

Survey on Youth Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons and Their Humanitarian Consequences

Nuclear weapons have brought devastating effects to humanity, and in 2010 State Parties to the NPT agreed by consensus the moral and legal dimensions of the imperative of non-use of nuclear weapons stating their “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons.” As a follow up to this, the International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons was convened in Oslo in March 2013.

Parallel to emerging efforts among States, Soka Gakkai International (SGI) conducted a survey recently on youth attitudes toward nuclear weapons and their humanitarian consequences to understand how ordinary citizens view nuclear weapons. There were 2,840 youth who participated in this survey from December 2012 through February 2013 from nine countries.

SGI has for decades been working in the promotion of peace and disarmament and has been actively involved in the global debate aiming at achieving a nuclear-free world. It reaches out to the public through various educational initiatives as well as through working with the media toward that goal.

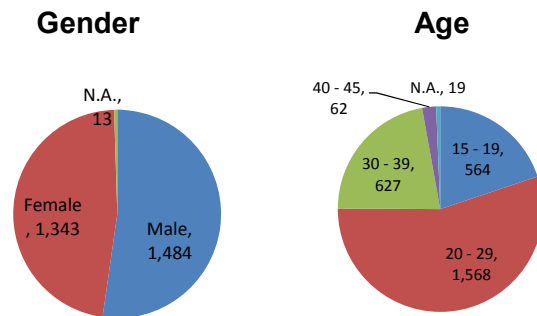
We hope to provide a snapshot of public opinion towards nuclear weapons.

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Survey on Youth Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons and Their Humanitarian Consequences

There were 2,840 youth from nine countries who participated in a survey on youth attitudes toward nuclear weapons and their humanitarian consequences. This survey was conducted from December 2012 to February 2013 by the youth of the Soka Gakkai International in order to assess current awareness towards nuclear weapons and identify an effective strategy toward their abolition.

Country			
Australia	465	Mexico	269
Brazil	227	South Korea	242
Italy	163	United Kingdom	206
Japan	846	United States	190
Malaysia	232	Total	2,840



1. Key Findings

1.1 Public Opinion towards Nuclear Weapons and Their Inhumanity

- **More than 90% of respondents feel nuclear weapons are inhumane.** This number drops by 15% among UK and US respondents. .
- **80.6% believe there should be a ban on nuclear weapons.** This number drops by 7% among UK and US respondents.
- **Only 10-20% of respondents identify UK, France, India, Pakistan and Israel as countries possessing NWS.**
- Among 30-39 year olds, about 55% answered Hiroshima as the place where nuclear weapons were used but among 15-19 year olds the percentage dropped by 15%.

1.2 Key points to emphasize when raising awareness about the inhumanity of nuclear weapons

- **Concern about “radiation” needs to be emphasized**
 - ✧ On the whole, **respondents who are more knowledgeable about the effects of radiation tend to oppose NWS more strongly.** This implies that targeted education and awareness raising efforts work effectively to increase support for the abolition of NWS.

- ✧ However, **in comparing respondents who were more knowledgeable about NWs with those who were less knowledgeable**, the number of those who do not support a **comprehensive ban treaty was slightly higher for the more knowledgeable than the less knowledgeable (7.3% vs. 6.6%)**.

Note 1: "Knowledge" here means to include the names of the cities where the bombs were dropped and extent of damages incurred.

Note 2: The higher "No" response may indicate support for theories justifying possession, i.e., nuclear deterrence theory.

- ✧ When comparing how knowledge influences attitude, **respondents' awareness of "radiation impact" seems to play a significant role in driving them to endorse the comprehensive ban treaty**. This stresses the importance of public education, especially one focusing on the effects of radiation.

