

THE ROMÉO
DALLAIRE



**CHILD
SOLDIERS**
INITIATIVE



**DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY**

Child Soldiers: A Handbook for Security Sector Actors

Third Edition



© Third Edition Revised February 2017

The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Canada

Cover Photo Credit:

Combat Camera | Sgt Roxanne Clowe

3rd Edition Edited by:

Darin Reeves, Director of Training
Dr. Shelly Whitman, Executive Director
Lisa Nociforo

3rd Edition Content Provided by:

Darin Reeves
Dr. Shelly Whitman
Dustin Johnson
Jennifer McNeil
Captain Wendy Kean
Tanya Zayed
Carl Conradi

Design:

Josh Boyer

Production

General Public

For more information please visit us at:

www.childsoldiers.org

Follow us:

Twitter: www.twitter.com/ChildSoldiers

Facebook: www.facebook.com/childsoldiers.org

A Message from the Founder LGen Roméo Dallaire (Ret'd)

Since its creation in 2007, the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative has continued to impact the world's understanding of how to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups, and to shape the response of security sector actors by improving their abilities to positively interact with children. The ultimate aim of the Dallaire Initiative is to progressively eliminate this abhorrent abuse of the world's most vulnerable – children.

The recruitment and use of children in armed conflict is not only one of the gravest injustices we currently witness in the world, but it is also a threat posed to those men and women in the security sector and to the larger attainment of peace and stability. The experiences and reality faced by soldiers, police and other security sector actors form a fundamental and irreplaceable role in the protection of children during times of war, and they must be empowered and properly educated with practical approaches to take on this duty. This handbook, now in its 3rd edition, is intended to continue to assist security sector actors in the fulfilment of this significant responsibility.

Since the release of the last edition of this handbook, much has been achieved in our advocacy, research and security sector approach to training – however, much remains to be done. Like a joint force that is more powerful than the sum of its parts, it is only by working together with other security and civilian stakeholders who share a common interest in child protection that we will achieve our mission. As before, it remains my hope that this handbook will someday no longer be needed, as the recruitment and use of children in war will be a tragic footnote in the history of warfare. For security sector actors, this must become and remain a key objective.

The Dallaire Initiative team continues to work towards this important goal—but we need your help. I firmly believe that with your cooperation and leadership, we can make a substantial contribution towards ending this crime against humanity. If we can end the use of child soldiers globally, we may go a long way in preventing conflict from erupting in the first place.

Peux ce-que veux, Alons-y!



LGen Roméo A. Dallaire, (Ret'd)



Table of Contents

Part I: Introduction

1.1 What is the Dallaire Initiative?	1
1.2 Guiding Principles	2
1.3 Our Unique Approach.	3
1.4 Children and Armed Conflict: A Security Sector Priority Leading to Change	4
1.5 The Purpose of this Handbook	5
1.6 Who Should use this Handbook?	6
1.7 Key Concepts.	7
1.8 Progressive Elimination	8
1.9 The Scope of this Handbook	8
1.10 The e-Learning Course	9
1.11 Core Competencies for Security Sector Training	11

Part II: Concepts and Strategies

2.1 Contemporary Conflict	13
2.2 Child Soldiers as an Early Warning Indicator	14
2.3 Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC)	15
2.4 Why Are Child Soldiers A Security Concern?	16
2.5 About Child Soldiers	19
2.6 Facing Child Soldiers: A Moral/Ethical Dilemma	33

Part III: Understanding The Operating Environment

3.1 The Importance Of Understanding Mandates	41
3.2 Strategic Complementarity.	42
3.3 Importance of Language	48

Part IV: Tactical Considerations and Responses

4.1 Tactical Considerations	50
4.2 Rules of Engagement (ROE)	52
4.3 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	58
4.4 Communicating with Children	65
4.5 Women Peacekeepers	71

