Hello everyone, my name is Kazuhiro Iguchi from Kansai Soka High School. Today, I am going to talk about:

The role of high schools for the abolition of nuclear weapons and discuss what Kansai Soka High School is doing towards this cause.

I hope that some of our initiatives can be helpful to provide a fresh perspective for nuclear disarmament education for all of you.
My school is located just 15 hours from here. No biggie. Just hop on a plane and sit.
There are Soka schools from elementary school to university located across Japan in Tokyo, Hokkaido, and Osaka region. We also have a university in America, and schools in Brazil, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Korea.
And here we are. Kansai Soka High School. Our school was founded in 1973 by Dr. Daisaku Ikeda.
Our Soka Education movement in started in the 1930’s just before WWII. Makiguchi and Toda were elementary school teachers. During their time, students were educated to become loyal soldiers who were willing to loose their life for the war. Makiguchi and Toda fought for the right to educate children for their own happiness rather than a means for war. Anything that was against the war was considered treason at that time.

As a result, they were both imprisoned as thought criminals. Makiguchi died in prison, while Toda came out alive. This was the beginning of our movement for creating humanistic values in society. Alongside, Toda was a young man named Daisaku Ikeda, who would carry on Makiguchi and Toda’s vision and eventually create Soka Schools around the world realizing the dreams of his mentors.
Each Soka School is distinctly unique and catered to the students.

Rather than a fixed pedagogy, each Soka School is given a principle by the founder which becomes the pillar of their education, and later a compass for their life in society.

At Kansai Soka high school, students treasure the following motto:

“Never build your own happiness upon the misfortune of others”. This was presented by Founder Ikeda during our first entrance ceremony in 1973.

Students engrave this spirit in their hearts as they learn.
In a famous speech he made at Colombia University, Teachers College in 1991, Dr. Ikeda mentioned the following to be conditions of a global citizen.

“The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.

The courage not to fear or deny difference; but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures, and to grow from encounters with them.

The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.”
While underlining his views on global citizenship, he proposed the following issues incorporated as integral elements of education at all levels.

- Peace education, in which young people learn the cruelty and folly of war, to root the practice of nonviolence in human society.
- Environmental education, to study current ecological realities and means of protecting the environment.
- Developmental education, to focus attention on issues of poverty and global justice.
- Human rights education, to awaken an awareness of human equality and dignity.

He continued to state:

“It has long been my belief that education must never be subservient to
political interests.

This proposal grows out of the experiences of my predecessors, of Makiguchi and Toda, who fought consistently against political control of education.

In the coming years, I would hope that we could see the realization of a world summit, not of politicians, but of educators.

This is because nothing is of greater importance to the human future/ than the transnational solidarity of educators.”
In 2015, Kansai Soka High School underwent a project to put Dr. Ikeda’s proposal which I just shared with you into practice.

For all students at our school, we have created a curriculum where students learn about global issues called GRIT, which stands for Global Research and Inquiry Time.

In Global Citizenship Seminars, we invite guest speakers from around the world to talk about one of the four fields of environment, development, human rights and peace.

As an optional course, we have UP which are classes held by guest lecturers every Thursday on one of the four topics.

We also conduct fieldwork trips to Hiroshima, Tokyo, Tohoku, and California.
As a selective course, we have Learning Cluster in which students research about global issues in English.
Let me quickly explain about our GRIT program.

In Grade 10, students learn in general about global issues through various activities.

We consider this to be the input and discussion stage.
In grade 11, students in groups of 3-4 choose a topic of their interest to research.

At this stage, students present their research to university students and professors.
In grade 12, the entire grade of 360 students engage in a Model United Nations forum.

Each group of 3-4 students represents a country, creating a massive forum of representing 92 countries.

The objective is for all countries to come to a consensus drafting a resolution to one global issue.

After the forum, each student writes an essay on the topic from the viewpoint of their country that they represented.

