

# CASE STUDY

## Innovative Training Tools



### Letter from Josh Boyter, Director of Communications The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

At the Dallaire Initiative, we are translating knowledge into action through innovative tools that are helping military, police and peacekeepers to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Our tools first and foremost identify gaps and respond to the unique environments that security sector personnel—soldiers, police, peacekeepers—operate within. We continually refine our training resources and develop tools and training aids to provide ongoing engagement with the issue. This ensures that our training lessons can be reinforced and enhanced well after our trainees have left the classroom

Through our tools and training, the Dallaire Initiative is adding value and complementing the credible work of our colleagues in the humanitarian sector, while enhancing and engaging the security personnel in the protection of children.

As an example of this bridging effect between humanitarian and security sectors is particularly pronounced in a set of playing cards designed for the security sector. This unique 52 playing card deck is not only helping the security sector to understand the roles and necessary responses required to the use of children as weapons of war, but is currently aiding in the rehabilitation of some 1700 former child soldiers in South Sudan. This seemingly simple tool, a set of playing cards, is having a major impact across conflicts, contexts and lived experience while reinforcing the prevention-oriented approach of the Dallaire Initiative to the issue of child soldiers.

Over the next year, the Dallaire Initiative will continue to produce innovative tools that help train and support the security sector in preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers, allowing us to bridge the gap between humanitarian and security interventions.

Josh Boyter, Halifax, NS

## PROCESS OF TOOL DESIGN

### IDENTIFYING GAPS

The Dallaire Initiative uses insights gleaned from our experiences in the field and the needs of our participants to identify gaps in knowledge and tools they require in being preventative actors in the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Often knowledge exists, but requires translation into a format that can be used easily in the field.

### CONCEPT

We seek to develop tools that will seamlessly integrate in our users routines or habits, while reinforcing our training on the prevention of children as weapons of war.

### DEPLOYMENT

Our tools are deployed to the field through our three/four day and Training of Trainer courses. Through the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our training, we seek feedback from the participants on our tools and adjust their format and content accordingly.



## IN FOCUS PLAYING CARDS AS TRAINING TOOLS

When not actively engaged in their mission, soldiers often play cards during their downtime. The development and use of customized playing cards provides a unique and relevant way to inject a training tool that supports our prevention oriented security sector approach to the issue of child soldiers.

These playing cards are currently deployed to support the ongoing work of civil society organizations working with recently demobilised child soldiers in Pibor, South Sudan. These cards have proven particularly useful in helping children to discuss their experiences while in armed groups, where other methods have failed.

The playing cards are currently available in English, French and Somali.

Over the course of 2015, the Dallaire Initiative worked with students of the Dalhousie Informatics and Computer Science programs to develop an interactive training game and generator for the Dallaire Initiative.

As a tool, the game will help contextualize the training of the Dallaire Initiative to various peacekeeping contexts around the globe and provide in-situ refreshers for security sector personnel. Playing through the game, security sector personnel will engage with children used as weapons of war across all 11 interactions found within the Dallaire Initiative's Child Soldiers: A Handbook for Security Sector Actors.

The first iteration of the game will be deployed to the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) by mid 2016.

## IN FOCUS CHILD SOLDIERS TRAINING GAME

"Through translating knowledge into innovative tools, we can ensure that military and police are equipped to be at the forefront of preventing the use and recruitment of child soldiers."

Josh Boyter, Director of Communications,  
The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

