

THE ROMÉO  
DALLAIRE



CHILD  
SOLDIERS  
INITIATIVE



DALHOUSIE  
UNIVERSITY

The Dallaire Initiative

# Strategic Plan 2019–2022

# A Letter from the Executive Director, Dr. Shelly Whitman

The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative (Dallaire Initiative) believes that in order to progressively end the recruitment and use of children as soldiers, the world must focus on effective prevention. It is the Dallaire Initiative's unique approach to affecting beliefs, attitudes and behavior change through our pedagogical approaches that leverage our relationship to work with the security sector through a prevention-oriented lens, that defines our organizational imperative and creates lasting impacts well beyond the immediate interventions.

The Dallaire Initiative has been housed at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada since January 2010. Our first five years focused on building a home, a team, our content and rationale, as well as achieving the funding and resources to sustain our vision. Since 2015, we have now built significant momentum in the consolidation of our global presence through relationships and memoranda of understandings (MoUs) with states and multilateral institutions, the development of policy frameworks and the creation of world-renowned research.

The Dallaire Initiative is now poised to demonstrate that our approach can significantly influence the global problematic of progressively ending the use of children as soldiers. Our unique ability to be heard and respected by the security sector, policy makers, multilateral organizations and non-governmental bodies creates a comparative advantage; one that is necessary in order to improve the holistic response required to tackle this issue. This strategic plan outlines our aims and objectives for 2019-2022.

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# Introduction



A peacekeeper and a child's hand (credit: UN Photo)

Today there are an estimated 250 million children and youth who live in conflict-affected countries, many of whom need urgent protection. This is heightened by the changing nature of war. If in the past children were involved in conflict despite their age, they are now being recruited because of their age. Tragically, there are a number of tactical and strategic incentives for armed forces and groups to recruit and use children and youth: they are susceptible to manipulation, able to pass through communities undetected, low cost, able to fill ranks quickly, and opposing forces often hesitate to react, under react or over react, to child soldiers, which in turn provides a tactical advantage to the opposing forces.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) highlights Six Grave Violations against children in armed conflict:

- i. Killing and maiming of children;
- ii. Recruitment and use of children as soldiers;
- iii. Sexual violence against children;
- iv. Abduction of children;
- v. Attacks against schools or hospitals; and
- vi. Denial of humanitarian access for children.

Of these six grave violations, the recruitment and use of children as soldiers can act as a linch pin in further conflict prevention efforts. This violation substantially increases a child's risk of the other grave violations creating a situation of double jeopardy. Effective prevention will also lead to a reduction in the human resource capabilities of violating armed forces and groups and their ability to sustain conflict, ultimately breaking the cycle of violence and positively impacting many generations to come.

The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative (Dallaire Initiative) was founded in 2007 with the specific purpose of ending the recruitment and use of children as weapons of war. In its initial phase, the organization focused on building a strong foundation consisting of a committed staff, strong partnerships, and strategic programs.

## Key Accomplishments to Date<sup>1</sup>

- Our work in research and curriculum development has resulted in world renowned training material for the security sector that has been referenced by NATO, the UN, and the African Union;
- We have contributed to the drafting of two UN Security Council Resolutions on Children in Armed Conflict and the first NATO Standard Operating Procedure on Children in Armed Conflict;
- Our training programs have been delivered to over 4,500 participants from over 55 countries;
- We have signed MoUs with 4 countries to implement our training integration programs;
- We have created more than 56 publications that have led to new dialogue, understandings and approaches to the subject of Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC);
- We are a key member of the Paris Principles Steering Group on CAAC;
- We collaborated with the International Criminal Court to create its first ever Policy on Children for the Office of the Chief Prosecutor;
- We deployed the first ever Child Protection Advisor to an African Union-led peacekeeping mission in Somalia;
- We advocated for and contributed to the first ever Joint Doctrine Note in the world on child soldiers with the Canadian Armed Forces and were included as a key element in Canada's Defence Policy – Strong, Secure and Engaged – released in 2017;
- We co-drafted and led the creation of the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, launched at the United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in November 2017.

