

CHILD LABOR MODULE SERIES



UI CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
CHILD LABOR RESEARCH INITIATIVE



**CHILD
SOLDIERS**

**BY
HELEN A. FINKEN**

OCTOBER 2004

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Children have no place in war and deserve the highest level of international protection to keep them from being used as child soldiers.

OLARA OTUNNU

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Opinions expressed in this module are the sole responsibility of the author.

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And last, but never least, we must honor Professor Burns H. Weston, Bessie Dutton Murray Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus and the founding Director of The University of Iowa Center for Human Rights. It was his passion for and deep commitment to human rights education, especially education about child labor that breathed life into the Child Labor Research Initiative. For his life-time commitment to international human rights, we honor him by providing this useful educational tool to enable teachers across the nation to multiply knowledge about child labor and to inspire their students to change the world.

Child Labor Module Team
September 2004
Iowa City, Iowa

About the Child Labor Research Initiative



According to the latest report of the International Labor Organization (ILO), 246 million children between the ages of 5-17 engage in child labor. The majority of the world's 211 million working children between the ages of 5-14 are found in Asia (127.3 million or 60%), Africa (48 million or 23%), Latin America and the Caribbean (17.4 million or 8%), and the Middle East and North Africa (13.4 million or 6%). The rest can be found in both transitional and developed economies. Asia has the highest number of child workers, but Sub-Saharan Africa has the *highest proportion* of working children relative to population.

The international community, which includes intergovernmental organizations such as the ILO, other UN agencies, the World Bank, national governments, and civil society organizations across the globe, have rallied worldwide to combat the most abusive and exploitative forms of child labor.

The University of Iowa Center for Human Rights (UICHR) joined this global effort in September 2001 when, with the kind help of Senator Tom Harkin (an honorary member of the UICHR's Executive Council), it received financial support from the US Department of Labor to implement the UICHR's Child Labor Research Initiative (CLRI), \$1,2 million to date. The initiative includes the following projects:

- Child labor legislative database of 31 countries
- Child labor essay collection
- Pre-collegiate modules on child labor
- College-level course on child labor
- Child labor public education program
- Colloquium on "Using the Human Rights Framework to Combat Abusive and Exploitative Child Labor"
- Child labor occasional paper series

Complete details of the specific projects being undertaken as part of the initiative can be found in the UICHR's website at www.uichr.org.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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A note from the author

This module does not touch on general child labor problems. The lesson plans are designed specifically to introduce secondary school students to a specific form of child labor – child soldiers. If teachers are interested in learning about general child labor problems, please consult a separate handout designed specifically for teachers. See “Teaching Child Labor: Issues in the Classroom” (appendix) written by Robin Clark-Bennet and Jennifer Sherer for the Child Labor Research Initiative.

Although there are five lesson plans in this module, each lesson is designed with great flexibility to allow teachers to pick and choose depending on time availability. For example, some teachers may choose to use only Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 to get insights into the lives of child soldiers through testimonials and stories. Others may choose to combine Lesson 1 with Lesson 4, which will allow students to be introduced to the concept of child soldiers and learn about the strategies by both inter-governmental organizations as well as non-governmental organizations to eliminate the use of child soldiers. Or teachers may choose to combine Lesson 1 and Lesson 5, which offers their students opportunities to become familiar with the problem and to meet an inspirational group of children of their age group who took the initiatives to start a movement for peace by children. The effort of this group of children resulted in a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

A few words on statistics

As you will discover, it is hard to find accurate statistics. I have reviewed many reports and studies to understand this issue and have encountered different figures depending on sources and authors. I encourage you to review the latest publication on child labor statistics, *Every Child Counts: New Global Estimates on Child Labor*, published in 2002 by the International Labor Office in Geneva. This report will give you insights into the big picture of child labor as well as provide some useful statistics on various forms of child slavery, including children in bondage, trafficking, and in armed conflicts. I have also included sources and citations I have used in these lessons for further investigation.

There is a real international consensus to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. To do so, there is a great need to raise awareness. I hope that this module will contribute to this global effort by educating young people about the use of children as soldiers.

Module Overview and Goals



According to the 2002 Report *Child Soldiers 1379* by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSC), governments and armed groups in more than 87 countries recruit children as soldiers. Children are actively fighting in 41 countries. An estimated 300,000 youths under the age of 18 are engaged in warfare. About half a million children from around the world have been pressed into military service and are involved as combatants, spies, servants, or sex slaves. The CSC defines a child soldier as “any person under 18 years of age who is a member of or attached to the armed forces or an armed group, whether or not there is an armed conflict” (p. 7). Furthermore, child soldiers “may perform tasks ranging from direct participation in combat; military activities such as scouting, spying, sabotage, acting as decoys, couriers or guards; training, drill and other preparations; support functions such as portering and domestic tasks; sexual slavery and forced labor (p. 7). The International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 182 has identified “forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict” as one of the worst forms of child labor. The ILO, the United Nations, and many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are actively working to eliminate this problem.

In this module, students will learn the scope and impact of the forced recruitment of child soldiers and the actions being taken by individuals and organizations to eliminate this practice. Students will analyze primary and secondary sources, debate, create maps, discuss, design individual action plans, conduct Internet research, and write reflectively as they learn about child soldiers.

MAJOR QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

- What is the nature and extent of the use of child soldiers in armed conflicts?
- What are some of the motivations for using children as soldiers?
- What is the impact of warfare on child soldiers?
- What actions have been taken by the world community to eliminate the use of child soldiers?
- How are youths around the world promoting peace?

CONVENTIONS THAT APPLY TO THIS MODULE ARE

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (concluded 20 November 1989 and entered into force on 2 September 1990), specifically Articles 21, 38 and 39
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts (concluded 25 May 2000 and entered into force on 12 February 2002)
- ILO Convention 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (concluded on 17 June 1999 and entered into force on 19 November 2000)

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

The Curriculum Standards for Social Studies referred to below were developed by a Task Force of the National Council on Social Studies (NCSS) and approved by the NCSS Board of Directors in April 1994.

- V. Individuals, groups, and institutions
- VI. Power, authority, and governance
- X. Global connections
- XI. Civic Ideals and practices

Child Labor Module Series
Child Soldiers

LESSON 1

Children as Soldiers

LESSON 1



Children as Soldiers

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson presents an overview of where, why, and how children are used as soldiers. Students examine a slide show, listen to audio reports, and create a map as they learn where child soldiers are used.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- ✎ Define a child soldier
- ✎ Identify where, when, why and how children are used as soldiers
- ✎ Analyze photographs, print and audio sources to gather information about child soldiers
- ✎ Map data about child soldiers
- ✎ Evaluate the extent of the use of child soldiers today

CONCEPTS

Conflict, revolution, power, civil war, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), poverty

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- ➔ What is a child soldier?
- ➔ In what types of activities do child soldiers participate?
- ➔ Where, why, when and how are child soldiers involved in combat?
- ➔ To what extent is the use of child soldiers a problem today?

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- ☑ Overhead transparency and marker
- ☑ Computer and LCD projector
- ☑ Handout #1: Mapping Child Soldiers
- ☑ Blank world political outline map (<http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/world.html>)
- ☑ World atlases
- ☑ Handout # 2: Child Soldiers' Testimonies

SUGGESTED DURATION

2 class periods

COURSE CONNECTIONS

American History, World History, Government, Global Studies, Current Events

SPECIAL NOTE TO TEACHERS

Some of the testimonials in Handout #2 of this lesson are graphic and might be of concern to some parents. Please use your professional judgment to evaluate the appropriateness of these testimonials for your students.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING THE LESSON

Activity 1

1. Give students the definition of a child soldier.

According to the *Child Soldiers 1379* Report, the CSC defines a child soldier as:

“...any person under 18 years of age who is a member of or attached to the armed forces or an armed group, whether or not there is an armed conflict. Child soldiers may perform tasks ranging from direct participation in combat; military activities such as scouting, spying, sabotage, acting as decoys, couriers or guards; training, drill and other preparations; support functions such as portering and domestic tasks; sexual slavery and forced labor.” (p. 7).

According to the 1997 Cape Town Principles:

”Child soldier... means any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.”

2. Ask children what types of activities soldiers conduct (cook, clean, build structures, act as porters, provide electrical wiring, operate computers, drive, wash clothes, maintain warehouses, act as officers, nurses, doctors etc).

