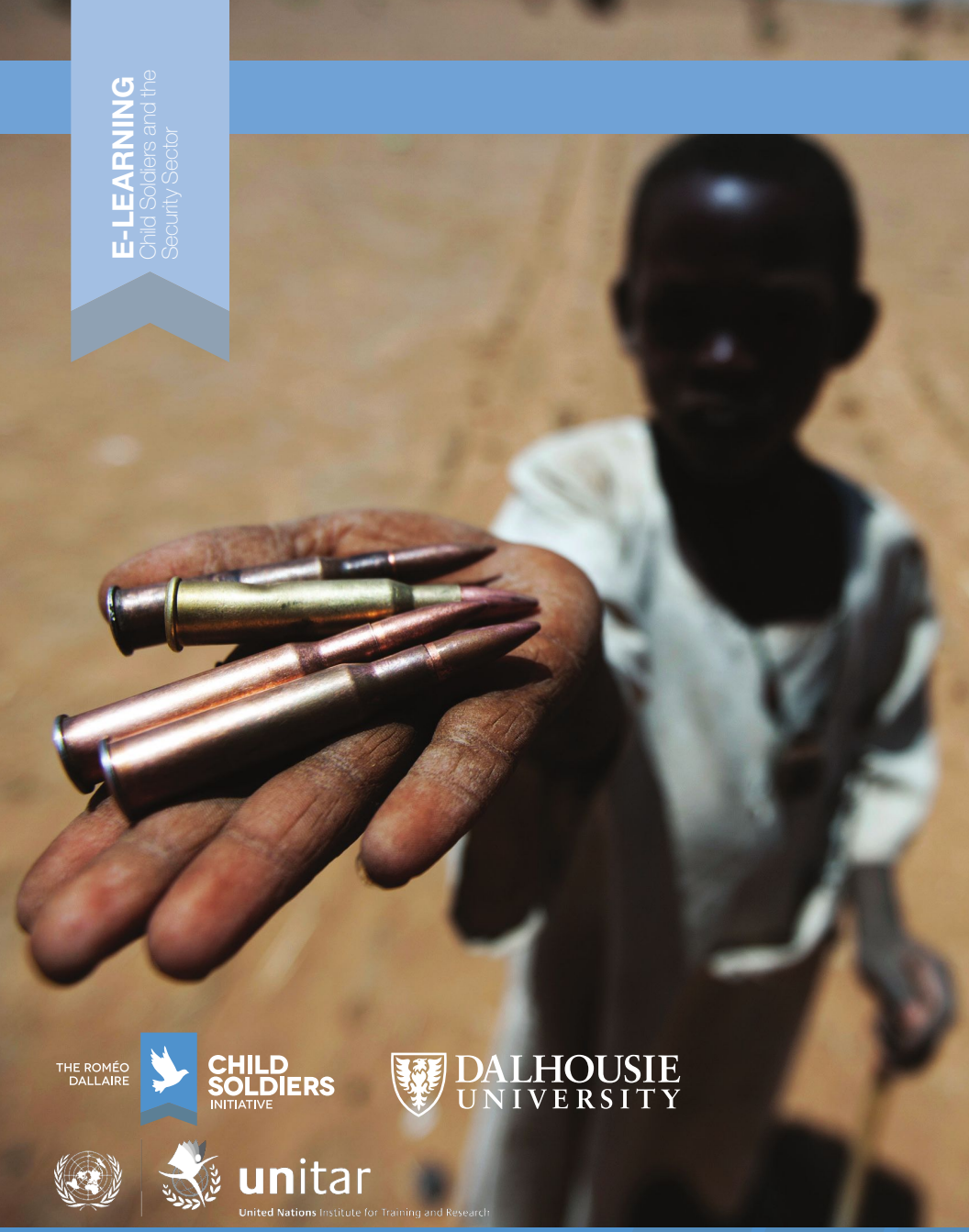
E-LEARNING
Child Soldiers and the Security Sector



THE ROMÉO DALLAIRE CHILD SOLDIERS INITIATIVE

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Child Soldiers and Security Forces:

A Joint Project between the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

Acknowledgments

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The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) was established as an autonomous body within the United Nations with the mandate of enhancing the effectiveness of the work of the United Nations and its Member States. Since its establishment in 1965, UNITAR has acquired unique expertise, accumulating experience, knowledge and capacities to design and implement a variety of training activities. Following its mandate of "enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations in achieving the major objectives of the Organization" UNITAR has contributed to developing the capacities of Member States in the fields of economic and social development; diplomacy; and peace and security.