<sup>1</sup> As of December 2018

## Our Vision

A world where the recruitment and use of children as weapons of war is unthinkable.

## Our Mission

Progressively ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

# Our Approach

## Children's Rights Upfront

“

The Dallaire Initiative believes that by actively putting children's rights upfront it will generate more political will and resources to enhance the protection of children and secure a peaceful future.

”

A Children's Rights Upfront (CRU) Approach seeks to elevate children's well-being higher up on the international peace and security agenda both in terms of making it a priority for all actors, as well as by ensuring children and youth participate in peace processes that impact their future. In the first instance, efforts focus on points of collaboration that aim to highlight the need to protect the rights of society's most vulnerable – children. By agreeing to make children a priority, this approach can build bridges between parties in the peace process and open space for dialogue in what may appear to be an intractable conflict. This can lead to increased confidence and trust, as well as concrete and measurable steps on the road to peace.

By prioritizing the needs of children, we can also begin to address the underlying factors that contribute to the vulnerability of children to being recruited and used as soldiers. Almost half of the world's population is under the age of 24 years. Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, have predominately young populations. This means that children are coming of age in societies that lack access to education, employment opportunities, healthcare, reliable supplies of food and water, shelter, and/or have experienced displacement of their families. These factors make many children and youth vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups.

While children are often victims of armed conflict and the grave violations, they also have the potential to be agents for peace. Therefore, the CRU Approach also recognizes the tremendous capacity of children and youth to be leaders and help build sustainable peace. They can play a vital role in the peace process on a local, national, regional and international level – processes that will essentially determine their future. Through children, we can create a rallying point for peace.



## The Security Sector Rationale

The Dallaire Initiative uses a security sector approach to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers for the following essential reasons:

**In-house expertise:** As an organization, we are uniquely placed to work with security sector actors around the world. Our founder, retired Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, has well-established expertise, credibility, and legitimacy with the security sector and in peace operations. In addition, under the leadership of our Executive Director, Dr. Shelly Whitman, we have built a strong team that possesses expertise in child protection, researchers, field knowledge and affecting policy experts on new approaches to protecting children more effectively through our work with the security sector.

**Strategic complementarity:** The Dallaire Initiative focuses on filling gaps in knowledge and practice to amplify current efforts by international organizations, non-governmental organizations, governments, legal experts and child protection advocates to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers in an overall effort to better protect children. Strategic complementarity is the exchange of information, sharing of resources, coordination of strategic objectives and co-implementation of programs amongst a range of actors from child protection agencies, to multilateral organizations, local and national social service providers, legal bodies, police, military and security sectors with a view to establishing more effective collaboration to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers. As detailed in the Dallaire Initiative Handbook for Security Sector Actors, there are well-researched, practical tactics to help security forces recognize where and how children are vulnerable to being recruited and used, in order to ultimately enhance the protection of children. This work is done in tandem with strengthening military and police doctrine, training integration and policy commitments.



Dallaire Initiative graphic from the Weapons of War campaign

## Considerations for choosing countries for programming focus:

There are key criteria for how the Dallaire Initiative chooses the countries of focus for programming. The criteria listed below must always be understood in relation to the realities of opportunity and resource constraints.

### COUNTRIES WHERE CHILD SOLDIERS ARE RECRUITED AND USED

- State violator listed by the UN Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict; or, recently de-listed nation;
- Action Plan signed to address listed violations by the above report with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children And Armed Conflict;
- Partnership opportunities with organizations working in relevant country;
- Request from host nation to provide training;
- Endorser of the Vancouver Principles.