4.6 Age Verification	73
4.7 Improving Interactions with Child Soldiers in Operational Situations	75
4.8 Spectrum of Interactions.	76
4.9 A.D.A.P.T.: A Tactical Tool for Security Sector Actors.	78
4.10 Interaction Scenarios	79

Part V: Operational Considerations and Planning

5.1 Considerations prior to or upon Mission Initiation	109
5.2 Monitoring: A Useful Tool for Collaboration and a Legal Requirement	111
5.3 ROE Development	112
5.4 Planning for the Detention and Handling of Child Detainees	114
5.5 Influence Operations and Child Soldiers	119

Part VI: Cross Cutting Issues

6.1 Materials to Guide Military Operational Planning	128
6.2 Children Involved in Criminal Activity.	142
6.3 Cross-Border Considerations.	149
6.4 The Stigmatization and Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers.	151
6.5 Conflict Resources	153
6.6 Children And Witchcraft	153
6.7 Vulnerabilities of Refugee and Internally Displaced Children	154
6.8 Neuro Science and Vulnerabilities of Children	155
6.9 Community Policing and Peacekeeping	156

Annexes

Annex 1: Lexicon	158
Annex 2: International Law.	164
Annex 3: Special Procedures and Safeguards for Children Deprived of Liberty by United Nations Peace Operations Personnel	171
Annex 4: Implementing Child Soldier Considerations into Military Planning and Activities	181
Annex 5: Template Checklists	183
Endnotes	189
Notes.	197

Acronyms

AAR: After Action Review

AU: African Union

CAAC: Children and Armed Conflict

CAAF: Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups

CAF: Canadian Armed Forces

CAR: Central African Republic

CAMP: Children Affected by Maritime Piracy

CO: Commanding Officer

CPO / CPA: Child Protection Officer / Advisor

CYCC: Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

DMTC: Directorate of Military Training and Cooperation

DPKO: Department of Peacekeeping Operations

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

FOB: Forward Operating Base

GO: Governmental Organization

GPS: Global Positioning System

GCPEA: Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack

HIV/AIDS: Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome

HQ: Headquarters

ICC: Interim Care Centre or International Criminal Court

ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

IDDRS: Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

ILO: International Labour Organization

IO: Information Operations

IPEC: International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

LO: Liaison Officer

LRA: Lord's Resistance Army

MONUC: United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MRM: Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

PRT: Provincial Reconstruction Team

PSYOPS: Psychological Operations

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

QRF: Quick Reaction Force

RCMP: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RDF: Rwanda Defence Force

ROE: Rules of Engagement

RUF: Revolutionary United Front / Rules on the Use of Force

SA: South Africa

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

SRSR: Special Representative of the Secretary-General

SSR: Security Sector Reform

UN: United Nations

UNAMIR: United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

UNFICYP: United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNITAR: United Nations Institute for Training and Research

UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNPROFOR: United Nations Protection Force

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

Acknowledgements

The research, production and publication, including translations of this third edition of the Dallaire Initiative's security sector handbook, was made possible by the generous support of:

- Social Science Humanities Research Council
- IAMGOLD
- UAE Mission to the UN

The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative also gratefully recognizes and thanks the following individuals, organizations and companies who have invested in our work:

- Carnegie Corporation of New York;
- DHX Media Ltd.;
- Intact Financial Corporation;
- Isles Foundation;
- Molson Foundation;
- Mr. James Mossman;
- Power Corporation of Canada;
- Unifor;
- Wounded Warriors Canada.

Together we are generating tangible momentum towards eradicating the recruitment and use of child soldiers worldwide.