- **Awareness about countries possessing NWs**

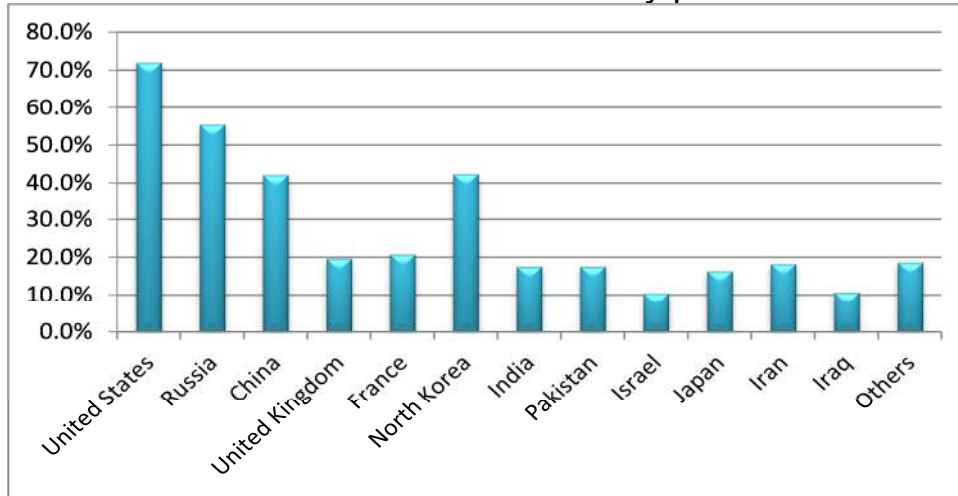
- ✧ **A majority of respondents think nuclear weapons are inhumane and should be banned. Meanwhile, respondents as a whole are not aware which countries actually possess nuclear weapons.** If people become more aware of nuclear-weapons states, more may question whether possession of nuclear weapons by such states is justifiable. This will help identify the countries that need to be targeted for awareness education.
- ✧ Some believe possession of NWs is justified as a "deterrence" and "status symbol." This justification may have an effect on state level decision makers, but the survey results of low awareness suggest that for ordinary citizens the value of possessing NWs is not as high as state actors may think. Citizens may feel the governments should pour state resources to other areas besides nuclear development and armament.

- **Awareness about the inhumanity of nuclear weapons – The majority of youth believe NWs are inhumane**

- ✧ **On the whole, youth generally believe that NWs are inhumane.** However, some still think that they are necessary. This rate is higher in countries possessing nuclear weapons than in non-possessing countries, and higher among men than women. It is vital that we raise public awareness that weapons violating international humanitarian law are prohibited, and the same rule would apply to NWs once they are assessed to be in violation.

2. Q & A Examples

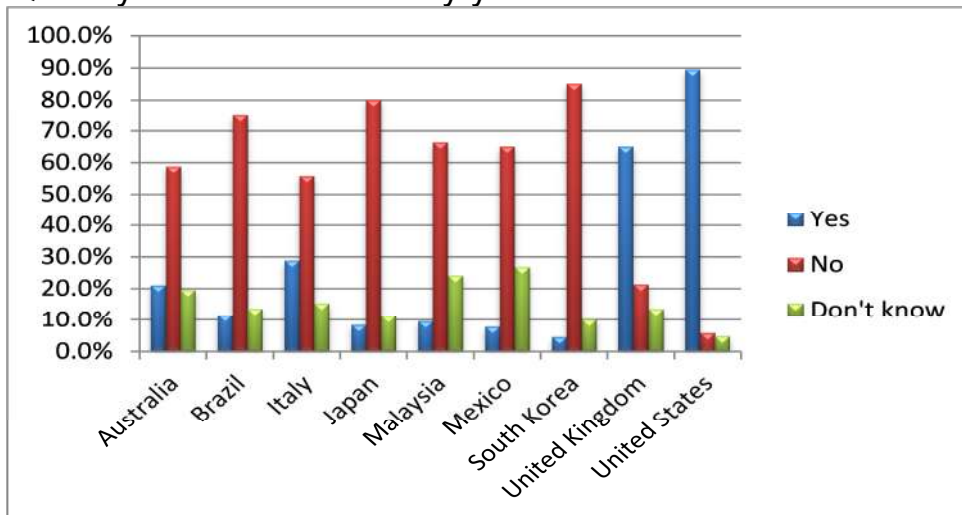
Q. Which countries in the world currently possess nuclear weapons?



This survey was conducted before North Korea's test last February.