### PEACEKEEPING (AFRICAN UNION OR UN) CONTRIBUTING COUNTRY – POLICE, MILITARY OR CORRECTIONS PERSONNEL

- Strategic location to influence peace and stability regionally;
- Current level of peace and stability that can be strengthened, including peace processes;
- Country that has experienced the recruitment or use of child soldiers in the past or is neighbouring nations that currently do recruit and use child soldiers;
- Endorser of the Vancouver Principles;
- Partnership opportunities with organizations working on child protection, security sector training, or peacekeeping;
- Request from host nation to provide training.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Host of important peacekeeping training centre (e.g. Ghana, Nairobi, Jordan, etc.);
- Request from host nation to provide training;
- Willingness to collaborate with the Dallaire Initiative;
- NATO contributing nations that wish to comply to SOP on CAAC;
- Key country that provides advise and assist training support to countries that experience the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

In most cases, we will prioritize based on the following:

- Those that currently experience the recruitment and use of child soldiers;
- AU and UN Peacekeeping Contributing Countries that have endorsed the Vancouver Principles;
- Willingness to collaborate with the Dallaire Initiative;
- Those that can positively impact the recruitment and use of child soldiers regionally.

### **The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers**

“The purpose of the Vancouver Principles is to prioritize and further operationalize child protection within UN peacekeeping, with a focus on tackling the recruitment and use of child soldiers.”

The Vancouver Principles were co-created by the Dallaire Initiative and the Government of Canada in 2017. The key principles were informed by 10 years of research, experience and gathering of best practices by the Dallaire Initiative on the critical gaps that existed in the current frameworks of the UN and national security forces to address the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

The Vancouver Principles contribute to the overall effectiveness of UN peacekeeping but require effective implementation for meaningful change. It is at this point that the Dallaire Initiative is working with the Government of Canada on the creation of the Implementation Guidance to accompany the Vancouver Principles that will be launched in the spring of 2019. Further to this will be the need to ensure that the Dallaire Initiative can work with the endorsing states on training, doctrine and policy changes.



Above: Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister Harjit Sajjan, Minister Chrystia Freeland, General Dallaire and Emmanuel Jal at the United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial, launching the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers



## Program Areas

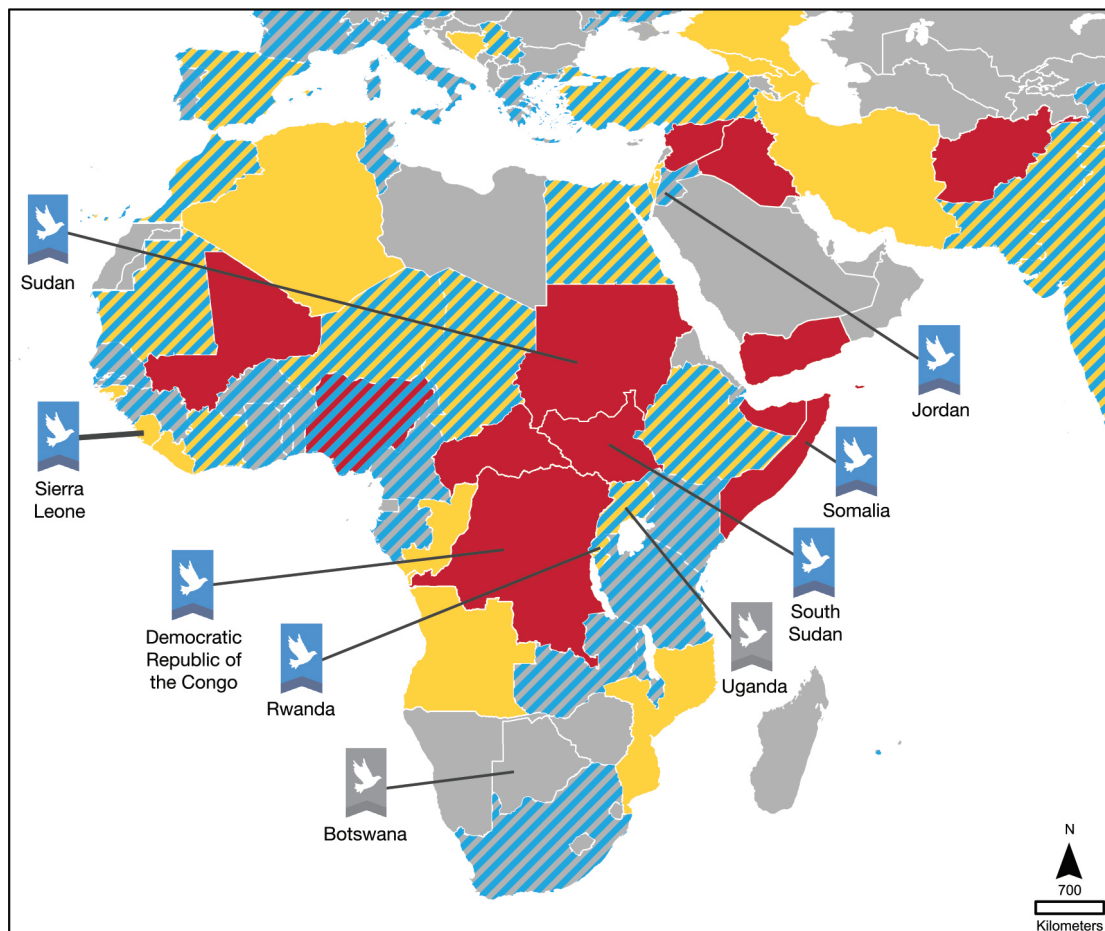
A Children's Rights Upfront Approach and our vision requires systemic change. We intend to increase knowledge and skills and change the attitudes of enough individuals to create widespread, systemic change. To do this we must reach a range of actors: from the policy makers in New York to community leaders in remote villages, from Generals around the globe to the soldier or police officer on patrol in conflicts zones, and from government to opposition and rebel leaders. Together we can build the momentum necessary to achieve our vision: “a world where the recruitment and use of children as weapons of war is unthinkable.”