Activity 2

- 1) Discuss: How big a problem is the use of child soldiers today?
- 2) Explain that students will examine several sources to find information about the use of child soldiers. As students examine each source, they are to collect data that helps them determine the extent of the problem.
- 3) Using an LCD projector and computer, view the MSNBC slide show *Children at War* and listen to the accompanying audio recording available at <http://www.msnbc.com/news/747688.asp>. (MSNBC, "Children at War," MSNBC, May 4, 2002.)
- 4) Note where children are involved in combat, the extent to which they are involved, and the reasons they are involved.
- 5) Listen to one or both of the National Public Radio (NPR) reports on Child Soldiers located at <http://www.npr.org>. (Search the NPR archives to locate the programs. Use RealPlayer to play the reports in class.) 1) "Fighting Child Soldiers," *All Things Considered*, aired April 10, 2002, features an interview with Peter Warren Singer of the Brookings Institution conducted by Robert Siegel (5 min.); 2) "Child Soldiers," *All Things Considered*, aired June 12, 2001, features an interview with Jo Becker, Children's Rights Advocacy director for Human Rights Watch, conducted by Linda Wertheimer (5 min.).
- 6) Compare the information in the audio reports to the data in the MSNBC slide show. Do the slide show and audio reports contradict one another? Explain the point of view conveyed in the audio reports. What are the similarities and differences between the information in the audio reports and the data in the MSNBC show? (Students can chart similarities and differences.)

Activity 3

Present these additional background facts about child soldiers to students as a handout on transparency. Human Rights Watch, a highly respected NGO based in New York City, has useful resources on child soldiers. Visit: <http://hrw.org/campaigns/crp/index.htm> to obtain the following information:

- Child soldiers have been used in over 30 countries
- Child soldiers are under the age of 18
- Children are used as soldiers because they are obedient and physically vulnerable
- Children who are poor, orphaned, or refugees are recruited by force or see armed groups as their best chance for survival
- Children become soldiers to seek revenge
- Children fight with weapons such as AK-47s or M-16s
- Child soldiers are used to clear landmines or make and deploy mines

- Child soldiers participate in suicide missions, carry supplies, and act as spies, messengers, cooks, and lookouts
- Girl soldiers are warriors and sex and domestic slaves
- Child soldiers have seen atrocities, including rapes, amputations, beheadings, and people being burned alive
- Child soldiers are often given drugs to make them overcome their fear and reluctance to fight
- Child soldiers become victims of conflict either by being killed, or by becoming disabled, homeless, or psychologically traumatized
- Because educations and opportunities to learn civilian job skills are often denied to them, child soldiers find it difficult to re-join peaceful society. Some turn to crime or become involved in other conflicts

Activity 4

Pinpoint the countries in which child soldiers are used on a blank map of the world by using the data provided on Handout #1. Use different colors for different continents. What do the maps reveal about the extent to which child soldiers are used in combat? Why are child soldiers found in some countries but not in others?

Activity 5

Have students read first-hand testimonials of child soldiers (Handout # 2) from various geographical regions to help students understand how some children end up as soldiers. Discuss some of these reasons based on testimonies. Expected answers include forced recruitment, poverty, indoctrination, lack of alternatives, lack of access to power or status etc.

EVALUATION

Write a response to the lesson's focus question: How big a problem is the use of child soldiers today? Answers should include findings about:

- 1) geographic distribution
- 2) numbers of children involved
- 3) the number of conflicts in which children participate
- 4) activities child soldiers are expected to do
- 5) the increased use of child soldiers

SUGGESTIONS FOR EXTENDING THE LESSON

The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers uses a red hand with a white silhouette of a soldier to symbolize child soldiers. Create a bulletin board about child soldiers by tracing handprints on red construction paper, cutting them out, and writing a fact discovered in Activity 3 about child soldiers on each one. Add these facts to the bulletin board as students learn new information during the module lessons.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WEBSITES

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

<http://www.child-soldiers.org/>

This site contains several articles such as “A Child Labor Issue ” and “A Growing Phenomenon” as well as Themed Reports (“Girls With Guns”) that provide additional information about the use of child soldiers.

Human Rights Watch (Children’s Rights Division)

<http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/index.htm>

This site provides an overview of the use of child soldiers.

ARTICLES, REPORTS, BOOKS, ETC.

Graça, Machel. "Children at Both Ends of the Gun." In *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. United Nations/Unicef, 1996. <http://www.unicef.org/graca/>.

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. *Child Soldiers 1379 Report (CSC Report)*. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2002. <http://www.child-soldiers.org/>.

This report by the CSC evaluates criteria laid out in UN Security Council Resolution (UNSC) 1379, paragraph 16, which was adopted in November 2001 to address the international problem of recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Click on <http://www.child-soldiers.org/>, enter site, then click on “CSC Publications.”

Kruger, Franz. “Child Soldiers Active in 41 Countries.” *Radio Netherlands*, June 12, 2001.

<http://www.rnw.nl/hotspots/html/childsoldiers010612.html>.

This article from the English language version of the Radio Netherlands website provides statistics about the extent of the use and recruitment of child soldiers, as well as introductions to the concepts of recruitment, sex slavery, lighter weapons, and UN protocol. It also includes a first-person testimony from a former child slave.

Child Soldiers Around the World

Using an atlas and a blank outline map of the world, map the following data. The title of the map is "Child Soldiers Fighting in Recent and Ongoing Conflicts."

Data are provided by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers *Global Report, 2001*.

<p>THE AMERICAS Colombia Mexico Peru</p> <p>EUROPE Russian Federation Turkey Yugoslavia (former Rep. of)</p> <p>AFRICA Algeria Angola Burundi Chad Republic of Congo Dem. Rep. of the Congo Eritrea Ethiopia Rwanda Sierra Leone Somalia Sudan Uganda</p>	<p>MIDDLE EAST Iran Iraq Israel and Occupied Territories Lebanon</p> <p>ASIA Afghanistan** India Indonesia Myanmar Nepal Pakistan Philippines Solomon Islands Sri Lanka East Timor Tajikistan Papua New Guinea Uzbekistan</p> <p>**Note: The interim government has made a public commitment to stop the use of children.</p>
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Child Soldiers' Testimonials

When Ishmael Beah was 14, he was recruited into the Sierra Leone Army. He remained a soldier for almost three years. In his testimony, read today by Samkelo Mokhine, he described his first experience at the front line. He is now studying in the U.S.

"When we got there we were in an ambush, the rebels were attacking where we were in the bush. I did not shoot my gun at first, but when you looked around and saw your schoolmates, some younger than you, crying while they were dying with their blood spilling all over you, there was no option but to start pulling the trigger. The sight stays with you. I was just pulling the trigger. I lost my parents during the war, they told us to join the army to avenge our parents."

Source: Franz Kruger, "Child Soldiers Active in 41 Countries," *Radio Netherlands*, June 12, 2001, <http://www.rnw.nl/hotspots/html/childsoldiers010612.html>.

In Uganda, children are caught in the battle between Uganda's People's Defense Force (UPDF) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel force, which is committed to overthrowing the Ugandan government and to this end rounds up children from villages it raids and forces them to join with them. One 16-year-old girl, testified to the cruelties she endured when a boy tried to escape:

"One boy tried to escape, but he was caught. They made him eat a mouthful of red pepper, and five people were beating him. His hands were tied, and then they made us, the other new captives, kill him with a stick. I felt sick. I knew this boy from before. We were from the same village. I refused to kill him, and they told me they would shoot me. They pointed a gun at me, so I had to do it. The boy was asking me, "Why are you doing this?" I said I had no choice. After we killed him, they made us smear his blood on our arms. I felt dizzy. There was another dead body nearby, and I could smell the body. I felt so sick. They said we had to do this so we would not fear death, and so we would not try to escape."

-Susan, 16

Source: Human Rights Watch, *The Scars of Death: Children Abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda*, Human Rights Watch Report, 1997, <http://www.hrw.org/reports97/uganda/lra.htm>.

"The first time I went into battle I was afraid. But after two or three days they forced us to start using cocaine, and then I lost my fear. When I was taking drugs, I never felt bad on the front. Human blood was the first thing I would have every morning. It was my coffee in the morning...every morning."

-Ibrahim, 16

Source: Youth Ambassadors for Peace, *Voices and Stories*, Free the Children, 2001, <http://www.freethechildren.org/peace/voices.html>.

"I was in the front lines the whole time I was with the [opposition force]. I used to be assigned to plant mines in areas the enemy passed through. They used us for reconnaissance and other things like that because if you're a child the enemy doesn't notice you much; nor do the villagers."