Currently, UNITAR provides training to approximately 37,000 participants per year in some 200 different types of training activities, applying both face-to-face and technologically enhanced learning methodologies.

The Peacekeeping Training Programme (UNITAR PTP) is a specialized programme in the framework of the Peace, Security and Diplomacy Unit of UNITAR, which offers a systematic and comprehensive preparation, through innovative and results-oriented trainings, to civilian, military and police personnel eager to serve in the fields of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Since its establishment in 2009, UNITAR PTP provides high-quality training comprised of both basic and advanced courses, developed in accordance with the United Nations guidelines and standards. Being a member of the advisory board of UNITAR's Peacekeeping Training Programme since the establishment of the programme in 2009, General Dallaire for many years has been dedicated to the idea of creating an innovative training partnership between UNITAR PTP and his Child Soldiers Initiative.

The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

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The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative, based at Dalhousie University, is a global partnership that is committed to ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers worldwide. It strives toward this goal by researching practical solutions, advocating for policy change and conducting comprehensive, prevention-oriented training for security sector actors.

Retired Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, former Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) established the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative in 2007. Its mission is to develop new strategies and tactics for eradicating the recruitment and use of child soldiers worldwide.

To achieve this important objective, the Dallaire Initiative conducts programming on three fronts:

1. It pursues rigorous, innovative **research** at a world-class university;
2. It engages in high-level **advocacy** to promote universal adherence to all international conventions that prohibit the use of children in war;
3. It delivers scenario-based, prevention-oriented **training** to security sector actors.

In every aspect of its programming, the Dallaire Initiative seeks to collaborate with concerned governments, security sector actors, academics, humanitarians and communities.

In 2012, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) appointed the Dallaire Initiative as its subject matter expert for all issues pertaining to child soldiers. The Dallaire Initiative is also an associate member of Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, a supporting entity of the 100 Series Rules on the Use of Force (RUF), and an integral part of the newly inaugurated Institute for Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts (CYCC), housed at Dalhousie University.

Background

According to the UN Secretary-General's 2014 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, 7 national armies and 50 armed groups operating in 14 countries recruit and use child soldiers. These children and youths are viewed as cheap and expendable labour and are easy to manipulate and control by commanders. They are used as combatants, messengers, porters and cooks and to provide forced sexual services. Some are abducted or forcibly recruited, while others are driven to join by poverty, abuse and discrimination, or to seek revenge for violence enacted against them or their families.

Children are more likely to become child soldiers if they are separated from their families, displaced from their homes, living in combat zones or have limited access to education. Children may join armed groups as the only way to guarantee daily food and survival. In some situations, the involvement of children in conflicts as soldiers may even be accepted or encouraged by the local society. Children may 'voluntarily' take part in warfare, not realizing the dangers and abuses they will be subjected to. Most likely, these children are responding to economic, cultural, social and political pressures.

By offering innovative training to security sector actors who encounter child soldiers in the field, UNITAR PTP and the Dallaire Initiative are joining efforts to create a world in which children are no longer used as a weapon of war.

While the Dallaire Initiative is at the pulse of the latest developments in the field of child soldiering, UNITAR PTP provides its know-how in the delivery of results-oriented trainings, which contribute to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations by strengthening the knowledge and skills of the personnel to be deployed. The e-learning format of this course was chosen due to its flexibility and inherent reach, as it even allows people who are deployed in a field mission to continue to learn.

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>
> – TANYA ZAYED
> Deputy Director, The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

United Nations Security Council Resolutions

Stopping the recruitment and use of child soldiers is at the heart of several Security Council resolutions which aim at protecting children in armed conflict. In particular, Security Council Resolution 1612 (which was adopted in 2005) put forward a system of continuous monitoring and reporting on the recruitment of child soldiers.

