

THE ROMÉO  
DALLAIRE



CHILD  
SOLDIERS  
INITIATIVE

DALHOUSIE  
UNIVERSITY

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# PREVENTING THE USE OF CHILDREN AS WEAPONS OF WAR

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Building the Capacity to Prevent the Use  
of Children as Weapons of War



Photo: Peter Bregg

## “All Humans are Human?”

In 1994, at the height of Rwandan Genocide, I confronted a young boy alone on a road that forever seared in me the absolute principal that all humans are human.

- Lt. Gen R. Dallaire

# “War Has Changed”

War has changed.  
Therefore our tactics must  
change too.

If in the past children were  
made to fight in spite of  
their youth, they are now  
being made to fight  
because of their youth.



**“To *progressively* end the use  
of child soldiers through a  
security sector approach”**

*Our Mission*

The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

## Education

Focus on changing attitudes and behaviours that will prevent the use of child soldiers

## Training

We deliver tactical, prevention-oriented training to security sector actors, to promote broader security sector reform that prioritizes the protection of children

## Advocacy

We engage in high-level advocacy activities to create and promote the political will to end the use of children as soldiers

# PREVENTION

We conduct world-class interdisciplinary research to build—and share—knowledge, which in turn leads to new solutions

## Research

# Child Soldiers as a Security Concern?

Armed groups use children to sustain and fuel their actions

Child soldiers are an “early warning” indicator;

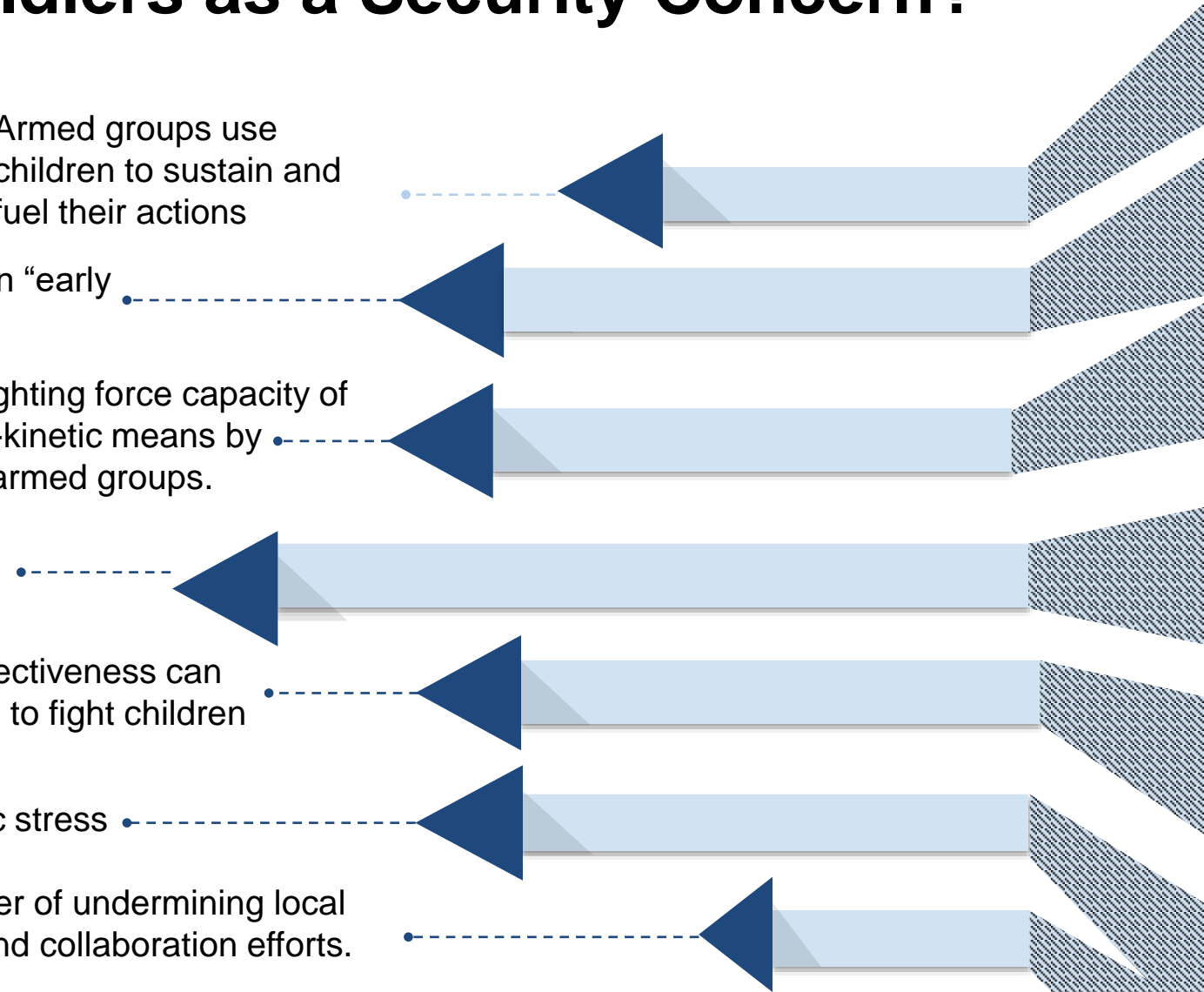
Opportunities to diminish fighting force capacity of armed groups through non-kinetic means by helping get children out of armed groups.