We also wish to acknowledge the committed support of many prominent researchers and representatives of various United Nations (UN) agencies including:

- The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Children and Armed Conflict
- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)
- The Global Partnership to Prevent Violence Against Children (the Partnership)
- The Paris Principles Steering Group (PPSG)
- The Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children
- The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
- The International Criminal Court, Office of the Prosecutor

The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative gratefully recognizes and thanks the following individuals, organizations and partners who have contributed their valuable knowledge to our work: Captain Wendy Kean, Royal Canadian Chaplain Service; Search for Common Ground and Child-to-Child Trust; individual representatives of the Canadian Forces; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP); local Canadian police departments; and the approximately 2,000 security sector personnel who have been trained by the Dallaire Initiative to date, and to whom we are grateful for the insights and experiences they continue to share, in particular those from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Jordan, Kenya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

In addition, we are grateful for regional cooperation with the African Union Peace and Security Department, the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

Thank you also to our partners at NATO as well as the British Peace Support Training Association.

The Dallaire Initiative is appreciative of the continued support of Dalhousie University, its Institutional home, and in particular for the support of President Dr. Richard Florizone and Dean Dr. Frank Harvey.

Lastly, the Dallaire Initiative is deeply grateful for the guidance and advisory support provided by Major Brent Beardsley (Ret'd), Darin Reeves, Colonel Jake Bell (Ret'd), Major Musa Gbow, Colonel Joe Edkins and members of the Veteran Trainers to Eradicate the Use of Child Soldiers (VTECS) Programme. Their contributions to this edition of the handbook are of incalculable value.

«For soldiers with any sense of honour at all, fighting children offers a no-win situation. To be defeated by children would almost certainly bring death, derision and disgrace, while to win would carry the taint of having killed mere children.»

-LGen Roméo Dallaire (Ret'd)

About the Dallaire Initiative

1.1 What is the Dallaire Initiative?

The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative is a global partnership that is committed to the progressive elimination of the recruitment and use of child soldiers worldwide. We combine research centered on practical solutions, national and international advocacy for policy change, and comprehensive, prevention-oriented training for security sector actors.

Our unique approach to working with and alongside military, police and prison personnel (security sector actors) - often the first point of outside contact for child soldiers - is groundbreaking and critical to the interruption of the cycle of child recruitment and use by armed forces and groups. In every aspect of its programming, the Dallaire Initiative collaborates with concerned governments, international organizations, security sector actors, academics, humanitarians and communities.

The Dallaire Initiative is housed within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Dalhousie University in Halifax, a premiere Canadian university that hosts world-class academic researchers. The Dallaire Initiative is also an integral part of The Institute for Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts (CYCC), also located at Dalhousie University.

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, and we were appointed a member of the Paris Principles Steering Group on Children and Armed Conflict (PPSG) in 2016. The Dallaire Initiative has been recognized for our high-level partnership with UNICEF, and are also an associate member of Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict and a supporting entity of the 100 Series Rules on the Use of Force (RUF). Key collaborators include the African Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Offices of the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The mission of the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative is to progressively end the use of child soldiers, through a security sector approach.

The vision of the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative is a world where children are no longer recruited or used as weapons of war.

The Program Pillars of the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative are:

- **Training:** The Dallaire Initiative delivers tactical, prevention-oriented training to security sector actors, to promote broader security sector reform;

- **Research:** The Dallaire Initiative conducts world-class interdisciplinary research to build-and share-knowledge, which in turn leads to new solutions; and
- **Advocacy:** The Dallaire Initiative engages in high-level advocacy to create and promote the political will to end the use of children as soldiers.

Woven throughout our three pillars is the consistent theme of Education. The Dallaire Initiative incorporates world class, current, educational materials and methods into its training courses and seeks to encourage critical thinking about the phenomenon of child soldiers to inform doctrine and training. Among the most recent addition to our educational programming is a summer 2017 course on English and Understanding Children and War.

This course combines English language classes with a module entitled Understanding Children and War which provides a certificate upon successful completion. The Understanding Children and War module explores the dynamics of conflict affecting children around the world today, examining the impacts of war on children including the roles undertaken by children; seeking better preventative approaches; and what can be better understood about children's agency and resilience in war, ranging from how children are exploited during conflict, sexual violence, child soldiers and youth gangs, to the need to prioritize solutions to better protect children's wellbeing. Also discussed are the responsibilities of the international community to address the particular needs of children in war.