In March 2014, the Security Council was called to take decisive steps to "make child soldiers history". In adopting Resolution 2143, the Security Council publicly declared that all government forces should be free of children by 2016 and that children in armed conflict should be an important aspect of any comprehensive strategy to resolve conflict and build peace.

Despite the existence of programming and normative legal frameworks to address the issue, children continue to be recruited and used in armed conflict. Many, including the UN, recognize the need for specific training on security sector interactions with child soldiers. Resolution 2143 (2014) recommends that "United Nations entities and United Nations peacekeeping troop and police-contributing countries undertake targeted and operational trainings for the preparation of United Nations mission personnel including troop and police contingents on their contribution in preventing violations against children".

Security sector actors involved in peace operations are often placed on the front lines with little, if any training on what to expect or how to deal with children being used as soldiers. Reporting and responding to abuses committed against children and supporting child protection activities are key aspects of the improved implementation of respective peace mission mandates.

Photo: UN

The E-Learning Course: Child Soldiers and Security Forces

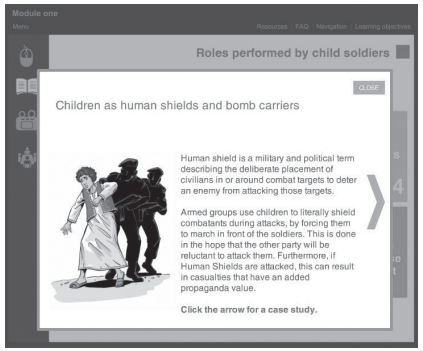
The objective of this course is to advance a better understanding of the phenomenon of child soldiering, as well as the reasons behind the use of children in armed conflicts. The course also aims to provide an overview of the possible options for interactions between police, military and child soldiers and the possible actions to prevent children's recruitment and re-recruitment.

Although this course was primarily designed with a military audience in mind, all security sector actors – including police, prison guards and private security personnel – should find its contents to be of practical help.

The course will also be helpful for civilian personnel (from the UN and other international and regional governmental and non-governmental organizations), students, researchers and academics who have a keen interest to acquire a better understanding of the phenomenon of child soldiers from a military and/or police perspective.

At the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Outline the major issues related to the phenomenon of child soldiers;
- Identify legal instruments that discipline the protection of civilians in conflict situations;
- Illustrate possible options for interactions with child soldiers;
- Discuss strategies for preventing the recruitment and re-recruitment of children as soldiers;



The course is structured as four successive modules, defined as follows:

Module 0 – Children and armed conflict

This module introduces the topic of child soldiers by framing it within the broader discussion of contemporary conflict. It describes new methods of warfare and focuses upon the impact that conflict has on children.

Module 1 –Introduction to the issue of child soldiers

The module provides the essential information necessary to understand the complexity of the child soldier phenomenon, by offering an introduction to and an overview of the issue of child

