the rest of the world, realized that the world had entered a new era – the Atomic Era. However, at the time, it was still not clear what kind of consequences and effects it could have on people. In the following years, nuclear weapons became the main means of demonstrating influence and power at the global level by great powers, and the countries which aspire to become great powers.

Today, any great power is unimaginable without nuclear weapons. The whole world realizes that this kind of weapon is a major asset in the hands of a state. Therefore, there is always a big risk that some other state will develop a nuclear weapon or obtain it in the future in order to achieve a significant political influence. Although great powers claim that nuclear weapons are a factor of stability on the political scene, this attitude should not be considered as positive, since the primary role of nuclear weapons is not preserving peace. A risk that this kind of weapon can be seized by terrorist organizations, which would not hesitate to use it, is one of the major security problems in the world.

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The big problem is, actually, the fact that we do not pay as much attention as we should to the issue of nuclear disarmament in the contemporary world, even though it is an important global issue that concerns all of us. This is proven by the fact that there is an apparent lack of scientific and expert papers in this field, as well as a lack of serious research studies which would estimate the level of awareness and knowledge about the nuclear issue and the need to completely abolish this kind of weapon in order to completely reduce the risk of its use for war purposes. Therefore, this chapter aims to open a debate on these issues in academia, in order to provide an alternative approach besides the dogmatic approach to nuclear weapons as a “guarantee of our security and stability”. The specific objective of the chapter is education, aiming to raise general public awareness and the level of knowledge of the issues regarding humanitarian disarmament, with special focus on groups like academia, young people, civil society, policy makers. The general population – regardless of the citizenship, gender, age and religious or political affiliation – needs to be informed and educated about problems of humanitarian disarmament, the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and promotion of international law.

It is justified to ask whether the weapon which can “kill the Earth”, the weapon which can devastate and destroy everything leaving long-term consequences for numerous generations, is a real necessity for civilized nations in the 21st century.

BACKGROUND

Europe has been engaged in disarmament processes since the late ‘80s, in order to eliminate the risk of indiscriminate weapons dissemination. A new model of humanitarian disarmament is emerging. Civil society, including the youth, has taken part in the security process requiring protection of civilian population from these weapons. Civil society became a partner and interlocutor of the states, the EU and the international organizations such as the United Nations.

The concept of humanitarian disarmament has emerged as a new security paradigm, as a liaison of cultures, to ensure the future of new generations. The involved youth are widening the field of humanitarian disarmament, arguing against nuclear weapons to ensure the security and peace in Europe and the rest of the world. The youth, with a vision of peace and security, need to acquire the skills necessary to directly influence NGOs, civil society, governments and politicians. Their civic engagement also enhances their professional prospects in the humanitarian fields of international relations and security.

During 2015, activities for carrying out a big project of the European Union commenced, named “ICAN Academy: Youth Supports Humanitarian Disarmament”, with the support of Erasmus + and partner organizations from the Republic of Serbia, France and Turkey. The goal of this project is to engage young people in spreading knowledge about the importance of eliminating nuclear weapons in the world. In the Republic of Serbia and Southeastern Europe, this project is implemented by students from an informal group “Youth for Disarmament”, who are, actually, part of a large International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

The project will enable the development of expertise and involvement of young people and their partners from three European geopolitical regions which are likely to establish a common understanding of European security:

- France, as a state with nuclear weapons and vast democratic experience;