Further details on this course may be found at: www.dal.ca/faculty/cce/programs/english-as-a-second-language/programs-and-courses/summer_programs/SummerEnglish-UnderstandingChildrenAndWar.htm

1.2 Guiding Principles

The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative is guided by the following core values:

- Respect for all stakeholders and their diverse viewpoints;
- Acknowledgement of the transformative power of education;
- Avoidance of the duplication of efforts via coordination and collaboration;
- Value of local organizations and community-based efforts;
- Encouragement of bold, forward thinking.

1.3 Our Unique Approach

In the past, the international community focused solely upon disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and not upon the complete eradication of the recruitment and use of child soldiers as a phenomenon. This approach, while needed, is incomplete; it seeks to fix the broken rather than to protect the whole. Until this issue is elevated within the security agenda, the international community will continue to squander excellent opportunities to prevent recruitment of children into armed forces and groups. This void has begun to be recognized by an increasing number of members of the international community, but leadership in government as well as within the security sector is required.

The Dallaire Initiative approach empowers military, police and prison personnel by re-conceptualizing children and armed conflict as a specific, and high-priority, concern. This in turn leads to doctrine, strategies and tactics to both interrupt child soldier recruitment, and to improve security sector interactions with all children, and ultimately to avoid casualties on all sides.

The evolution of pre-deployment training for military, police and prison personnel has improved with respect to children's rights and the protection of civilians, but until recently very little had been done to prepare them to encounter child soldiers in operational theatres. Such events present security sector actors with a serious dilemma, forced to juggle ethical considerations and rules of engagement (ROE) with the basic need to protect themselves, their colleagues and affected civilians.

This handbook continues to support the training of security sector actors and to recognize that preparing to encounter children in armed conflict is as important as preparation for any other aspect of a mission. It also stresses that there should be constructive and ongoing coordination and cooperation with agencies traditionally responsible for children during times of war. These practices enable security sector actors to focus on the security environment and rely upon these civilian organizations, thereby strengthening child protection in general.

Important



The recruitment and use of children in hostilities is a crime under numerous widely ratified regional and international treaties and is the focus of many UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. As such, in the eye of the law, child soldiers are victims of a crime and are therefore entitled to special attention and protection.

1.4 Children and Armed Conflict: A Security Sector Priority Leading to Change

1.4.1 Focused Training leading to Improved Capability

The Dallaire Initiative recognizes that preparation for interactions with children in armed conflict is critical for today's missions. Our unique training content and methodology introduces a set of core competencies to equip security sector personnel for encounters, and potential interventions, with children in armed conflict, and in particular with child soldiers, and to identify and counteract recruitment tactics. Our training also has a central role to play in prevention by focusing security operations on recognizing and responding to high-risk recruitment areas. It teaches peacekeepers how to identify child soldiers in non-combat situations, how to manage confrontations with armed children, support escape by child soldiers and protect those who have escaped. It facilitates the closer integration of humanitarian and military operations and leads to strengthened reporting on the prevalence of child soldiers and other grave violations against children in conflict affected and fragile states.

1.4.2 Community Action and Partnership

We recognize that community engagement is particularly important, as child soldiers come from and return to communities that have been deeply affected by violence. Successful efforts to prevent recruitment will therefore always depend upon the involvement and cooperation of these communities, their leaders and organizations. We focus our efforts to impact attitudes and behaviors in order to establish new norms on the protection of children with key stakeholders including security sector personnel, communities, and civil society. By building connections between groups focused on the common goal of preventing the recruitment of child soldiers, we strengthen communications and reinforce collective action. The Dallaire Initiative works closely with local and international organizations that share our objective to protect children and end impunity in regards to violations against children.