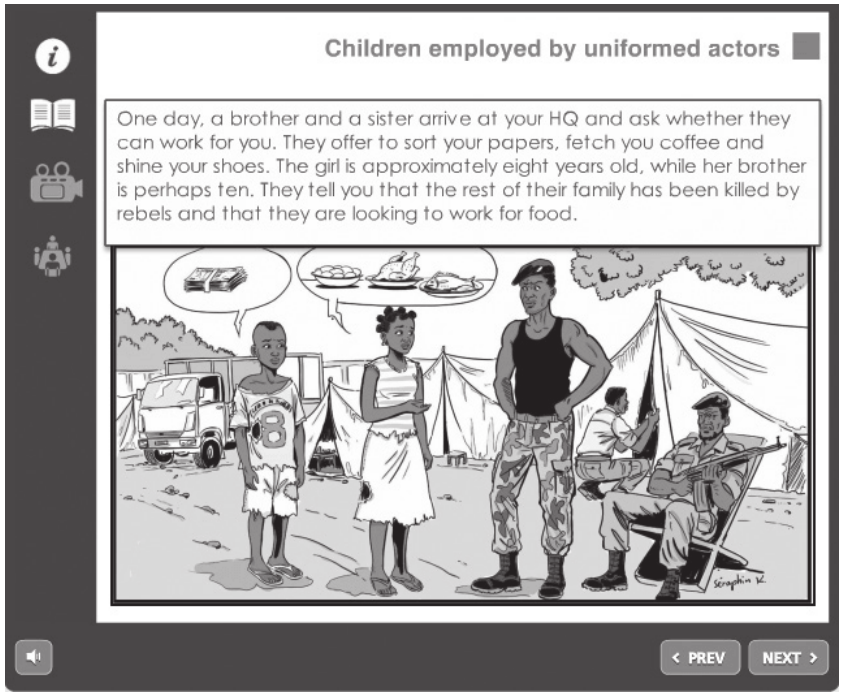
soldiers. Module one expands upon the definition of child soldiers – as outlined in the Paris Principles – and discusses how and why child soldiers are used. It explores the driving factors and risk factors that lead children to be recruited. It also discusses the detrimental social effects of using child soldiers, for the children themselves and for the military and police that encounter them, making a case as to why child soldiers should not be used.

Module 2 – International legal framework

Module two examines the existing legal instruments that apply to child soldiers. It explores the specific provisions of the different bodies of law at the international level (such as those contained in International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law and UN Security Council Resolutions), at the regional level and national level, to delineate the legal framework for the protection of children from recruitment and use as soldiers. It also discusses the legal consequences for infringement of these provisions and the ensuing accountability mechanisms.

Module 3- Interacting with child soldiers

Module three focuses upon security sector interactions with child soldiers and begins by offering an overview of the different



types of interactions that may occur between national and/or international military and police forces and child soldiers. This module provides substantive guidance on tactics, techniques and procedures to handle armed groups that use child soldiers and offers basic operational guidance.

Module 4- Preventing the recruitment and/or re-recruitment of child soldiers

Module four discusses strategies aimed at preventing the recruitment and re-recruitment of children as soldiers. It elaborates upon the importance of including children in peace agreements and demobilization plans and stresses the importance of cooperation among different actors on the ground for the development of a comprehensive programme strategy that includes activities at different societal levels. The module concludes by exploring the consequences of failing to prevent the recruitment and re-recruitment of children as soldiers.

Methodology/Learning Approach

This e-learning course is delivered in an online format so as to support security sector efforts at effecting continuous education. In the words of Lt. Gen. Dallaire, this e-learning course is therefore "an essential tool that is there when you need it. This flexibility allows us to keep people who are in theatres of operation in a continuous learning pattern". By embedding the learning content in a scenario setting, this course enables participants to feel as though they are part of a mission context while enhancing their knowledge on the issue of child soldiers. Through the scenarios, learners are constantly challenged to reflect upon possible strategies to identify child soldiers, to interact with them and lastly to find strategies to prevent their recruitment and re-recruitment.

The e-learning course adopts UNITAR's approach to delivering learning content in an innovative format. UNITAR optimizes the use of available technologies with the objective of offering multiple instructional settings, catering to personal learning styles. Instructional design methods are applied, which prioritise interaction and support explorative and collaborative learning. Social activities are frequently incorporated to support the learning process, facilitate networking among professionals and encourage the sharing of experience. Participants of the "Child Soldiers and Security Forces" course have the opportunity to discuss challenges and ideas with their peers in forums on the online learning platform. After the successful completion of the course, participants can stay in touch and continue their interaction within UNITAR PTP's community of practice.

"WITHOUT THE CORRECT TACTICS, TECHNIQUES, AND PROCEDURES, WE WILL CONTINUE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF CHILD SOLDIERS WITH OUTDATED METHODS"

– DR. SHELLY WHITMAN
Executive Director, The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

Significance of the Course

This e-learning course urges security sector actors to recognise that preparation for interaction with children in armed conflict is as important as preparation for any other aspect of a mission. It also stresses that there should be strong coordination and cooperation with agencies that usually bear primary responsibility for children during times of war. Such collaboration enables security sector actors to draw upon the wealth of intelligence that is generated by these civilian organisations and to contribute to the strengthening of child protection in general.