By understanding the complexities surrounding this issue, we can identify the most effective courses of action. These are specific interventions where we can partner with existing organizations, fill gaps, and best leverage our activities in order to achieve greater results. One of our unique and most effective leverage points is the security sector. The legacy of our founder, Retired Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire provides moral credibility to our work within the security sector and peace operations. The organization has built on this legitimacy over the years with the expertise and vision of Executive Director, Dr. Shelly Whitman, and a strong team that combines child protection expertise, researchers, field knowledge and policy experts. In doing so, we will also ensure that our work with the security sector is reinforced by multiple sectors and achieved through the following initiatives:

- **Develop a Network of Champions:** Through effective advocacy, research and education opportunities, the Dallaire Initiative aims to influence the attitudes and behaviours of policy makers, government officials, multilateral organizations, business leaders, academics, students, community leaders, individuals and organizations.
- **Applied Research:** Interdisciplinary and applied research is used to develop innovative and effective tools, policies and practices that help our partners implement a CRU Approach focused on preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers.
- **Influence Policy & Doctrine Development:** High-level advocacy activities to create and promote the political will to draft and implement international and national policies, peace processes, and legal frameworks with a CRU Approach.
- **Train and Build Capacity:** Increase in the quality and effectiveness of policies, strategies and practices to better protect children, as well as the security sector, by prioritizing the prevention of the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups.

## Where We Work

We work at international, regional, and national levels around the world to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers. While recognizing the growing transnational and cyber aspects to the recruitment and use of child soldiers, we currently have a focus in the below key regions, displayed in the map below. It cross-references countries where child soldiers are currently being used; countries where child soldiers have been used since 1989; countries that contribute over 100 peacekeepers; and countries where the Dallaire Initiative works.