-former child soldier from
Burma/Myanmar

Source: Former child soldier from Burma/Myanmar, interview by Human Rights Watch, Liberia, April 1994, in Human Rights Watch, *The Voices of Child Soldiers*, Human Rights Watch, 2004, http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/voices.htm#N_4_.

"They beat all the people there, old and young, they killed them all, nearly 10 people... like dogs they killed them... I didn't kill anyone, but I saw them killing... the children who were with them killed too... with weapons... they made us drink the blood of people, we took blood from the dead into a bowl and they made us drink... then when they killed the people they made us eat their liver, their heart, which they took out and sliced and fried.... And they made us little ones eat."

-Peruvian woman, recruited by the
Shining Path at age 11

Source: Peruvian woman, interview by R. Brett and M. McCallin, in Rachel Brett and Margaret McCallin, *Children: The Invisible Soldiers*, (Stockholm: Rädda Barnen, 1996),127.

Zaw Tun's story:

“I was recruited by force, against my will. One evening while we were watching a video show in my village three army sergeants came. They checked whether we had identification cards and asked if we wanted to join the army. We explained that we were under age and hadn't got identification cards. But one of my friends said he wanted to join. I said no and came back home that evening but an army recruitment unit arrived next morning at my village and demanded two new recruits. Those who could not pay 3000 kyats had to join the army, they said. I (my parent) could not pay, so altogether 19 of us were recruited in that way and sent to Mingladon (an army training centre).”

Source: BBC World Service, “Zaw Tun’s Story,” in *Children of Conflict: A Human Rights Issue*, BBC World Service, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/childrensrights/childrenofconflict/>.

Jean Paul’s Story

“I joined the army to get food for my mother, my brother, and sisters,” says Jean Paul, 15. Jean Paul is one of 4,500 Rwandan children, aged 10-18, who was in the military during the country’s brutal civil war. Wearing ragged soiled clothing and running barefoot on the jagged lava rock, Jean Paul looks like any other refugee boy. Jean Paul now lives in a refugee camp near Goma, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where he is one of 630 demobilised child soldiers in an UNICEF-funded reintegration project, which provides schooling, job skills and activities aimed at promoting self esteem.”

Source: Global March Against Child Labor, *The Voices of Former Child Soldiers*, Global March Against Child Labor, <http://www.globalmarch.org/childsoldier/voices.php3>.

Child Labor Module Series
Child Soldiers

LESSON 2

Child Soldiers Stories

LESSON 2



Child Soldiers' Stories

LESSON OVERVIEW

Using oral histories, students will identify the physical and emotional challenges faced by child soldiers and how they cope with those challenges. Students will attempt to evaluate the morality of using child soldiers by responding to a quote by Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- ✎ Identify the physical and emotional challenges faced by child soldiers
- ✎ Describe the strategies child soldiers use to cope with combat
- ✎ Evaluate the morality of using children as soldiers
- ✎ Form an opinion about whether child soldiers are victimizers or victims

CONCEPTS

Power, exploitation, atrocities

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- ➔ How do child soldiers' lives change once they become warriors?
- ➔ What physical challenges do they face?
- ➔ What emotional challenges are related to being a child soldier?
- ➔ How do child soldiers cope with physical and emotional challenges?
- ➔ What do you think a society loses when children are used as soldiers?

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- ☑ Reading #1: Tom Masland, "Voices of the Children," *Newsweek*, May 13, 2002, 24.
- ☑ Web site: BBC World Service, *Children of Conflict*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/childrensrights/childrenofconflict/>. (Additional articles are available by searching for "child soldiers" at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi.html>)
- ☑ Website: Eric Beauchemin, "Child Soldiers of Liberia," Radio Netherlands, <http://www.rnw.nl/en/liberia>.
- ☑ Website: MSNBC, "Children at War," MSNBC, May 45, 2002, <http://www.msnbc.com/news/747688.asp>.

- Computer with internet
- Handout #1: Child Soldiers' Stories

SUGGESTED DURATION

1 class period

COURSE CONNECTIONS

American History, World History, Government, Global Studies, Current Events

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING THE LESSON

1) Locate Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Burma (Myanmar) on a world map. Give a brief overview of the civil wars in each country. Background reports from National Public Radio's program, *All Things Considered*, are available at <http://www.npr.org>. "Burma's Rebels" aired on May 22, 2001. "Sierra Leone's Election" aired on May 14, 2002. Background information about Liberia is located at Radio Netherlands <http://www.rnw.nl/en/liberia>. The U.S. Department of State's 2002 Human Rights Reports will also provide helpful background. The most recent reports can be found at the following sites:

Burma (Myanmar): <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18237pf.htm>

Liberia: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18211pf.htm>

Sierra Leone: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18225pf.htm>

2) The British Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Netherlands, MSNBC Web sites and *Newsweek* (Reading #1) sources present child soldiers' stories. Using data from one or more of the sources, students will complete Handout #1: Child Soldiers' Stories. Encourage students to play the audio reports on the BBC and Radio Netherlands sites as part of their investigation.

EVALUATION

Using evidence from the child soldier oral histories, write a response to South African Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu's statement:

"It is immoral that adults should want children to fight their wars for them. ...There is simply no excuse, no acceptable argument for arming children."

SUGGESTIONS FOR EXTENDING THE LESSON

- 1) Research the use of child soldiers in the American Revolution, Civil War, WWI, WWII, Vietnam, Korea and the Gulf War. How are the circumstances of their participation similar and/or different from the child soldiers in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Burma?
- 2) Research the use of child soldiers in other contemporary conflicts, such as Afghanistan, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Colombia.
- 3) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts bars ratifying countries from using force to recruit children under 18 into government armed forces. It further recommends that these countries take steps to ensure that the children under 18 and already in the government armed forces not participate in direct hostilities (see Articles 1, 2, 3). In the U.S., some high schools sponsor Junior Reserve Officer Training Courses (JROTC). Research and debate the value of offering JROTC at the high school level for individuals and the country. The Web site for America's Defense Monitor, <http://www.cdi.org/adm/838/transcript.html>, has a transcript of a 1995 radio program that presents the pros/cons of JROTC. Students can use the transcript to prepare their debate or role-play the program.
- 4) View the film *Soldier Boy*. 5 min., Danmarks Radio (TV)/UNICEF, 1997. *Soldier Boy* was co-produced by Danmarks Radio (TV), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' agency for international development and co-operation (DANIDA) and UNICEF. Videocassette available at <http://www.unicef.org/broadcast/vidcat.htm>.
- 5) Analyze a poem, "Child Soldiers," by Isabelle Balot. How does her imagery evoke the reality of being a child soldier?
- 6) Have the class read a humanitarian novel *Marie: In the Shadow of the Lion* by Jerry Piaseki (New York: United Nations Publications, 2001) and write a reaction to explore the lives of these children caught in armed conflict situations in an unspecified African country. As a class project, students may wish to stage a vignette based on this novel. It is a terrific way to raise greater awareness within their community.

Child Soldiers

by
Isabelle Balot

Awash in the sun of timeless Africa
The beast-king goes robed in light
A murderous heat stirs in his thighs
As he crouches in the brush or bed of a creek.

In the fire of noon when all seems dead
When everything sleeps in the saffron haze
This warrior lurks in the deep bush grass
A glint at play in his lambent eye.

A sudden surge, and a great, tawny blur
Flashes up and descends in a fantastic bound
Strikes and crushes the prey to the ground,
Kills in one blow of sovereign power.

I know of other kings under African skies
They, of all hope and royalty bereft,
Warriors without helmets, armor or heft,
Ragged and shoeless, with leathery skin.

Nomads without pity at the bend of a road
- Fatality writ in their dark eye's depth
As in a crypt where shadows drift
They come to sow death, grenade in hand.

Behold the child soldier, the murdered child,
Sent in battalions into the sun-scorched light
For diamonds, for ivory, black gold or white!
Pencil in hand, he would sketch only death.

Under stubborn brow and crown of black hair
What memories cling from the days of innocence
that balm that pours from the flask of infancy
Form a thread too fine for a mind to retrace.

In combat, there's nothing can thwart his will;
This more than a child, this man not yet,
Is a god and a king, an unripened adult
Who thinks he is immortal, lives only to kill.

When the combat is over, he sits in ashes;
With a rifle smeared with blood and sweat
He tortures a golden or silvery cricket
Idly crushes a salamander or scarab.

Sprawled on a cartridge sack what does he see
Behind wide open eyes, the sleeping warrior,
What does he hear when he dies under fire,
In the mortar's blast and the buzzing of flies?