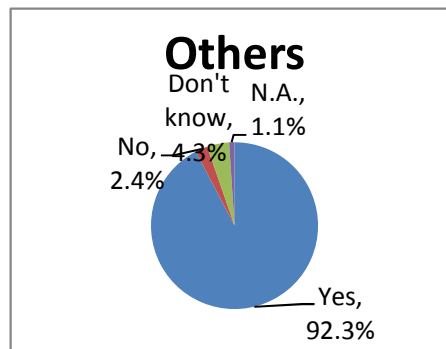
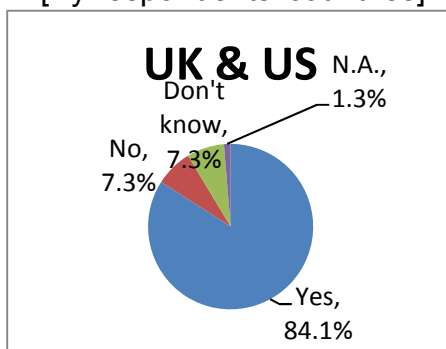
Some respondents named "Korea." As we cannot judge what this correctly implies, we don't include it in "North Korea" in this graph.

Q. Do you think the country you live in now has nuclear weapons?



Q. Do you think nuclear weapons are inhumane?

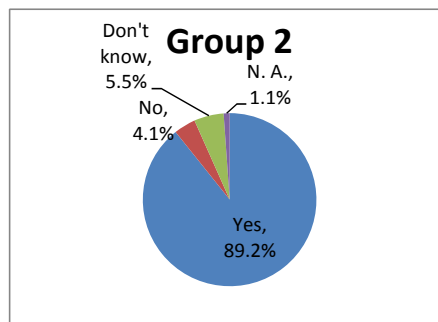
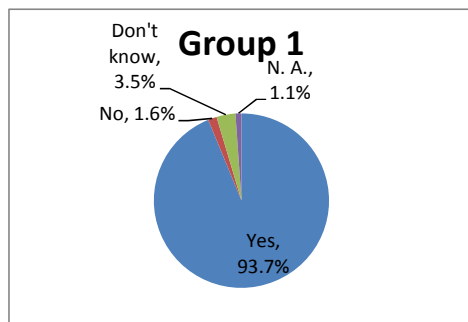
[By respondents' countries]



[By awareness on the name of the cities where atomic bombs were dropped]

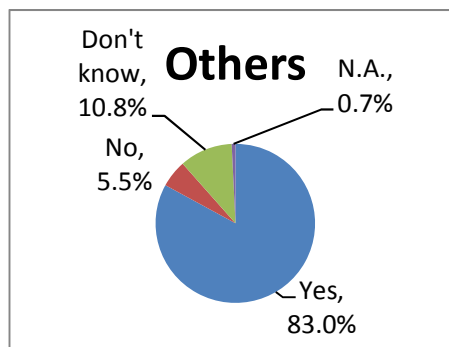
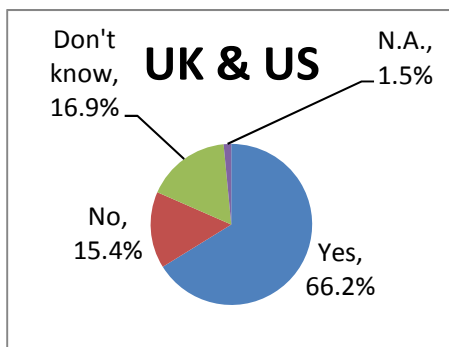
Group 1: Those who could name both Hiroshima & Nagasaki

Group 2: Others



Q. Should a treaty be adopted which comprehensively bans nuclear weapons throughout the entire world?

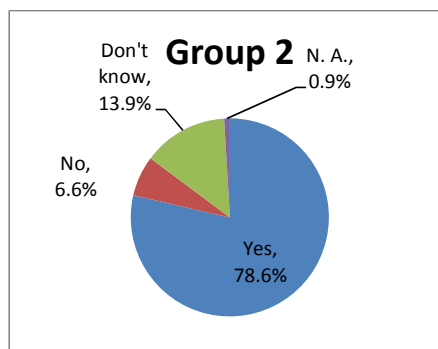
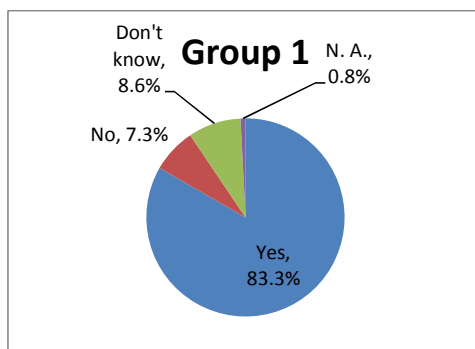
[By respondents' countries]