Where we  
work currently



Where we've  
worked previously

### Children Recruited and Used as Soldiers

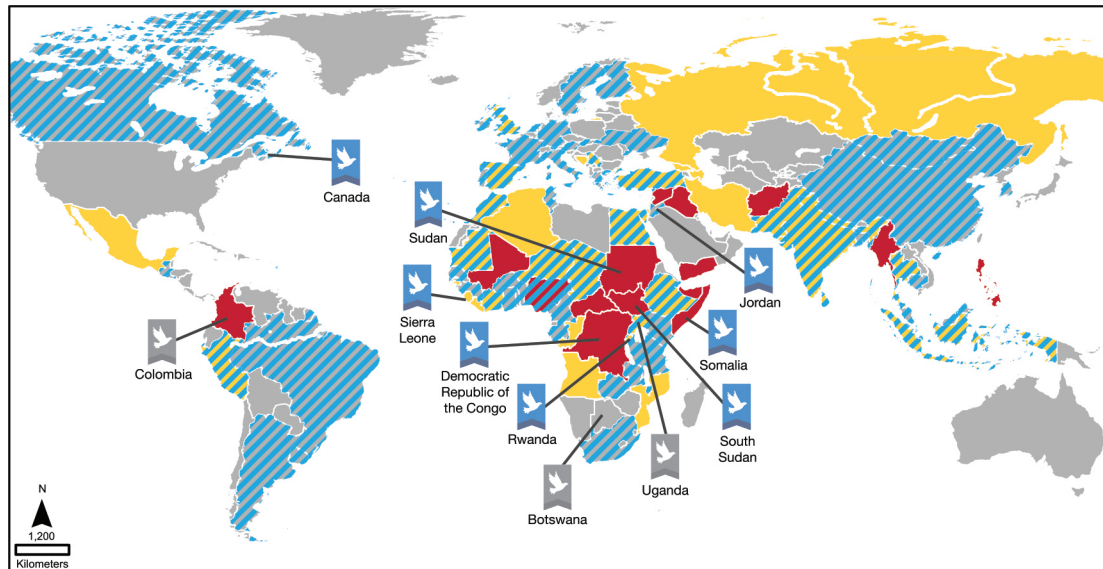
**Yellow:** Children recruited and used  
as soldiers since 1989  
(Haer & Böhmelt, 2016)

**Red:** Children recruited and used as  
soldiers in current conflicts (verified  
numbers are from the UN Report of  
the Secretary-General on Children  
and Armed Conflict, 2018)

### Countries Contributing 150 or More Peacekeepers to UN Missions

**Blue Diagonal Stripes:** 150+ peacekeepers  
contributed

Author: Daniel Bryce



Where we  
work currently



Where we've  
worked previously

#### Children Recruited and Used as Soldiers

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Author: Daniel Bryce

# Our Theory of Change

At the heart of our theory of change are children and a Children's Rights Upfront approach. Our commitment to elevate and protect the rights of children is evident in every aspect of our work. As described in Our Program Areas, we are focused on four core activities:

- Developing a network of champions;
- Applying research to practice;
- Influencing policy and doctrine;
- Training and building capacity.

Our work in these areas seek to change the behavior of individuals by increasing knowledge, skills and attitudes of those who directly and indirectly influence a child's environment. In conflict affected countries, a child's environment is often shaped by the work of the security sector actors. Therefore, we are seeking a critical mass of people in the security sector, along with support from civilian policy makers and practitioners to prioritize the safety of children. This will significantly contribute to progressively ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers, beginning with the youngest children first, and then over time, all those who are underage. A sustained level of effort in this area will, one day, create a world where the recruitment and use of children as a weapon of war is unthinkable.



# Strategic Aims

## Aim 1

### Improved operational effectiveness of the security sector in nations contributing to peace support missions through a Children's Rights Upfront Approach.

There are currently 73 nations (as of January 2019) that have endorsed the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers. The Dallaire Initiative will work with the endorsing nations to implement the Vancouver Principles for application to police and military forces at a national level to improve peacekeeping effectiveness. Focusing on countries that have the potential to impact regionally, through their contributions to peace support operations, their history of and/or proximity to conflicts that recruit and use children as soldiers, or their influence economically and politically, we can create momentum to progressively end the use of children as weapons of war. Strengthening key national security sector actors' ability to protect children at home and abroad reduces the vulnerability of children to this human rights abuse globally. This added capacity serves the dual purpose of also protecting security sector actors and reducing operational stress injuries.