Drugged, drunk, stunned by the sun,
Does he dream of lagoons and a glittering source,
Does his forehead feel a mother's kiss
Through his final sleep, what images run?

Pardon, Lord, but when this battered Africa
Wants to bind up its wounds and begin to yearn
For peace that sinks deep through its dark domain,
When the altars light up at the hour of prayer,

When peace is promised and even celebrated
I see amidst glittering constellations,
In spite of myself, a lion-god of diamonds
Whose fierce pagan eyes laugh from the dark.

Poem © 2004 by Isabelle Balot

This poem is available for download at:

http://www.un.org/spanish/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/fsoldiers_files/poemEngBgrd.doc

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

REPORTS

UNICEF. *The State of the World's Children 1996: Children in War*. UNICEF. <http://www.unicef.org/sowc96/childwar.htm>. See also:

UNICEF. *The State of the World's Children 200: Leadership*. UNICEF, 2001. http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_7344.html.

These reports provide additional information about the impact of war on child soldiers.

NEWS ARTICLES

Several stories about child soldiers can be located by searching the BBC News home page: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi.html>

Voices of the Child Soldiers

Tom Masland, "Voices of the Child Soldiers," *Newsweek*, May 13, 2002, 24. It is also available at <http://bulletin.ninemsn.com.au/bulletin/EdDesk.nsf/0/04f33cd07b62458bca256bb10015ab12?OpenDocument>.

The four boys at St. Francis Primary School don't stand out much. They're just a bit bigger than other fourth and fifth graders crowded onto rough benches in the otherwise bare classrooms. And teachers at St. Francis say the four are doing well--eager to learn, more disciplined than their younger classmates. But look closely, and you see that the four are different from their fellow students in other ways. Their knees are battered from crawling through the West African bush, and they have ugly welts from incisions once stuffed with heroin and cocaine. The letters RUF--for Revolutionary United Front--are carved across the chest of one boy. And the external marks only hint at the scars within--at the horrors the boys suffered, and perpetrated, as forced conscripts in an unimaginably brutal civil war.

The four boys from Makeni, Sierra Leone, won't be among child delegates joining more than 60 heads of state at United Nations headquarters in New York this week. They've barely thought about one of the main issues involved in the U.N. Special Session on Children--how the international community can roll back the growing exploitation of children in war. Experts say soldiers under the age of 15 have fought in more than half of the world's 55 ongoing or just-ended wars. Children are easy to recruit, low cost and malleable. From the "little bees" of Colombia to the "baby brigades" of Sri Lanka, they have become the cannon fodder of choice.

In a world absorbed with the "war on terror," with headlines blaring about terrified Americans and terrorized Israelis or Palestinians, the atrocities committed against some of these children almost demand a new language to encompass a further extreme of horror. The kids of the Mideast get more attention, either as disciples of terror or as victims of occupation. But nobody has been more exploited than the kids of Sierra Leone. They may not come from a strategically important country, or a place that, for now anyway, represents a danger to the world's rich nations. But the growing use of children has changed the dynamics of warfare, and must be treated as a new security threat. The question before the United Nations this week will be how to muster the will to enforce longstanding international conventions and three new resolutions on children and armed conflict. The latest protocols on children's rights took force in February, and condemned the use of child soldiers and their sexual exploitation.

Some may dismiss teenage ex-combatants as war criminals who don't have much to contribute to a debate on human rights. Indeed, these boys say they can now look only to God for forgiveness. Yet they are, in a very intimate way, the world's leading experts on child warfare. And their eyewitness accounts--shocking as they are--convey the unthinkable inhumanity of those who coerced them into combat. To that end, NEWSWEEK recently spent three days debriefing these four young veterans, selected from among 25 ex-combatants who attend the 1,023-student primary school in Makeni, a rundown market town 90 miles northeast of the capital, Freetown. All lost close relatives in the war; two stammer uncontrollably. Abdul Rahman Kamera, 15, still lives with the rebel commander who nicknamed him "Go Easy"; he can find no living relative. Zakaria Turay, 14, whose war name was "Ranger," and Abbas Fofanah, 16, who

went by "G-Pox," live with aunts. Only Alieu Bangura, 14, called "Major" by his fellow warriors, has been reunited with his mother. All are destitute, barely getting enough to eat. Their stories:

Before the War

Abdul Rahman: I remember that my grandmother used to prepare cooked food to sell. Early in the morning she used to take food to where she was selling it. I would go and collect the dishes. After school I would go to the house, get drinking water, wash my uniform and go to my companions to play football. I liked to play defense. In the house, we played a board game with seeds, called Tin Tan Ton. When the moon was full we used to take our mats outside and tell stories and then sing. We would swim in a stream. The older ones would dunk us. My favorite time was when I came home from school and my grandmother was still selling. I would go and eat, and she would put in a lot of extra meat for me.

Abbas: In the morning my mother would ask me to sweep and clean. My father drove a big truck. When the moon was full I would play with my companions. We would bounce a ball and play hide-and-seek in the moonlight. We lived in Bo, near where the Makeni vehicles used to park. My grandmother sent word from Burkina Faso that she had no child to play with. I was sent to Burkina. I used to sell for my grandmother. She gave me palm oil and onions to go and sell.

Alieu: In the morning I would sweep under our mango tree, then wash my face and go to school. At night we used to tell stories in the moonlight. My father was the superintendent of our district [in Makeni]. On weekends I would go with my father to his farm. I carried water for him.

Forced Into Service

Alieu: I was abducted during Operation Pay Yourself, in 1998. I was 9 years old. Six rebels came through our yard. They went to loot for food. It's called *jaja*--"get food." They said, "We want to bring a small boy like you--we like you." My mother didn't comment; she just cried. My father objected. They threatened to kill him. They argued with him at the back of the house. I heard a gunshot. One of them told me, "Let's go, they've killed your father." A woman rebel grabbed my hand roughly and took me along. I saw my father lying dead as we passed.

Abdul Rahman: I was in class, second grade. I was 8 years old. They threatened to kill us. In front of us, they brought a grown-up man, going gray. They put his hand on a stump and amputated it. They gave me a gun and I refused it. They fired between my feet. I took the gun.

Abbas: I was on my way to the market when a rebel demanded I come with him. The commander said to move ahead with him. My grandmother argued with him. He shot her twice. I said he should kill me, too. They tied my elbows behind my back. At the base, they locked me in the toilet for two days. When they let me out, they carved the letters RUF across my chest. They tied me so I wouldn't rub it until it was healed.

Zakaria: I was captured in Freetown on May 25, 1997. I was carrying pans in the street. A rebel told me, "Put your pans down and come carry our load."

We walked all the way to Makeni.

The Drug Factor

Aliou: We smoked jamba [marijuana] all the time. They told us it would ward off disease in the bush. Before a battle, they would make a shallow cut here [on the temple, beside his right eye] and put powder in, and cover it with a plaster. Afterward I did not see anything having any value. I didn't see any human being having any value. I felt light.

Zakaria: My missions included diamond mining near Kono, drug purchasing, collecting ammunition in Liberia, looting villages and capturing civilians. I used to buy drugs at the Liberian border from a man called Papi. They forced us to take them. This is where they would cut and put the "brown-brown" [heroin]. [He shows a raised welt on his left pectoral.] We would then inhale cocaine. During operations, I sometimes would take it two or three times a day. I felt strong and powerful. I felt no fear. When I was demobilized I felt weak and cold and had no appetite for three weeks.

Abbas: They gave me injections in the leg [shows track marks] and cut the back of my head to put in cocaine [shows scar]. The smaller ones are the ones who stand in front, the elder ones behind. So they give the boys the injections. It happened any time we were going on the attack--more than 25 times.

Atrocities Up Close

Aliou: The first time I killed anybody was during my first battle, at Lunsar. We captured 10 civilians. The CO [commanding officer] was asking them where the government soldiers were, and they refused to say. The CO told me to kill one of them, or he would shoot me. I shot [the civilian] in the chest... After Lunsar, I was a small-boy commander. I commanded 10 boys, aged 10 to 16.

Abbas: When we caught kamajors [pro-government militiamen] we would mutilate them by parts and display them in the streets. When villagers refused to clear out of an area we would strip them naked and burn them to death. Sometimes we used plastic and sometimes a tire. Sometimes they would partially sever a person's neck, then leave him on the road to die slowly. I saw a pregnant woman split open to see what the baby's sex was. We had met her on the streets of Kabala. Two officers, "O5" and "Savage," argued over it and made a bet. Savage's boys opened the woman. It was a girl. The baby lived.