1.4.3 Monitoring, Evaluation and Ongoing Assessment.

The Dallaire Initiative is committed to strengthening research and ensuring that data on violations against children is used effectively for planning, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that interventions are reaching their goals and having an impact on children's lives. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks are designed and implemented as part of all interventions to validate the impact of training. The assessments

undertake a mixed-methods approach of both quantitative and qualitative measurement that aims to change attitudes and behaviors in the long-term. As part of our sustainability plan, monitoring and evaluation also includes observations and follow up with all states incorporating our approach to child soldiers regarding doctrine enhancement and the integration of training into their national training programs. If training is integrated into a state's doctrine, it will dramatically increase the number of security sector actors who will be better prepared to deal with situations involving children and armed conflict.

1.4.4 Managing Risk and Ensuring Sustainability

Working with large systems such as state militaries and governments presents many challenges. It is possible however to identify some of the potential risks, monitor progress, proactively act to mitigate these risks, and build contingency plans should these risks be realized. We work to professionalize militaries, build sustainability through the creation of doctrine and adapt training and education throughout the life cycles of all security sector actors, from recruitment to retirement, whether military or police. As part of this comprehensive risk management and contingency planning system we routinely take the important step of developing and signing Memorandums of Understanding with our partners, be they state bodies or international organizations, while meeting with senior government leaders to build a foundation of understanding and commitment for this approach.

1.5 The Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook highlights and reinforces the various roles that should be taken by security sector actors in protecting children affected by armed conflict. In particular, it focuses upon national and international military, police and prison officials who, in the conduct of their mission duties, are in direct contact with child soldiers in the field. These security sector actors are frequently the initial points of contact with children, both before they are recruited into armed groups and when they are employed as child soldiers, during times of peace or during armed conflict, and it is their training and education that must demand additional attention. This handbook should serve as a resource, both to accompany in-class training and simulations developed by the Dallaire Initiative, and as an in-theatre aide memoire.

Countries and regional organizations have only recently begun to develop coherent policies and doctrine to guide military and police in dealing with children during complex peace operations. Similarly,

substantive guidance on best tactics, techniques and procedures to handle armed forces and groups that recruit and use child soldiers is still in its infancy. Along with this handbook, the Dallaire Initiative continues to advance the world's focus on these gaps, by raising strategic awareness within the international community and by providing operational and tactical guidance for security sector actors. As with previous editions of this handbook, the Dallaire Initiative bases its recommendations upon both primary and secondary research conducted over many years, conducted with security sector and humanitarian actors in conflict and post-conflict settings.

1.6 Who Should use this Handbook?

This handbook supports all security-focused organizations engaged in peace operations, including troop contributing countries (TCCs) forces, host nation military and police, private security companies and national prison services. It does this by providing tactically relevant information while also educating security sector actors who have participated in training sessions led by the Dallaire Initiative, with the overall aim of preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

It is critical to note that the most effective means of applying the Dallaire Initiative approach requires concerted national level training and doctrinal shifts that embody the need for change in individual attitude and behavior, and national policy as it relates to the protection of children and armed conflict.

In the field, security sector actors serve as critical points of contact with children. This includes children not at risk of recruitment or before they are recruited into armed forces or groups, as well as those recruited and used as child soldiers and those children who have escaped from this abuse; during times of peace and during times of armed conflict. This handbook supports our goal to lead change in this area and see children protected from this abuse, and compliments all efforts to imbue professional security sector actors with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to legally, effectively and humanely interact with children.

As will be further expanded upon in the chapter on cross-cutting issues, several additional considerations exist or must be considered separately with regards to distinct security sectors, in particular for the maritime security sector actors as well as police forces. In further developing upon this handbook, which is generally intended for use by all security sector actors, a number of additional, supporting handbooks have been or are in the process of being written to support the unique needs of distinct security sectors.

For the maritime and naval security sector community, the *Children Affected by Maritime Piracy: A Handbook for Maritime Security Sector Actors* (1st ed.) was created in the fall of 2016, and a separate handbook focusing on distinct issues faced by police is forthcoming.