Core Competencies and the training handbook

The Dallaire Initiative has developed comprehensive training and tools, including the first of its kind "Child Soldiers: A Handbook for Security Sector Actors".

While pre-deployment training for military, police and prison personnel is improving—particularly with respect to children's rights and the protection of civilians—very little is currently being done to prepare security sector actors for the possibility of confronting child soldiers before or during active hostilities. This presents security sector actors with a serious dilemma, as they are forced to juggle ethical considerations and their rules of engagement (ROE) with the basic need to protect themselves, their colleagues, and affected civilians.

The Dallaire initiative and UNITAR believe that widespread, standardized training for security sector actors is one crucial way to address this failure. As such, in 2012 the Dallaire Initiative and UNITAR developed a set of *Core Competencies for Security Sector Training on the Prevention of the Use of Child Soldiers.*

Core Competency #1

Security sector actors must demonstrate a clear understanding of the definition of a child soldier

Core Competency #2

Security sector actors must begin to see child soldiers as a security concern that demands unique attention

Core Competency #3

Security sector actors must understand the importance of effective reporting and collaboration with other concerned organization

Conclusion: Strategic Complementarity

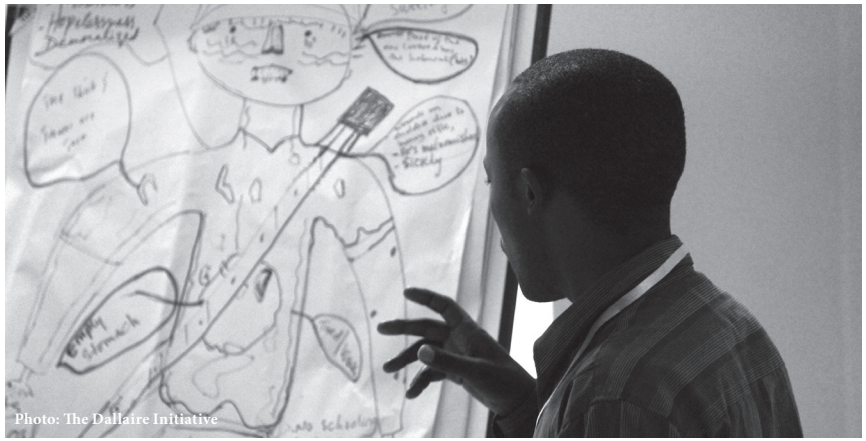


Photo: The Dallaire Initiative

This e-learning course and related face-to-face trainings are intended to complement existing efforts to protect children in conflict. Indeed, the Dallaire Initiative and UNITAR wish to acknowledge the many achievements that have already been made by local, regional and international organisations. Recently, in the area of training, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations formally launched *"Train, Act, Protect: A new standard in child protection training for peacekeepers"*. Its debut at the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations marked a new training approach that is the product of collaboration between international actors and organizations, including the Dallaire Initiative.