In Kabala I was forced to do amputations. We had a cutlass, an ax and a big log. We called the villagers out and let them stand in line. You ask [the victims] whether they want a long hand or a short hand [the amputation at the wrist or elbow]. The long hand you put in a different bag from the short hand. If you have a large number of amputated hands in the bag, the promotion will be automatic, to various ranks.

We gang-raped women, sometimes six people at a time. I didn't feel much because I was drugged and I was just there for sex. One of my friends was having sex with a girl when she

complained she was tired. He took out his pistol and shot into her vagina. But usually we would let them stagger and go.

I remember one tough operation. We were dressed all in black, we were the ones they called the cobras. We killed people, we cooked them, we ate them and then we broke their pots.

Zakaria: I remember when I was manning the heavy machine gun. No one dared stand in front of me. I killed when I said, "You! If you leave I will kill you!" We were the men who amputated hands and used the same cut hand to slap the victim. We beat and killed people, not even afraid of the consequences. We were ready to commit any crimes. We were the rough ones.

Abdul Rahman: My schoolmates and I met our old teacher, and we knocked him down. We killed the teacher and we took his books and burned them, and then we took some of the papers to the toilet to wipe ourselves.

Zakaria: They [older rebels] would [impale people] when the drugs had taken hold and they wanted to play wicked games. They want to see blood. Some of them drink blood. Especially on the war fronts, where there's no food, no water, when we killed civilians we would cut a hole on the top of the arm, above the wrist, and press on the arm, and drink.

And Now, the Aftershocks

Abbas: Sometimes I feel dizzy, and I feel like doing bad things. I go in the house and lie down... Three months ago a friend insulted me, called me a rebel who killed so many people and destroyed the whole world. I said, "You won't make remarks like that again." I met a woman slicing potato leaves. I snatched the knife from her and stabbed her. I ripped his skin... When I see a pretty woman passing I think of the times in the bush when we were raping women, when I could just call her and say, "Come here, let's go."

Aliou: If someone offends me, I think back: if I had been in the bush, how I would have dealt with him. I feel ashamed of myself... I dream about what happened. Sometimes I feel scared, because I've killed, I've drunk blood, I've smoked jambaa--I worry that these things will take over, that they'll lead me to do bad things again. The drugs we took made me feel very light. I worry that I'm not as intelligent as I was before.

Zakaria: Most times I dream, I have a gun, I'm firing, I'm killing, cutting, amputating. I feel afraid, thinking perhaps that these things will happen to me again. Sometimes I cry... When I see a woman I'm afraid of her. I've been bad with women; now I fear that if I go near one she'll hit me. Perhaps she will kill me.

Facing the Future

Abdul Rahman: The only thing I'm thinking about is to go further with my schooling, and let me reap the benefits. That's all I pray for. We're all human beings, and you [foreigners] sat and watched this country being destroyed. You have the money and you will not help.

Abbas: Right now I want to be a doctor or teacher. I want to go to America to learn a very powerful job. Let me be able to do something for my people.

Aliu: After I have finished my university I want to be a doctor or a teacher. Father God, I have a future plan for this country that will make this country develop. I thank God that I have survived; they did not kill me in the bush. They used to punish me, do all kinds of bad things to me, but they did not kill me... Please support us. Right now we don't have books, we don't have pens, we don't even have uniforms. Let them send some things for us.

Zakaria: I am praying for forgiveness so that more fruitful things can come our way, praying that God will help us to become good people.

Protecting Others

Abbas: We need a leader who would take good care of this country. The rebellion started because of bad leadership. God must forgive boys like us. It was not our fault. It was the fault of the elders. Those who committed the highest crimes should be punished.

Aliu: The guilty can be prosecuted. They should be taken to court, and let them explain what happened. Thinking about the part I've played, I'm thinking I may be liable to appear in court.

Zakaria: Right now, the war is over, but what happened to us should not repeat itself with our children. With only small things to compensate us for what we've been through, we will be able to pick ourselves up.

The task of prosecuting those who exploited such children is monumental. In West Africa, Liberia's Charles Taylor pioneered the use of "small-boy units" during his drive for power in the 1990s. Security analysts estimate that he and others used 15,000 children as combatants in that war, and now Taylor is Liberia's president--and fending off a new rebellion. Neighboring Sierra Leone's war was an extension of Liberia's brutal conflict. The RUF gained control of the country's rich diamond fields, selling through Liberia. Sierra Leonean commanders who had served under Taylor took an estimated 10,000 children as combatants during the decadelong conflict, which the United Nations officially declared finished only this year.

At least the world will try to punish the boys' bosses. Last month U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed a U.S. Defense Department lawyer as chief prosecutor for the U.N.'s Sierra Leone War Crimes Tribunal. David Crane will head prosecutions at a court charged with trying violations of Sierra Leonean and international humanitarian law since Nov. 30, 1996—the date when rebels signed a peace accord that later collapsed. RUF rebel leader Foday Sankoh will be among the first to go to trial. He has been jailed since May 2000.

But many of the big fish may wriggle free. The rebels didn't keep good records. Unlike the Balkans, where war-crimes cases are succeeding, none of Sierra Leone's neighbors supports prosecutions; these countries are all implicated. The biggest fish of all is Taylor, who has no interest in cooperating. If the West hopes to extract pledges of support from other countries in the region, it will have to condition aid on their compliance. Finally, the victimized societies need to look inward, to ask themselves hard questions about what they have done to encourage

the treatment of people as commodities. A nation like Sierra Leone will cheat itself if it expects foreigners alone to deliver a cure. Child warriors everywhere need elders to look up to.

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Child Soldiers' Stories

Read and listen to the stories of child soldiers in *Newsweek* and on the Radio Netherlands and BBC World Service Web sites. Use specific examples to answer these questions:

1. How do child soldiers' lives change once they become warriors?
2. What physical abuses do they face?
3. What emotional hardships are related to being a child soldier?
4. How do child soldiers cope with physical and emotional exploitation?
5. When a government allows the use of child soldiers what is lost by the country, the society and individuals?
6. What war crimes have child soldiers committed? Should child soldiers be considered criminals or victims?
7. What dreams do child soldiers have for the future?

Child Labor Module Series
Child Soldiers

LESSON 3

Taking Aim at Small Arms

LESSON 3



Taking Aim at Small Arms

LESSON OVERVIEW

One of the contributing factors to the growing use of child soldiers is the availability of small arms. This lesson examines the use of small arms, their impact, and the actions being taken to eliminate their use. Students will use an Internet exhibit by UNICEF as the basis for creating a presentation about the interrelationship between small arms and child soldiers.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- ✎ Describe the interrelationship between small arms and child soldiers
- ✎ Design and conduct a classroom presentation about the use of small arms using Internet resources.

CONCEPTS

Technology, conflict, socialization, mass production, recruitment, demobilization

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What are small arms? How and where are they manufactured?
- What is the interrelationship between the availability of small arms and child soldiers?
- How have small arms impacted the participation of children in warfare?
- What actions are being taken to keep small arms out of the hands of children?
- What actions are being taken to eliminate the use of child soldiers in combat?

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- ☑ Computers with Internet access
- ☑ LCD projector
- ☑ UNICEF Internet exhibit, “Taking Aim at Small Arms,” at <http://www.unicef.org/smallarms/exhibit/>.
- ☑ Handout #1 for Lesson 3

SUGGESTED DURATION

2 class periods

COURSE CONNECTIONS

American History, World History, Government, Global Studies, Current Events

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING THE LESSON

1) Introduce the interrelationship between small arms and the increased use of child soldiers by viewing the introduction to “Taking aim at small arms,” at <http://www.unicef.org/smallarms/exhibit>. Using the facts presented in the introduction, have students label the facts on Handout #1 as “CAUSES” and “EFFECTS.” Discuss the nature and extent of the problem of small arms.

2) Divide the class into five groups. Each group will use segments of the “Taking aim at small arms” exhibit to design a presentation. Suggested group segments:

Group 1: What are small arms? (2 sub-sections) & Small arms, small victims (2 sub-sections)

Group 2: Children as soldiers (4 sub-sections)

Group 3: The arms trade (4 sub-sections)

Group 4: Call to action (5 sub-sections)

Group 5: Healing Through Art – found in “The Gallery”

Groups 1-4 should locate the photographs in The Gallery’s Photo Exhibit that correlate with their presentation topic.

3) The text portions of the “Taking aim at small arms” segments can be printed from the Web site for use during presentation planning.

4) Students are to take notes as presentations are made in order to complete the evaluation task.