Summaries of these essays are written in English taught in English language classes.
During our overseas fieldwork to California, students have a chance to meet with Former UN Under-Secretary General, Ambassador Chowdhury.

Students present their MUN draft resolutions and receive feedback on what would happen if this was actually presented at the United Nations.
At Kansai Soka, we have a few initiatives to learn and take action on the topic of nuclear weapons.

I don’t have time to explain them all, so I have chosen a few to share.
First, I would like to introduce to you about our fieldwork to Hiroshima.

Rather than me explaining, I would like to share a video which I made for you. Please enjoy.
Right before coming to this summit, I heard a student of mine who went to Hiroshima this year share her experience to her friends.

I asked her to write it down and promised her that I would share it here today.

“I learned many important things through Hiroshima Fieldwork. First, my views of nuclear weapons have changed. Before going on the fieldwork, I learned about nuclear deterrence theory and I was somewhat convinced. Although I knew how inhumane nuclear weapons are, I couldn't refute against the idea. However, through hearing the testimonies of Hibakushas, visiting the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, and listening to the poems of survivors, I was disgusted that we can justify having weapons that has the power to make people suffer this much. A world that has such weapons exist, is like letting evil exist. This made me realize that international security that depends on threat is not correct, and that true international security should be based on trust.”
You can see that her knowledge of nuclear weapons evolved as she was able to find a real connection the problem, and further identify the root cause,

which is not nuclear weapons per se but our own egoism and selfishness/ that allows us to justify the suffering of other in order to protect oneself.

Remind you that this was something that spontaneously came out of her casual conversation with friends.
Even if you can’t visit Hiroshima, there are many things you can do to teach and learn about nuclear disarmament.

As another example, I would like to introduce about our Learning Cluster Program.
The Learning Cluster Program (LC) is part of Kansai Soka’s program, to foster global leaders for peace.
Learning Cluster is a program where students learn about global issues in English.

20-25 students from grades 11-12 are selected each year through an English proficiency test, an essay on global issues, followed by a group and individual interview test.

The program is a year long and is conducted every Thursday after school from 4:00-5:00.

Six English language teachers from six countries who specialize in teaching English overlook the program.
This allows Japanese students to use their English skills for academic research, discussions and presentations.
Furthermore, we teach them critical thinking, discussion, leadership, and problem solving skills through various activities and opportunities.
These English skills and Thinking skills are combined to tackle the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the United Nations, and initiate research projects with support from a team of their international teachers.
Furthermore, students look at each global issue from these four areas.
Since the start of this program in 2014, over 100 students have studied a variety of global issues within the four fields.

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The foundation of this program is based on our school founder Dr. Daisaku Ikeda's Annual Peace Proposal.

Every year on January 26, to commemorate the SGI’s founding,

Daisaku Ikeda publishes a peace proposal which explores the interrelation between core Buddhist concepts and the diverse challenges global society faces/ in the effort to realize peace and human security.

The aim of Learning Cluster is for students to create their own proposal for peace, which we have been calling the High School Peace Proposal.
During first semester, emphasis is placed on team-building, basic research skills, and a broad understanding of key global issues that are relevant in today's world starting by examining the SDGs, and Dr. Ikeda's peace proposal.

Students are taught how to find reliable sources, how to reference them, and write a literature review.
During July each year, we conduct a domestic fieldwork to Tokyo where students learn more in depth about the current issue from professors and experts in Japan.

This year, all LC students are focusing on the disarmament of nuclear weapons.

We visited Tokyo University, Soka University, Peace Boat, and met with the Japan Director of the United Nations Development Program as well as with professor Kevin Clements in New Zealand through a video broadcast. He founding chair of the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Otago University. He shared about nuclear weapons from a humanitarian perspective.
In 2nd semester, students are divided into five smaller groups, based on their areas of interest,

and international teachers are assigned to each group to guide the students in their research projects.