[By awareness of the cities where nuclear weapons were dropped]

Group 1: Those who could name both Hiroshima & Nagasaki

Group 2: Others

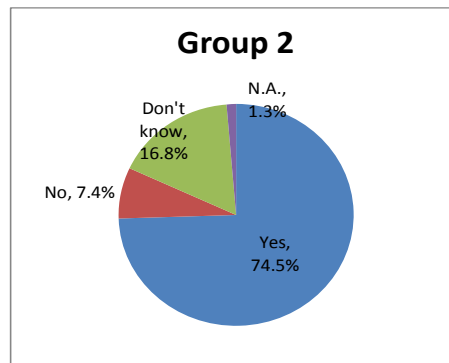
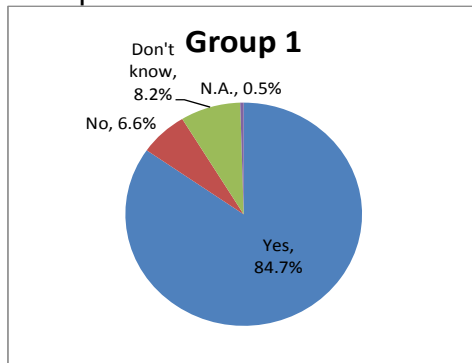


*Group 1's rate of both "Yes" and "No" is higher than Group 2.

[By awareness about radiation]

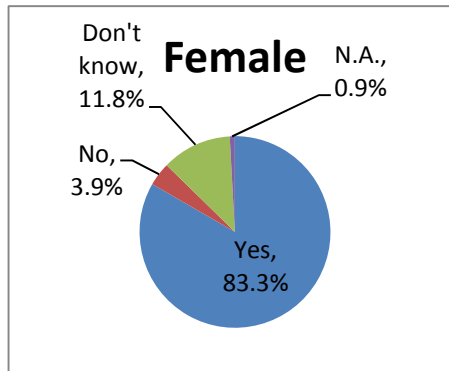
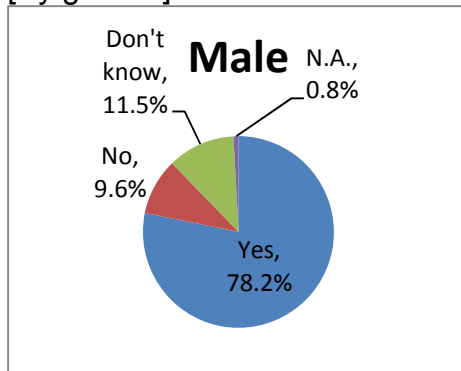
Group 1: Those who were able to identify many kinds of radiation effects