EVALUATION

Using data from the group presentations, students will create a graphic organizer, such as a ‘web,’ showing the interrelationship between small arms and child soldiers. (A ‘web’ is constructed by placing a circle in the center of a piece of paper and writing “Small arms/child soldiers” in the circle. Students draw connecting circles that show the major ideas and situations related to the topic. Sub-topics are shown as spokes leading from the connecting circles.) After completing the graphic organizer, students will write a summary of the interrelationship between manufacturing and sale of small arms and child soldiers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EXTENDING THE LESSON

Debate this question:

If small arms were unavailable to combatants, would the use of child soldiers decrease?

Use data from “Taking aim at small arms” to build arguments for each side of the issue.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Boutwell, Jeffery and Michael T. Klare. “A Scourge of Small Arms.” *Scientific American*, June, 2000, 48-54.

Lesson 3

Handout #1

These facts come from the introduction to “Taking Aim at Small Arms” found at <http://www.unicef.org/smallarms/exhibit>. Label each fact as a CAUSE or EFFECT of the use of small arms by child soldiers:

_____ One half billion light weapons are circulating throughout the world.

_____ Children are often forced to become fighters, human shields, spies, porters or sex slaves.

_____ As many as 90 percent of the casualties are civilians caught in the crossfire. The majority are women and children.

_____ In early 2001, some 600 factories in more than 95 countries throughout the world were legally producing small arms and light weapons.

_____ In societies destabilized by the use of small arms and light weapons, children are denied many of their human rights.

_____ “It is immoral that adults should want children to fight their wars for them..
...There is simply no excuse, no acceptable argument for arming children.”
– Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu

_____ The light weight and small size of these weapons has made it possible for combatants to exploit children as soldiers.

_____ When a country is in the throes of such violent turmoil, its children pay a heavy price.

_____ “For the United Nations, there is no higher goal, no deeper commitment and no greater ambition than preventing armed conflict.” – Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Child Labor Module Series
Child Soldiers

LESSON 4

*Strategies to Eliminate
Child Soldiers*

LESSON 4



Strategies to Eliminate Child Soldiers

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will study the efforts by the international community to stop the use of child soldiers and to reintegrate former child soldiers into their communities. Students will become familiar with two major inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), namely the ILO-IPEC and UNICEF and some key international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to eliminate the use of child soldiers.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- ✎ Learn how two inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) work to combat child soldiers.
- ✎ Learn about major non-governmental (NGO) organizations' work to contribute to the global effort to combat child soldiers

CONCEPTS

IGOs, NGOs, civil society, international cooperation and collaboration

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How are international organizations working to end the use of child soldiers?
- What international standards and protocols address the use of child soldiers?
- What have governments been doing to eliminate the use of child soldiers?
- What are civil society organizations, or NGOs doing to contribute to the effort to eliminate the use of child soldiers?

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- ☑ Reading #1: United Nations, *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict*, United Nations, 2002. ("The Child Soldiers Protocol"). Available at <http://hrw.org/campaigns/crp/protocol.htm>.
- ☑ Computers with Internet access

SUGGESTED DURATION

2-3 class periods

COURSE CONNECTIONS

American History, World History, Government, Global Studies, Current Events

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING THE LESSON

This lesson focuses on the attempts of organizations and governments to end the recruitment/use of child soldiers. The importance of studying such attempts is well stated by Walt Werner:

One cannot live in this media-rich culture without feeling some unease about the future. Weekly we encounter disturbing images of urgent proportions. A litany of enormous challenges - including poverty and famine, human rights abuses and repression, desertification and ecological stress, social chaos and international debts - confronts our increasingly interdependent world....

Anyone who is a teacher is necessarily an optimist. Our working with young people represents a commitment to the future. We are teaching for hope. . .Essential to hope is a knowledgeable and reflective confidence in the future and a willingness to engage it. The future, whether one's own or that of a larger group, is seen as open, having possibilities rather than foreclosed or predetermined. This belief entails confidence that current problems and worrisome trends can be addressed in response to care and effort, that good planning and strategic action taken today can have significant consequences. In short, hope expresses itself as a "Yes" to tomorrow....

Our goal is to encourage the development of those abilities and dispositions that allow young people to engage in appropriate personal, social and political action. Hope is indistinguishable from a belief that individuals and groups influence and shape their futures through action. A strong sense of personal efficacy is a driving force behind any achievement. Without it there is little open-mindedness to new ideas, willingness to reflect on one's own plans, or motivation and confidence in becoming proactive. To paraphrase Saul Alinsky, "There can be no darker or more devastating tragedy than the death of people's faith in themselves and in their power to direct their future. Denial of the opportunity for participation is the denial of human dignity. . ." Students need to understand why they are not powerless to make a contribution at some level.

Fostering efficacy is not an add-on to studies of global issues, but should be part and parcel of the ongoing discussions:

- *focus on the worldwide extent of agencies, partnerships and networks engaged in problem solving. Young people are not aware of the range of groups - whether governments, international institutions, non-governmental organizations, grassroots community initiatives, or the private sector - committed to action and*

what they are doing. The important understanding here is that the difficulties facing our interdependent globe are being worked on by many people in various ways.

- *infuse good news stories about the successes that individuals, groups and institutions are having in their actions. Elicit examples of actions that have been and are being taken to solve problems.*
- *encourage discussion of personal actions that could be taken at home and in the school or community...*

The complexity of issues and problems does not preclude consideration of meaningful action: What can I personally do? Is there collective action that we should plan?

Depending upon the age and circumstances of students, activities may involve letter writing, changing one's consumer habits, attending a seminar for further information, joining the work of a community organization, or forming a school club. Appropriate action is not only a way to apply what is learned, but also a means for understanding issues better and strengthening efficacy.

Walt Werner, "Teaching for Hope," in Roland Case and Penny Clark eds., *The Canadian Anthology of Social Studies* (Pacific Educational Press, Vancouver, CA: 1999) 249-253.

Activity 1

- 1) Ask students what actions the world community might take in order to reduce the forced recruitment of children. Chart student ideas on the board or a transparency.
- 2) Examine the actions of the world community by reading the protocols about child soldiers that have been passed. Discuss Reading #1 (Child Soldiers Protocol), which is a summary of the features of the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The full text of the Optional Protocol is available at (<http://www.unicef.org/crc/annex1.htm>). In article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, governments are urged to ensure that children are not involved in hostilities. The Optional Protocol specifies additional criteria for meeting this goal.
- 3) Discuss why states would or would not be willing to ratify the Optional Protocol.
- 4) Check to see which countries have ratified the Optional Protocol at <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/ratifications.htm>. Discuss why some countries have not signed the Optional Protocol.
- 5) Explain that on March 13, 2003, the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the child on the involvement of children in armed conflict came into force with 109 countries signing and 51 countries ratifying the Optional Protocol.

Activity 2

Examine the actions of three inter-governmental organizations, particularly the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

1) ILO-IPEC

Through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC), the ILO works to combat child labor in general and child soldiers specifically. Research IPEC's website to learn about the ILO-IPEC's programs and strategies. Visit: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/index.htm>. If you have trouble accessing this page, visit www.ilo.org and click on "Child Labor: IPEC." The ILO encourages the ratification of Convention No 182. It calls for immediate action to ban the worst forms of child labor, which include forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. The full text of the Convention can be found at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/ratification/convention/text.htm>. Juan Somavia, Director General of the ILO, says this about the convention:

Very simply, it defines the worst forms of child labor and asks all governments to ban them. Make sure everyone knows about them. Pass new laws if needed. Monitor and enforce them. Be creative in wiping out the root causes. Plug leaky borders by working together with other governments and citizens to make the agreement hold water. I pledge our maximum effort to make this happen. We are campaigning. We are working in every country that invites us in (now some 60) on action strategies to take girls and boys out of this exploitation. And we are continually learning, gathering facts, analyzing patterns of what works and what doesn't, aiming to work smarter and more effectively each day.

As of September 23, 2003, 144 countries have ratified Convention 182. Check the progress of the ratification on the map at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/ratification/map/index.htm>.

Compare the ratifying countries with those that have signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Why might a country ratify one and not the other?

2) UNICEF

UNICEF, an agency of the United Nations, has been working to promote children's welfare for over 50 years. The agency's current work is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Have students visit UNICEF's *Voices of Youth* Website and click Explore to read about children's views and experiences of war, http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/rights/explore_151.html. Instruct them to research UNICEF's agenda and strategies to combat the use of child soldiers.