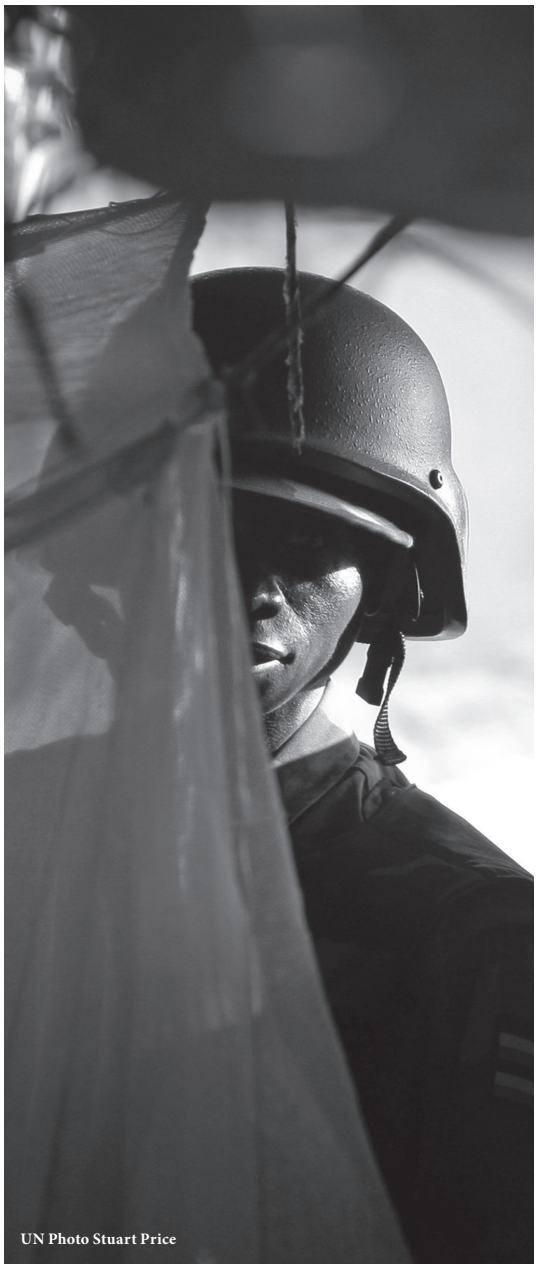
The persistent use of children in armed conflict demands concerted effort from security sector actors and humanitarian organisations. They must work together to move beyond standard, reactionary responses to the child soldier phenomenon and towards carefully planned, preventative action. For too long, disciplines have been operating in silos, rarely crossing the proverbial bridge to collaborate with "the other". One cannot underestimate the complexities of the child soldier problem and relying upon personality-driven cooperation is both risky and unsustainable. Opportunities for working together must be acknowledged and lessons must be extrapolated from successful partnerships of the past.

Combined, these courses offer a comprehensive training opportunity for any security sector actor preparing for deployment to countries where children are being used as soldiers.

The "Child Soldiers and Security Forces" e-learning course was designed to provide security sector actors with a foundational, preparatory understanding of the child soldier phenomenon, regardless of where they are currently based. Nevertheless, the course is but one component of the Dallaire Initiative's and UNITAR's broader pedagogical framework and it should not be viewed as a substitute for face-to-face training. Indeed, students of the e-learning course are encouraged to build upon their introductory knowledge by attending one of the Dallaire Initiative's and UNITAR's in-house trainings, which afford them the opportunity to hone newly acquired tactics through interactive, scenario-based exercises.

The Dallaire Initiative and UNITAR also use their in-house trainings as an opportunity to identify prospective partner trainers. These individuals may subsequently be invited to attend one of the Dallaire Initiative's training-of-trainer courses. Successful graduates of this programme are then added to the Dallaire Initiative's roster of security sector trainers, which serves to multiply the course's overall impact and reach.

If you wish to learn more about our training courses, please contact ptp@unitar.org or info@childsoldiers.org



UN Photo Stuart Price

How to Register

Participant profile

Participants are not expected to have prior experience in or knowledge of the field. However, participants must:

- Have a university degree in a relevant area with proven interest in the child soldiers issue (BA or equivalent) or the equivalent working experience in a relevant field (2 to 4 years);
- Have good command of English language (reading and writing);
- Be computer literate.

Technical requirements

Flash: Flash Player 10 or later (http://www.adobe.com/go/getflash), and one of the following browsers:

- Windows: Internet Explorer 6 and later, Firefox 1.x and later, Google Chrome, Opera 9.5 and later
- Mac: Safari 3 and later, Firefox 1.x and later, Google Chrome
- Linux: Firefox 1.x and later
- HTML5
- Google Chrome 14 or later on Windows or Mac
- Safari 5.1 or later on Mac

Certificates

Successful e-learning participants will receive a Certificate of Completion from UNITAR after completion of the course. The certificates will besigned by the UNITAR Executive Director or his/her authorized representative.

Course schedule

The course will be open upon request throughout the year. Both, groups and individuals will be eligible to participate. For institutions interested in enrolling a larger number of participants, please contact ptp@unitar.org, for individuals please check course dates at www.unitar.org/event.

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