Using the skills we teach them in class, students embark to identify their research questions, design their own research methodologies and collect data.

The results of their findings are to be further examined and concluded by a proposal.
During 3rd Semester, we conduct a fieldwork trip where students share their high school research projects to students, professors, and experts in America.

This is our trip in 2017 with a group of 14 students that were researching about gender, hunger, terrorism, poverty, child labor and nuclear weapon issues.
These are my students studying on the plane as we go to LA.
UCLA students and a professor in American and African American Literature and History studies welcomed us. Over lunch we discussed about global issues. Not a minute was wasted.
As soon as we arrive, we head over to UCLA
Students researching about Gender Equality presented their research.
Afterwards we held a discussion with the professor over the topic.
The next day we headed over to USC
Where we met with the dean of religious studies.
The Counter-Terrorism group shared their research and gained feedback from the professor.
The next day, we went over to Orange County to visit Soka University of America.
Each research group of 3-4 students were each given time with a professor who specialized on their topic.
The groups shared about their research...
And received thorough feedback.
90 minutes with an American professor for Japanese high school students is a big challenge.
But I always believe in my students
And they continue to surprise me.
In the afternoon, we have an opportunity to meet with Former United Nations Under-Secretary General, Ambassador Chowdhury.

Each group presents their research proposal and gains feedback.
This is also where the Model United Nations draft resolution is presented.
The next day, we participate in a university fair held at Soka.

This opportunity gives a chance for students to see what University students are researching about.
Later in the afternoon, we go to Orange County Waldorf School...
Discussion with Waldorf Students

Where students hold an exchange about global issues.
The highlight of our trip is visiting the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.
The antinuclear education group presented their research and proposal.
And held a 2 hour Q&A session with Dr. Krieger. With special permission from Dr. Krieger himself, students here today have copies of this dialogue in your booklets.
After coming back, students try to share their learning with many students as possible. They hold discussion sessions after schools to share about their experience and learning.
Conduct presentations
And share to visitors during open campus
They even make newspapers
So after an event, students autonomously find many creative ways to share their experience and learning. This becomes also a great way for students to reflect on their learning.
The final product of Learning Cluster is publishing our work as a High School Peace Proposal, which is also accessible on our school website.
As a result of conducting our fieldwork for 5 years, we have been able to connect and receive support from the following institutions.

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This year, students in the Learning Cluster program are all studying about nuclear weapons and are at a stage where they are finalizing their projects.
There are many resources you can use to learn and teach about nuclear weapons.

Dr. Daisaku Ikeda’s Peace Proposals are available online through the SGI website, his books with world thinkers including Dr. Krieger from the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is available.

Book donations can be made for school libraries, so please contact Ryan if you would like these books.

The Q&A session that my students held with Dr. Krieger is also given to you in your booklets and can be a great source of material. It is also up on the NAPF website. Just type, “Nuclear Age Peace Foundation Kansai Soka High School” and it should pop up.

Testimonies of A-Bomb Survivors are archived on the SGI Official YouTube Channel.

Hibakusha Memoirs are available on Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Website, also the CIF website is a treasure box of materials on this topic. It’s one of the best, so please check it out and ask Ms. Masako Toki who is here today for more detail.

There are places you can probably visit domestically, and please steal any ideas you found today to create your own programs. The more the merrier to abolish nuclear weapons.
Lastly, I would like to finish by sharing what I think is important when teaching about nuclear weapons.

First, teaching fact is not enough. We must find ways for students to create value from their knowledge.

Second, we must realize the root cause of the problem. It’s not about nuclear weapons but an inner transformation to “Never build your own happiness upon the misfortune of others”.

Lastly, through education to empower ourselves, ordinary citizens, to take action for peace.

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Thank you so much for your long attention.

I don’t think this is the last time we will meet each other so I look forward to our next encounter.
Together, let’s abolition nuclear weapons and begin the dawn of a humanistic generation.