1.7 Key Concepts

This handbook offers insight, lessons learned, and best practices, training tools and tactical procedures that should be implemented by security sector actors in the field. It demonstrates that:

- In addition to being a serious legal, human rights and child protection issue, the phenomena of child soldiers is a significant security issue that can potentially cause, sustain or expand armed conflict. The use of child soldiers may also have direct bearing upon whether a peace operation is successful or not. As such, the international community should view child soldiering as an important problem of prime relevance to the security agenda;
- The role of security sector actors in protecting children during armed conflict has previously been under-appreciated. Security sector actors are therefore encouraged to assume greater responsibility for this role by adhering to the menu of tactical and operational recommendations made in this handbook;
- Solutions to child soldier-related challenges are best achieved through concerted, collaborative and mutually reinforcing action amongst security sector actors and other agencies working within their respective spheres of influence.

Important

As Margot Wallström, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, stated on 6 April 2011, "...sexual violence has been recognized by the international community as a security threat that demands a security response."¹

As with the recognition by the international community that sexual violence is a security threat demanding a security response, the Dallaire Initiative believes that the use of children by armed forces and armed groups is likewise a security threat that demands a security response.

1.8 Progressive Elimination

In 1992, the International Labour Organization (ILO) founded the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). This noble effort to progressively end the problem of abusive child labour aims to strengthen the capacity of countries to deal with the phenomenon, and to act as a catalyzing force for a powerful, global, movement.

In keeping with the ILO's philosophy and approach, the Dallaire Initiative promotes the progressive elimination of the recruitment and use of child soldiers. This strategy has been supported by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict and the SRSG "Zero Under 18" campaign,² and affirms that the ultimate goal of eradication can only be realized via concrete and incremental action, such that:

- The very youngest children are given priority attention with regards to protection from recruitment and use by armed forces and groups. DDR programmes and related academic studies have repeatedly shown that the younger a child is when he or she is recruited, the more difficult it will be for him or her to successfully demobilize and reintegrate;
- Awareness-raising campaigns and security sector training, operating in line with the Dallaire Initiative's core competencies, are implemented in a concerted, country-by-country manner;
- Dialogue is encouraged and space is created within which tangible, bite-sized progress can be discussed, all building towards the ultimate goal of ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers, by some of the most intractable leaders and groups violating the rights of children globally.

1.9 The Scope of this Handbook

This handbook forms part of a growing library of international resources and instruments focused on the protection and needs of children in areas of armed conflict. Other supporting documents will be referenced to complement the information presented here, and in particular the following external resources are useful:

- The "Do No Harm" Principles;³
- The UN DPKO Child Protection Policy;⁴
- The UN Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) Handbook;⁵

- Humanitarian Negotiation: A Handbook for Securing Access, Assistance and Protection for Civilians in Armed Conflict;⁶
- Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict;⁷
- The International Criminal Court, Office of the Chief Prosecutor's Policy on Children (draft, 2016);
- All other national and international legal instruments that concern the protection of children during armed conflict.

Ongoing practical and specialized training to educate and train security sector actors in their interactions with child soldiers is needed to guide their developing awareness, knowledge and skills with the aim of enabling them to better protect themselves and children who are associated with armed groups. As such, this handbook should ideally be used as a complement to in-class and online training. If the first time an interaction occurs between a security sector actor and a child soldier is during mission, then it is already too late as under-reaction, or over-reaction, is likely. Our security sector actors deserve better training and practice to ensure the proper reaction becomes second nature.

Finally, each conflict and post-conflict environment exhibits unique dynamics and characteristics that demand different strategies and actions to address the recruitment of child soldiers. By regularly soliciting input from users and incorporating lessons learned via research, this handbook will remain a living document that will be periodically updated so as to reflect good practices and the ever-evolving challenges posed by the phenomenon of child soldiering.

Feedback on the handbook is welcome and can be sent directly to the Dallaire Initiative at info@childsoldiers.org.