Group 2: Others

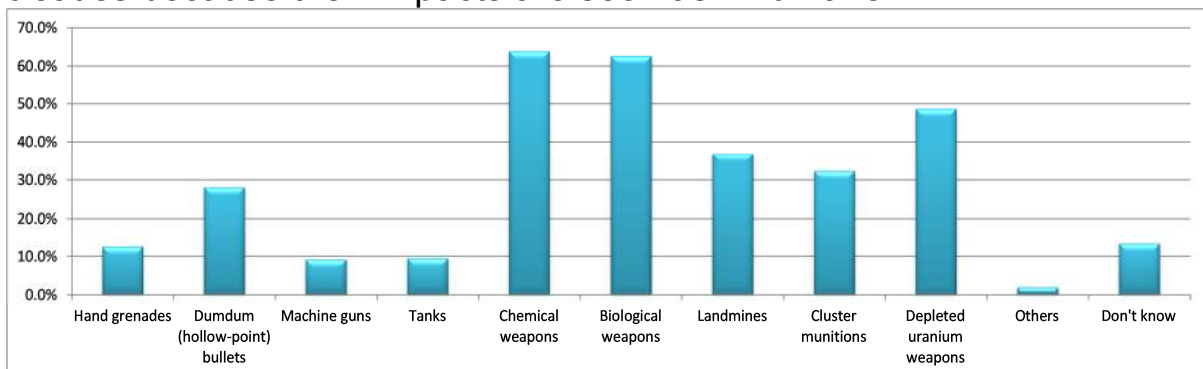


* Group 1's "Yes" is higher, "No" is lower.

[By gender]



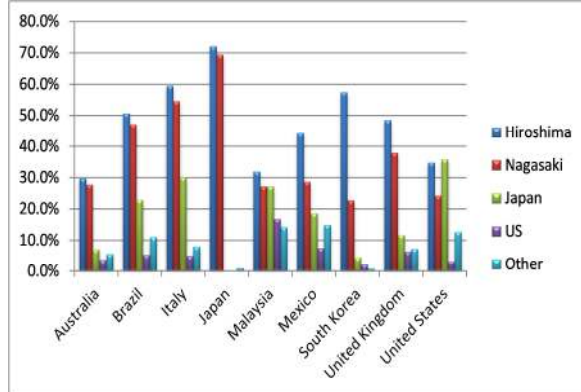
Q. Which of the following weapons are prohibited through international treaties because their impacts are seen as inhumane?



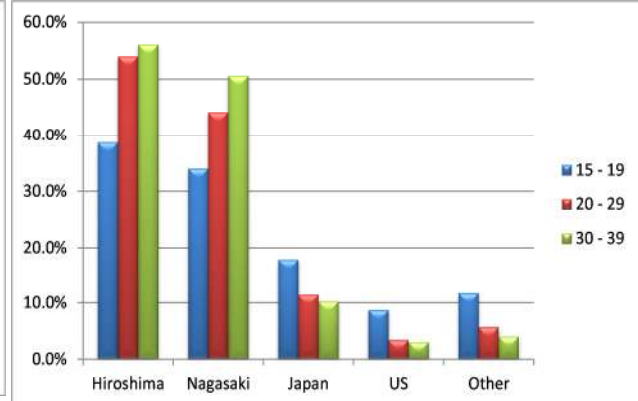
*The rate of landmines and cluster munitions, which are already banned, is lower than that of depleted uranium weapons, which are not.

Q. Please write down the name of the place(s) (countries or cities) where you think nuclear weapons were used.

[By respondents' countries]



[By respondents' age group]



Older respondents tend to know more about the actual bomb dropping.

It has been 68 years since their use in an actual war. Unfortunately, the memory of the use of NWs and the damages they cause will inevitably continue to fade. In reality the younger generations are less aware of NWs and their refusal attitude is weaker than the older generations. It is shocking to us that even in Japan only about 70% are aware of the name of the cities where the atomic bombs were used. The role education plays is becoming more and more prominent.

3. Choice of Countries for the Survey

We felt this survey should be conducted in nuclear-possessing countries, those under a nuclear-umbrella and those in nuclear-weapon-free-zones (NWFZ). In addition, one of the conditions concerning the choice of countries was the availability of SGI youth members who would conduct the surveys. The nine countries used in this survey were chosen based on these parameters.

4. Research Method

4.1 The survey was conducted by local SGI youth in the target countries.

4.2 Survey respondents centered on a demographic of youth and young adults 15 to 45 years old, who are not SGI members.

4.3 Timetable:

- Dec 2012: The Soka Gakkai Youth Peace Conference sends respective SGI organizations an electronic file of the questionnaire. Survey begins.
- Jan- Feb 2013: Survey conducted.
- Late Feb 2013: Data entered and calculated.

5. About Us

Soka Gakkai International is a lay Buddhist organization linking more than 12 million people around the world. In 2007 we launched an anti-nuclear campaign titled "People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition" and have since conducted educational activities on a grassroots level through panel exhibitions, seminars and surveys. For more information, visit our campaign website at

www.peoplesdecade.org