If one child is used, all children are suspect.

Troop morale and effectiveness can be affected by having to fight children

Post-traumatic stress

The danger of undermining local support and collaboration efforts.



# Countering the Strategic and Tactical use of Children as Weapons of War

Today, children are used as weapons of war by seven state forces and 51 armed groups in 14 contexts around the globe.

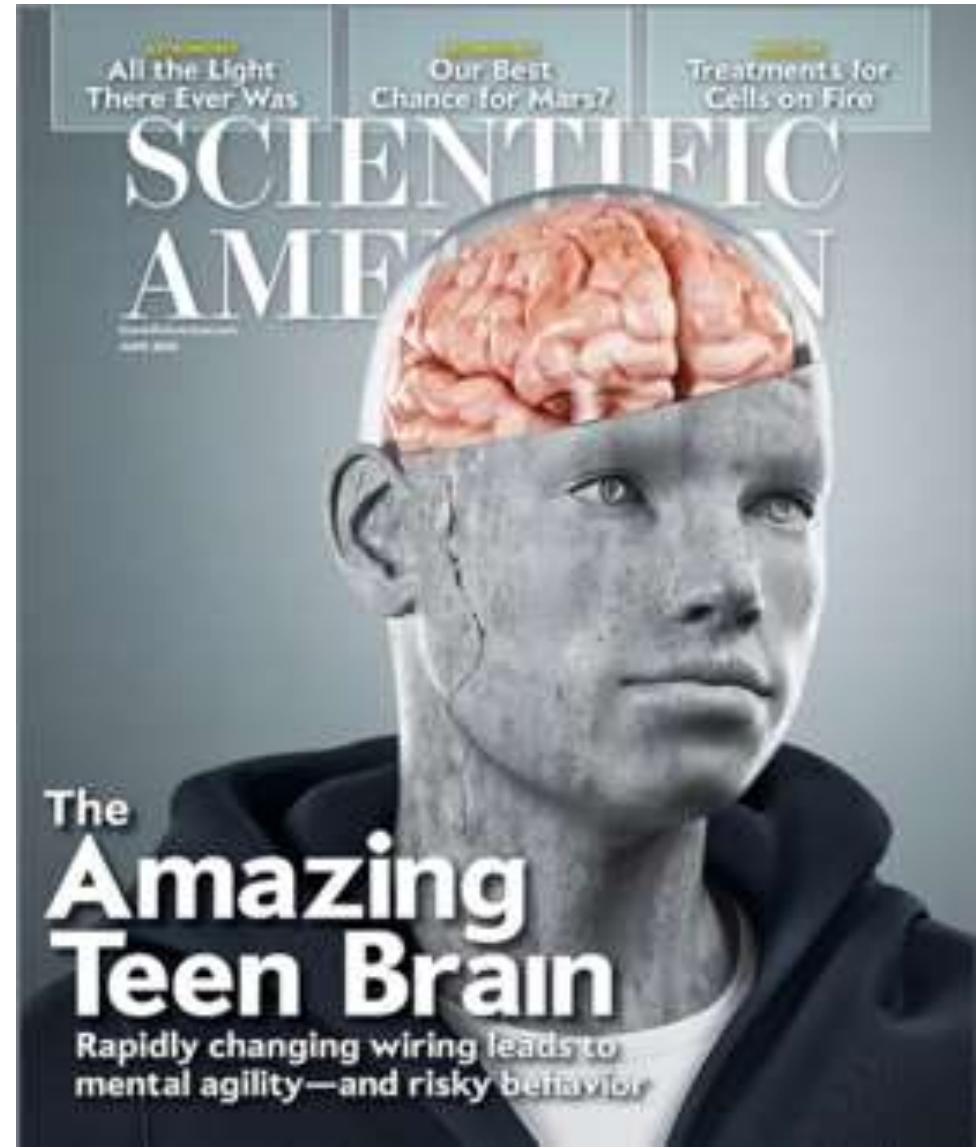
We have an opportunity to counter the tactical and strategic use of children as weapons of war by empowering military, police, communities and children