#### How will we achieve this strategic aim?

1. Implementation of national and regional level awareness and training programs that strengthen operational tactics and procedures to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers;
2. Creation and integration of national doctrinal change, standard operating procedures, and training systems that focus on a CRU Approach;
3. Continued improvement and contextualization of training tools and pedagogy;
4. Continue to partner with key organizations such as UNICEF, NATO, the African Union and relevant established training institutions;
5. Promotion of the implementation of the Vancouver Principles;
6. Identify key M&E and research gaps to support and provide the information required to achieve this aim.



Top: An AMISOM soldier holding a Dallaire Initiative Security Sector Handbook in Nairobi in 2017 (credit: Dallaire Initiative Staff)

Bottom: A tank on a UN Mission (credit: UN photo)



## Aim 2

### Reduce the number of states where children are recruited and used as soldiers.

There are currently (as of January 2019) 7 state security institutions that continue to recruit and use children in armed conflict. Tackling the recruitment and use of children as soldiers will lead to a reduction in the human resource capabilities that sustain conflict and can break the cycle of violence which impacts generation after generation. To do so we must progressively create environments that lead to changed systems, attitudes and behaviours that result in communities, security sector actors, policy makers, and children viewing the recruitment and use of children as soldiers as “unthinkable”.

#### How will we achieve this strategic aim?

1. Create awareness amongst political and security sector leadership at a national level through executive briefs and advocacy efforts;
2. Train security sector actors and professionalize their interactions with children in armed conflict;
3. Advocate for the prevention of the recruitment and use of children in armed forces both through our national programs with the security forces and in conjunction with the UN SRSG CAAC and UNICEF to achieve the action plan objectives;
4. Advocate for new policies or laws or adherence to existing international legal frameworks, including the endorsement and implementation of the Vancouver Principles;
5. Support appropriate champions of change in host nations with practical guidance, tools, and curriculum;
6. Effectively monitor, evaluate and understand the impact of the Dallaire Initiative approach;
7. Conduct research to support our understandings of the drivers of recruitment and use of children to various contexts and provide innovative solutions.



Top: Dallaire Initiative Training to AMISOM soldiers from Somalia in Kenya in 2017  
(credit: Dallaire Initiative Staff)

Bottom: General Dallaire, Dr. Whitman and Malek Reuben Riak Rengu, Deputy Minister of Defence South Sudan in October 2018  
(credit: Dallaire Initiative Staff)

## Aim 3

### Increase and empower global champions for a Children's Rights Upfront Approach.

Through effective advocacy, research and education opportunities, the Dallaire Initiative aims to influence attitudes and behaviours of policy makers, government officials, multilateral organizations, individuals and organizations that mentor, care for or influence children and their protection, in order to prevent the vulnerability of children to being recruited and used in violence and/or conflict.

#### How will we achieve this strategic aim?

1. Build a partnership strategy and partnership profiles to understand who our global champions and key audiences are;
2. Disseminate knowledge and evidence of best practices;
3. Create new knowledge through research that can influence practices that promote a Children's Rights Upfront Approach;
4. Advocate for inclusion of a CRU Approach in peace processes, resolutions and dialogue related to ongoing conflicts;
5. Influence and create new policies, tools and curriculum that promote the prevention of the recruitment and use of children as soldiers;
6. Influence and sustain relationships with key audiences, governments, individuals and organizations as our champions of change to advocate for the implementation of a CRU Approach;
7. Identify key strategies, resources, timeframes and approaches to influence the key audiences;
8. Develop engagement strategies for alumni network and volunteers.



Top: General Dallaire and Dr. Whitman meeting with his holiness, Pope Francis at the Vatican in January 2019

Bottom: At the Intact/One Beacon offices for a funding announcement in NYC in December 2018. Left to right, Jason Patuano (Director, Communications and Public Affairs – Intact), Michel Chikwanine (author), Dr. Whitman (Executive Director), Charles Brindamour (CEO - Intact), Ishmael Beah (author), General Dallaire (founder). (credit: Greg Kessler)

## Aim 4

### Strengthen the operational effectiveness of the organization to achieve our strategic aims.

Over the last 8 years, the Dallaire Initiative has established itself as an expert in this field and is now experiencing an increased demand for services. As a result, we have also experienced exponential growth within the organization. Field offices are now being established to support nationally-led programs and trainers, which builds capacity and sustainable growth.