1.10 The e-Learning Course

The Dallaire Initiative has created two comprehensive e-learning courses exploring the issue of child soldiers and security sector actors:

1. A course specifically for security sector actors, written and designed in collaboration with UNITAR's Peacekeeping Training Programme⁸,
2. A course created and launched at Dalhousie University under the College of Continuing Education as part of their Police Certificate Programme.⁹

The objective of the UNITAR e-learning 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, while also providing an overview of 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 are expected to 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, and; Understand the need for strategies to prevent the recruitment and re-recruitment of children as soldiers.

The online Police Certificate Programme course combines Dalhousie University's Summer English in Canada Program English classes with a module entitled Understanding Children and War offered through the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative. The programme includes classes involving reading, writing, speaking and listening while exploring the dynamics of conflict that affect children around the world today. The course examines the impacts of war on children including the roles children undertake during armed conflict, how to address better approaches to prevention, and issues around children's agency and resilience in war. Topics covered within the class range from discussions on how children are exploited during conflict, sexual violence, child soldiers, and youth gangs, to the need to prioritize solutions to better protect children's wellbeing. Another important aspect involves discussions around the responsibilities of the international community to address the needs of children in war. As part of the ESL summer program, the course will incorporate a great deal of student interaction, through discussions and presentations, and when students are not in the Understanding War and Children class, the Interacting with the English Language workshops allow students to use the language skills learned in real-life situations within the community.

Please refer to the Dallaire Initiative's website—www.childsoldiers.org—for the most current information pertaining to these online course options or contact us directly for more information.

“The objective of this course is to advance a better understanding of the phenomenon of child soldiering and to give basic operational guidance for field personnel.”

—UNITAR

1.11 Core Competencies for Security Sector Training

Despite the existence of a global normative legal framework and extensive international programming, the phenomenon of child recruitment and use in armed conflict persists. The Dallaire Initiative believes that widespread standardized training for security sector actors on the prevention of the use of child soldiers is one crucial way to address this failure. No such standards currently exist and this is why the Dallaire Initiative has collaborated with UNITAR to develop a set of core competencies for all security sector trainings related to interactions with child soldiers

Core Competency #1: Definition of a Child Soldier

Security Sector Actors Must Demonstrate a Clear Understanding of the Definition of a Child Soldier

Following any child soldier-related training, security sector actors should be able to properly define and explain:

- National and international legislation on the issue;
- What constitutes child soldiering (i.e. the various roles and responsibilities a child soldier might have in an armed group);
- How child soldiers are recruited;
- How child soldiers are used strategically;
- The unique roles played by girl soldiers and the gender-specific challenges they face (e.g. giving birth to children within the armed group, etc).

Core Competency #2: Child Soldiers as a Unique Security Concern

Security Sector Actors Must Begin To See Child Soldiers As A Security Concern That Demands Unique Attention

This training encourages security sector actors to “see the child first and the child soldier second.” Course participants demonstrate their new understanding by successfully explaining:

- Why child soldiers should be on the security agenda;
- The types of interactions that may occur between a security sector actor and a child soldier;
- The moral dilemmas associated with confronting a child soldier;
- The risks associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other operational stress injuries (OSIs);
- How security sector actors can improve their interactions with child soldiers in all situations, including lethal and non-lethal interactions.

Core Competency #3: Reporting and Collaboration

Security Sector Actors Must Understand The Importance Of Effective Reporting And Collaboration With Other Concerned Organizations

The solution to ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers defies any single discipline or organization. Because of the unique role that they play in conflict and post-conflict environments, security sector actors have access to information that humanitarian organizations do not—and vice versa. Course participants should therefore be able to explain:

- How to effectively recognize, monitor and report human rights abuses committed against children;
- How to successfully take part in child protection activities, in particular those activities focused on preventing the recruitment of children as soldiers;
- The importance of collaboration, coordination and information sharing, particularly with humanitarian and civil society organizations.