Share UNICEF's mission statement with students and discuss what it means to them and how it can benefit the international community's effort to stop the use of child soldiers.

Have students read the mission statement out loud. Get them to focus on the paragraph that is most relevant to child soldiers and children in war (see paragraph in bold).

UNICEF's mission statement

UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.

UNICEF insists that the survival, protection and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress.

UNICEF mobilizes political will and material resources to help countries, particularly developing countries, ensure a "first call for children" and to build their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families.

UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children - victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities.

UNICEF responds in emergencies to protect the rights of children. In coordination with United Nations partners and humanitarian agencies, UNICEF makes its unique facilities for rapid response available to its partners to relieve the suffering of children and those who provide their care.

UNICEF is non-partisan and its cooperation is free of discrimination. In everything it does, the most disadvantaged children and the countries in greatest need have priority.

UNICEF aims, through its country programmes, to promote the equal rights of women and girls and to support their full participation in the political, social, and economic development of their communities.

UNICEF works with all its partners towards the attainment of the sustainable human development goals adopted by the world community and the realization of the vision of peace and social progress enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

(http://www.unicef.org/about/who/index_mission.html)

Ask students: "Can you relate UNICEF's mission statement to child soldiers? Can you suggest some strategies to help realize this mission?" Break students into small groups and ask them to address these questions.

3) Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict

<http://www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/>

The Secretary-General appointed Mr. Olara A. Otunnu as his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in September 1997. In announcing the appointment, the Secretary-General underscored the urgent need for a public advocate and moral voice on behalf of children whose rights and well-being have been and are being violated in the context of armed conflict.

The role of the Special Representative is to act as:

- **Advocate**- building awareness of the needs of war-affected children
- **Catalyst** - proposing ideas and approaches to enhance the protection of children in war
- **Convenor** - bringing together key actors within and outside the UN to promote more concerted and effective responses, and
- **Facilitator** - undertaking humanitarian and diplomatic initiatives to unblock difficult political situations

Key elements of the mandate:

- **Assess** progress achieved and difficulties encountered in strengthening the protection of children in situations of armed conflict
- **Raise Awareness** and promote the collection of information about the plight of children affected by conflict
- **Encourage the development of networking and foster international cooperation** to ensure the protection and rehabilitation of children affected by conflict

Ask students to come up with ways they might assist the Special Representative to achieve his mandate. Break students into small groups and have them come up with their ideas. Then chart these ideas on the board.

Activity 3

Research and report about the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are working to end the use of child soldiers. Below are some of the many NGOs engaged in the global effort to eliminate the use of child soldiers. Have students research each site to identify the organization's agenda and strategies.

The International Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

<http://www.child-soldier.org>

The U.S. Campaign to Ban the Use of Child Soldiers

<http://www.us-childsoldiers.org>

Human Rights Watch

<http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/index.htm>

Scroll down to “Global Issues” and click on “Children’s Rights” to learn about Human Rights Watch’s efforts to eliminate the use of child soldiers.

Kids Can Free the Children

<http://www.freethechildren.org/>

Visit “Youth in Action” and click on “War-Affected Children” to learn more about Free the Children’s work on children in armed conflicts. Direct link is: http://www.freethechildren.com/youthinaction/war_affected_children.htm.

The United Students Association for Action Against the Use of Child Soldiers

(USA4Action) is a network of college and university students supporting the current US campaign to stop the use of child soldiers. E-mail: usa4action@hotmail.com

Amnesty International – Child Soldiers

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/children/soldiers/>

One World

http://www.oneworld.org/child_rights/ch_war.html

EVALUATION

After reviewing the work of IGOs and NGOs, students should have an idea of how these organizations function. They should be able to form their own student group to contribute to the global effort to stop the use of child soldiers. Have them come up with a name of their own organization. Then break them up into small groups (5 groups of 5) and have them come up with the following:

- 1) Their group’s mandate and mission statement
- 2) Programs (for short and long-term goals)
- 3) Education and Outreach activities
- 4) Identify other partners to collaborate (IGOs and NGOs they have learned about and others they may have found on their own)
- 5) Come up with publicity campaign to inform the public about their organization

Note: Teachers can decide to limit the number of activities based on class size.

Have students select a presenter from each group and present the result of each group’s discussion to the entire class.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EXTENDING THE LESSON

Strategies to stop the use of child soldiers include demobilizing and reintegrating children into society. Both are extremely complex issues that involve coordination at the community level, counseling, education, job/skills training, locating family members and ensuring safe transport and return of children, etc. There is also an additional complication when attempting to reach child soldiers belonging to armed opposition groups as opposed to government forces. Such complexities are also opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of the issue.

1. Discuss how a country could demobilize and reintegrate its child soldiers. What challenges would that task present? Instruct students to listen to internet audio recordings, or read about two countries that are demobilizing child soldiers. They should write a comparison of the two accounts that include the goals, strategies and outcomes of each effort.

Internet Audio Resources

- A. BBC News, "Child Soldiers to Be Disarmed," BBC News, May 25, 2000
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/764230.stm>
- B. BBC News, "Child Soldiers to Swap guns for PCs," BBC News, May 25, 2002
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1886248.stm>
- C. BBC News, "Congo Demobilises Child soldiers," BBC News, December 18, 2001
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/world/africa/1718545.stm>
- D. BBC News, "Rehabilitating Sudan's Boy Soldiers," BBC News, May 4, 2001
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1313271.stm>
- E. Kenneth Walker, "Child Soldier Rehab," National Public Radio, July 6, 2000
<http://www.npr.org> (Open archives and type in program title)
- F. Ivan Watson, "Child Soldiers of Sierra Leone," National Public Radio, July 11, 2001
<http://www.npr.org> (Open archives and type in program title)

Print Resources

- A. Accounts of the reintegration of child soldiers into society have been published by the *Christian Science Monitor*. They can be found on electronic periodical services (such as EBSCO Host) or in public libraries. They can also be purchased from *Christian Science Monitor's* archives (<http://www.csmonitor.com>). These two stories are recommended:

- 1) Christian Science Monitor, "Aid Agencies help to Rid Child Soldiers of War's Scars," Christian Science Monitor, October 30, 2001.
 - 2) Christian Science Monitor, "In Sudan, soldiers become children again," Christian Science Monitor, September 6, 2001.
- B.** Yvonne E. Keairns, *The Voices of Girl Child Soldiers*, Quaker UN Office, October 2002. This report can be found in the American Friends Service Committee web site <http://www.afsc.org/issues/>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

According to Human Rights Watch, there are four kinds of international law relevant to child soldiers: international human rights law, international humanitarian law, international criminal law and international labor law. Consult <http://hrw.org/campaigns/crp/int-law.htm> for more information.

Also view:

UNICEF, *3551: Demobilization of Child Soldiers in Southern Sudan*, 26 min., UNICEF: 2001
Order at <http://www.unicef.org/vidcat/order.html>

Cost: \$15.00 / Length: 26 minutes

UNICEF Summary of film: 3551 is the number of child soldiers taken away from front lines and offered new hope in a place ravaged by one of Africa's longest running wars. These boys are in the Sudan Peoples Liberation army and they have never known peace. Peter Malwien is one of those boys and he's lost both of his parents to the war. We follow Peter as aircraft from the UN's World Food Programme are diverted from usual humanitarian tasks and more than two and a half thousand boys are lifted by air to the Rumbek area. At the camps, built where the children are to live until they can be returned to their homes, Peter, who has never been to school begins to imagine new and exciting challenges. Finally, we watch Peter's hard journey home and the reconciliation with his remaining family members.

(http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/video_3567.html)

The Child Soldiers Protocol

A Summary of Key Provisions by Human Rights Watch

<http://hrw.org/campaigns/crp/protocol.htm>

In 2000, a dramatic breakthrough was achieved in efforts to end the use of children as soldiers. On January 21, after six years of negotiations, governments from around the world agreed on a new international treaty to prohibit the use of children as combatants.

The new child soldiers protocol establishes eighteen as the minimum age for direct participation in hostilities, for compulsory recruitment, and for any recruitment or use in hostilities by non-governmental armed groups. It is technically an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Previous international standards had allowed children as young as fifteen to be legally recruited and sent into war. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (which has been ratified by every government except the United States and Somalia) generally defines a child as any person under the age of eighteen. However, in situations of armed conflict, the convention set the lower age of fifteen as the minimum age for recruitment and participation in armed conflict. The new protocol helps to correct this anomaly.