# “The Amazing Teen Brain”

“Society should also realize that the teen years are a turning point for a life of peaceful citizenship, aggression or, in rare cases radicalization. **Across all cultures, adolescents are the most vulnerable to being recruited as soldiers and terrorists, as well as the most likely to be influenced to become teachers and engineers.**”





# Practical Tools

- First of its kind handbook focusing on tools, tactics, techniques, procedures and knowledge for security sector on child soldiery.
- Prevention oriented and context specific.
- Our training is constructed on core competencies created through extensive research and consultation with security sector.
- E-learning course enables continuous learning opportunity while on mission.

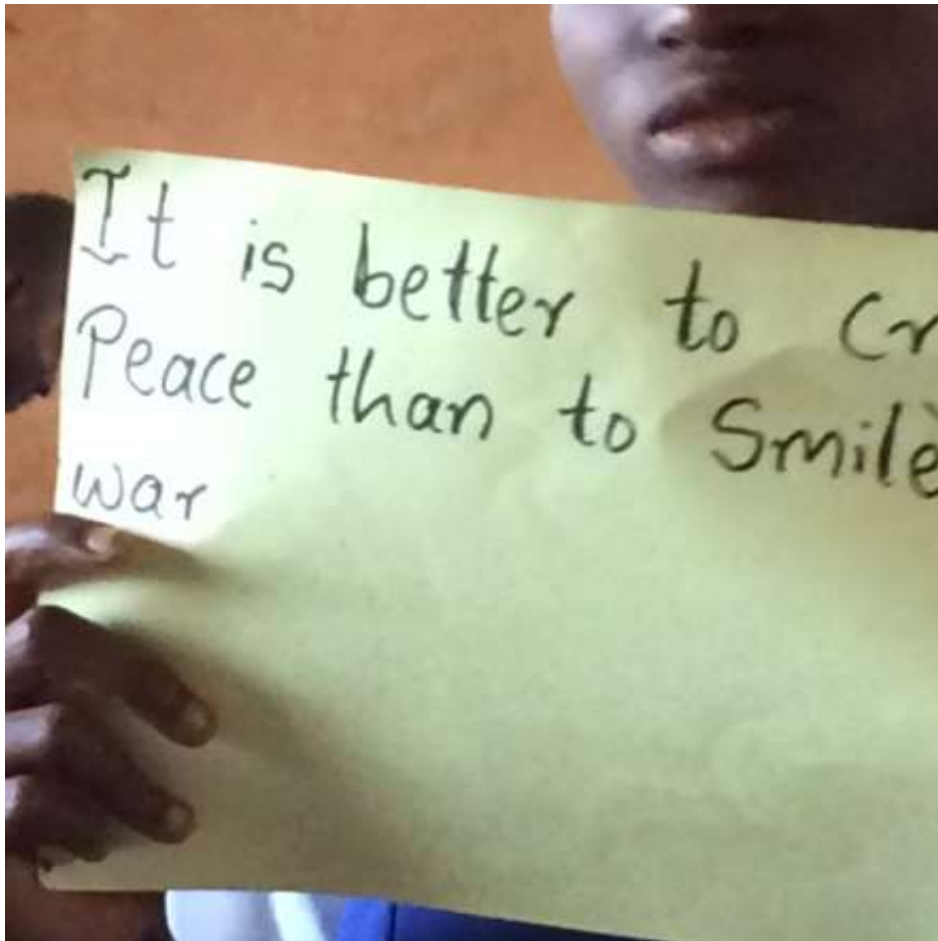


# Impact Assessment



- Impact assessments are done through qualitative and quantitative analysis.
- Quality assurance is the key to our success.
- Exit interviews point to an evolution in participants' personal attitudes and beliefs about child soldiers and how to deal with children in armed conflict after receiving our training.

# Sierra Leone - Creating a Model for Prevention



- National level training and doctrinal framework of military, police and prison personnel over the past 4 years.
- Implementation of children's peace clubs for children aged 8-12.
- Impact Assessment on preventative training developed through research.
- Top-down and bottom-up approach to make the use of child soldiers **"unthinkable"**.





# Putting Children's "Rights Upfront"

By raising children as a priority on the peace and security agenda we can create a point of collaboration for the international community to rally around to prevent violent conflict.

