International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

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This report represents International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War's responses to Charting Impact, a joint project of BBB Wise Giving Alliance, GuideStar USA Inc, and Independent Sector. Charting Impact uses five simple yet powerful questions to encourage strategic thinking and help organizations share concise information about their plans and progress toward impact.

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Mission:
IPPNW is a non-partisan international federation of physicians organizations dedicated to research, education, and advocacy relevant to the prevention of nuclear war. To this end, IPPNW seeks to prevent all wars, to promote non-violent conflict resolution, and to minimize the effects of war and preparations for war on health, development, and the environment. For its work to educate the public about the medical consequences of nuclear war, IPPNW received the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize.
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1. What are we aiming to accomplish?
To eliminate nuclear weapons, reduce armed violence and build peace worldwide.

2. What are our strategies for making this happen?
From uranium mining to nuclear testing and production, from Nevada to Moruroa and Hanford to Chelyabinsk, IPPNW and its affiliates collect and analyze data that provides the public with a frightening assessment of the health and environmental costs of pursuing security through nuclear weapons. IPPNW and its affiliates not only educate the public, they also organize citizens in the nuclear states to protest and change their governments’ policies. IPPNW believes that the active involvement of millions of people is essential if we are to prevent war and abolish nuclear weapons. Physician activists were instrumental in the campaigns to ban atmospheric and underground nuclear test explosions and in helping to shut down nuclear weapons testing sites and production facilities.

3. What are our organization's capabilities for doing this?
IPPNW is the only international medical organization dedicated to the abolition of nuclear weapons. Founded by US and Russian physicians in 1980, IPPNW is credited with raising public awareness about the devastating effects of nuclear weapons and with persuading American and Soviet leaders that the Cold War nuclear arms race was jeopardizing the survival of the entire world. IPPNW received the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of this accomplishment. Today IPPNW mobilizes doctors, medical students, and concerned citizens in 62 countries in the service of a broader war prevention mission. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and Aiming For Prevention, IPPNW's campaign to reduce the global devastation caused by small arms violence, bring the expertise and compassion of doctors to bear on the whole human tragedy of armed conflict.

4. How will we know if we're making progress?

5. What have and haven't we accomplished so far?
IPPNW was founded in 1980 by physicians from the United States and the former Soviet Union who shared a common commitment to the prevention of nuclear war between their two countries. Citing the first principal of the medical profession — that doctors have an obligation to prevent what they cannot treat — a global federation of physician experts came together to explain the medical and scientific facts about nuclear war to policy makers and to the public, and to advocate for the elimination of nuclear weapons from the world's arsenals. IPPNW received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985. Although the Cold War ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US and Russia retained thousands of nuclear weapons ready to launch at a moment's notice. Proliferation and the threat of nuclear terrorism have added to the nuclear danger in the post-Cold-War world. In recent years we have learned that even a limited, regional nuclear war using a fraction of the world's nuclear weapons would cause irremediable harm to the Earth's ecosystems and could result in the starvation of as many as two billion people in a “nuclear famine.” IPPNW has remained a leader in the global movement for a world without nuclear weapons, launching the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) in 2007, and working with numerous other NGOs to campaign for a treaty that will ban and eliminate these instruments of mass extermination under international law. The 1990s global campaign to ban landmines marked IPPNW's first major entry into the non-nuclear arena.
The federation became engaged in addressing small arms violence in 2001 when we launched Aiming for Prevention, which has broadened to include all types of armed violence. Aiming for Prevention has been driven by IPPNW affiliates from the global South—primarily Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and South Asia—who live and work in areas where armed violence is a constant threat and consumes significant portions of health care budgets. Continuing medical education courses and trainings in the emerging field of Peace through Health have been developed by IPPNW affiliates with university affiliations in Norway, Denmark, the UK, and Canada. IPPNW supports and encourages this academic work to advance the understanding of the interconnections between peace and health.