The new protocol was adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly on May 25, 2000, and opened for signature in early June. By August 2002, two years after its adoption, 109 countries had signed it, and 35 countries had ratified it. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers is campaigning for universal ratification of the protocol.

Key provisions of the Protocol:

- * **Participation in Hostilities:** Governments must take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces that are under the age of eighteen do not take a direct part in hostilities.
- * **Conscription:** Governments must not conscript (compulsorily recruit) any persons under the age of eighteen.
- * **Irregular Armed Groups:** Rebel or other irregular armed groups are prohibited from recruiting under-18s or using them in hostilities. Governments are required to criminalize such practices and take other measures to prevent the recruitment and use of children by such groups.
- * **Voluntary recruitment:** Governments must raise their minimum age for voluntary recruitment beyond the current minimum of fifteen, and must deposit a binding declaration stating the minimum age they will respect. (In practice, this means the minimum age for voluntary recruitment is sixteen.) Governments recruiting under-18s must maintain a series of safeguards, ensuring that such recruitment is genuinely voluntary; is done with the informed consent of the person's parents or legal guardians; that recruits are fully informed of the duties involved in military service; and that proof of age is established.

- * **Implementation:** Governments must demobilize children recruited or used in violation of the protocol, and provide appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration assistance.
- * **Ratification:** All governments can sign and ratify the protocol, regardless of whether or not they have ratified the underlying Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- * **Monitoring:** Governments must submit a report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child within two years of ratifying the protocol, providing comprehensive information on the measures it has taken to implement the protocol. Thereafter, follow-up reports are made every five years.

Child Labor Module Series
Child Soldiers

LESSON 5

Soldiers for Peace

LESSON 5



Soldiers for Peace

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will learn how youths in Colombia have organized the Children's Movement for Peace in order to create peace in their homes, communities, and country. Students will write a dialogue between a child soldier and a member of the Children's Movement for Peace to show that they understand each group's perspectives and circumstances.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- ✎ Identify the political, social and economic conditions in Colombia that foster violence
- ✎ Identify the purposes, activities, and achievements of the Children's Movement for Peace in Colombia
- ✎ Describe the efforts of individuals involved in the Children's Movement for Peace
- ✎ Analyze why young people in Colombia have been willing to risk their own safety in order to promote peace
- ✎ Compare and contrast the circumstances, fears and dreams of a child soldier in Colombia and a member of the Children's Movement for Peace
- ✎ Complete an action plan related to eliminating the use of child soldiers.

CONCEPTS

Peace, personal and community participation

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- ➡ What efforts can and should individuals make to reduce violence?
- ➡ How much risk should an individual take to reduce violence?
- ➡ How can youths work to reduce violence?
- ➡ What can an individual do to help eliminate the use of child soldiers?

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- ☑ Computer with Internet access
- ☑ Website: CNN/Turner Learning, *Soldiers of Peace*, CNN/Turner Learning, 1999, <http://www.turnerlearning.com/cnn/soldiers/intro.html>

☑Video: Kyra Thompson, *Soldiers for Peace*, CNN/Turner Learning, 1999, <http://www.unicef.org/vidcat/377/index.html>.

☑Book: Sara Cameron, *Out of War* (Scholastic Press, 2001).

SUGGESTED DURATION

1-2 class periods

COURSE CONNECTIONS

American History, World History, Government, Global Studies, Current Events

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING THE LESSON

Activity 1

1. This lesson introduces students to the Children's Movement for Peace (CMP) in Colombia. It is a group of youth who organized and petitioned for a national special election about the future of Colombia. "The Children's Mandate for Peace and Rights" election was held in October 1996. Over 2.7 million Colombian children voted in the election. UNICEF, The National Network for Peace Initiatives, the Red Cross, the Scout Federation and the Catholic Church supported the initiative. Subsequently, the CMP was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize (the first time children had ever been nominated) and five members were invited to participate in the Hague Appeal for Peace Conference on May 11-15, 1999, in the Netherlands. The movement is an example of how youths can be positive change agents in the world.
2. Read the background information about the CMP and the profiles of the individuals involved at <http://turnerlearning.com/cnn/soldiers/intro.html>. Prepare a brief presentation for students about the CMP.
3. Use the video, *Soldiers for Peace*, and the accompanying learning activities from the CNN Web site, to provide additional background about the individuals involved in the CMP and their strategies for change.

Additional profiles and stories about the CMP are available at

<http://www.unicefusa.org/peace/stories.html>, and

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1999/children/stories/child.soldiers/>

4. Discuss the risks the CMP members took, their successes and disappointments. Provide this update from Sara Cameron in August, 2002, about the CMP members:
 - A) Juan Elias and his family are still waiting for political asylum in the U.S.

- B) Farlis speaks good English after spending a year in California. She is now back studying in Bogota.
- C) Johemir avoided conscription into the army and is a university student in Bogota.
- D) Wilfrido is studying via the Internet in Apartado. Things are very tough for him. His home area is extremely violent.
- E) Mayerly's family fell into economic difficulties after her father left home. She's managing to continue her studies in communications. She addressed the General Assembly of the UN in May during the UN Special Session on Children, <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/>.

All of the children are still engaged in peace work except for Maritza, who is having a difficult time with drugs.

- 5) Using facts from the video and Internet resources, discuss *Out of War* author Sara Cameron's assessment of the Movement:

the real achievement of the Movement is the light it sheds on how young people must be involved in peace making. It isn't enough to just protect or even just to educate those who live with violence. We have to help young people understand that they have the power and the capacity to build a different world -- and one that doesn't rest on more violence. Too often such kids have only two choices, to hide from violence or to join in with it. As adolescents they want to define who they are. If they have been driven from their homes by war they may lose faith in their parents, their community leaders, their government to protect their futures. They see those who drove them from their homes by force as having the greatest power. It's a "logical" step then to see force and violence as the answer to protecting your own future (as well as seeking revenge.) The Children's Movement taught me that when young people talk openly about what war does to them, when we find ways to help them engage in finding solutions, in helping other younger kids, in improving their communities in whatever way, we give kids affected by violence a third choice... and a way out of war. In some ways it means letting kids put their education to work faster, sooner – proving to them that learning works.

Activity 2

1. The Children's Movement for Peace is an effort to change a culture of war to a culture of peace. After completing Reading #1, identify how the Children's Movement for Peace is contributing to a culture of peace. What additional steps could the young people take to change their culture from one of war to one of peace? What have the Colombian children accomplished that other youths should emulate?
2. Open a concluding discussion with the following questions: What needs to happen for the transition from a war culture to a peace culture to become permanent? Who has the ultimate responsibility to make that happen?

Activity 3

1. Assign students to design a personal action plan to stop the use of child soldiers. Examples of existing campaigns can be found at the following websites:

Human Rights Watch: <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/whatdo.htm>

Say Yes to Children Campaign: http://www.netaid.org/SayYes/en/new_index_html

U.S. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers: <http://www.us-childsoldiers.org/join.html>

Amnesty International: <http://www.amnesty.org>

2. Students can plan events (films, speakers, posters) to raise awareness about the use of child soldiers in their school. Dates to consider include:

September 18: International Day of Peace

November 19: World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse

November 20: International Children's Day

December 10: Human Rights Day

The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World began in 2000 and extends to 2010.

EVALUATION

Write a two-voice poem or dialogue that reflects the viewpoints of a member of the Children's Movement for Peace and a child soldier in Colombia. Present the poems or dialogues in class. Incorporate each individual's experiences, values, fears and dreams in the poem or dialogue.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EXTENDING THE LESSON

The Children's Movement for Peace has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Write a newspaper editorial supporting this nomination. Research other groups that have received the Nobel Peace and compare the Children's Movement for Peace to those organizations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BOOKS

Abrams, Irwin. *The Nobel Peace Prize and the Laureates: An Illustrated Biographical History, 1901-2001*. Science History Publications, 2001. ISBN: 0881353884

Keene, Ann T. *Peacemakers: Winners of the Nobel Peace Prize*. Oxford University Press, 1998. ISBN 0195103165.

PEOPLE

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WEB SITES

Nobel e-Museum, <http://www.nobel.se/peace/index.html>, presents all the peace laureates, their acceptance speeches, biographical information, and links to additional resources.

Official Web site (in Spanish) for the Children's Movement for Peace, <http://www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Creek/8238/index.htm>. Open "Imágenes del Movimiento" for photographs.

Sara Cameron, <http://www.saracameron.org>

UNICEF, <http://www.unicef.org/children-in-war/feature-peaceed.html>, reports on programs for promoting peace in war-torn regions.