#### How we will achieve this strategic aim?

1. Improved organizational processes and systems to support and sustain growth;
2. Create new monitoring and evaluation frameworks;
3. Clarify and review our legal and institutional positioning at Dalhousie University;
4. Solidify a strategic directions and organizational structure;
5. Build an operational plan, including security plans, for the organization;
6. Continue to design and implement policy and procedures that support our growth from a human resource perspective, including a staff wellness plan, professional development and continuous assessment;
7. Ensure employees have the right tools for the job, including technological resources that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the workflow;
8. Clarify the policy, procedures and functioning of field offices;
9. Implement effective workplan planning processes in line with the strategic objectives;
10. Create a comprehensive fundraising and business development strategy to sustain current operations and plan for growth;
11. Create an effective communications strategy to support and achieve the strategic aims overall.



Top: Juba Office – John Kon Kelei, General Dallaire, James Tucker, Dr. Whitman, Beatrice Robertson (credit: Dallaire Initiative Staff)

Bottom: Staff, outside Dallaire Initiative Headquarters on Dalhousie Campus March 2019. (credit: Michael Tompkins Photography)

# Key Indicators of Success

The Dallaire Initiative's work aims to see significant movement towards the following ultimate outcomes within the next three years of operations and activities.

## **1. Policies and legal frameworks for the CRU approach are being implemented and monitored for success.**

- Level of policy alignment with international child protection protocols (Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Children on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC), the Paris and Vancouver Principles, the Safe Schools Declaration & Convention on the Rights of the Child) among our focus countries. (policy alignment tool currently under construction)
- Increase in the number of national and international policy documents that includes a Children's Rights Upfront approach.

## **2. Strengthened capacity of security sector actors to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers on a country by country basis.**

- Level of integration of the Dallaire Initiative training material into military and police doctrine among our focus countries. (barometer to measure this process is currently under construction)
- Percentage of participants in training and capacity building activities that report they have changed their behavior by applying their new knowledge and skills.
- Percentage of participants in training and capacity building activities that report they have shared their new knowledge and skills.

## **3. People who work with children in our areas of operations are receiving more resources to better protect children at risk from recruitment into armed groups and forces.**

- Number and diversity of partners supporting a CRU approach.
- Extent to which the Dallaire Initiatives' resource materials are disseminated and referenced.
- Number and diversity of MoUs signed with partners including states, security sector actors, multilateral organizations, and civil society organizations.

If we are seeing significant change on these fronts, then we are well positioned to achieve our vision of a world where the recruitment and use of children as soldiers is unthinkable.

# Annex

## Confirmed Programming Areas 2019–2022

PROJECTS	TIMEFRAME Project End Date	ADVOCACY High-level engagement Media/Events/Conferences		TRAINING Integration Military & Police Training Capacity building (other security sector)		EDUCATION Capacity building (civilians) University programs		RESEARCH
South Sudan	Mar 2021	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
AU Capacity Building (Somalia, DRC & Sudan)	Dec 2019	X		X	X	X		
Rwanda Integration Project	Dec 2021	X	X	X	X	X		X
Rwanda Centre Regional Training & Learning	Aug 2022	X	X		X	X		
Sierra Leone Model for Prevention	2019			X	X	X		
Sierra Leone Education Project	Aug 2019						X	
Veteran Trainers to Eradicate the use of Child Soldiers (VTECS)	2019	X	X			X	X	
Knowledge for Prevention (K4P)	Sep 2020		X					X
Vancouver Principles	Ongoing	X	X					X
Domestic Security (Building Connections & PS Expert Committee)	Ongoing	X	X		X	X		X
Nigeria	Ongoing	X			X			
Dal Certificate on Children	Ongoing						X	X
Jordan PSD	Ongoing	X			X			
Allons-y (Journal)	Ongoing		X				X	X