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Radio Program Teaches Students and Citizens about Protection of Children

Over two million Zimbabwean children country-wide will benefit from a multi-media awareness campaign on child protection. Children First, in partnership with Population Services International (PSI) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), launched a media campaign on November 5, in Bulawayo featuring a weekly radio drama program. The program highlights the rights and protection of children as its centerpiece and is aired on Radio Zimbabwe.

The program includes two radio dramas. The first, in Shona, is entitled “Kuziva Mbuya Huudzwa” and focuses on creating awareness of children’s rights based on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The second, in Ndebele, “Luthando,” focuses on protection of children. Broadcast over 26 weeks, the radio drama program is complemented by workbooks and exercise packets educators can use to guide discussions with children’s groups. Children First is also providing schools with interactive CD recordings of the dramas and other educational and social support messages.

The launch in Bulawayo marks the second phase of a campaign begun in Harare in October and focuses on protection of children from all forms of abuse. The ceremony was held at Esigodini Primary School. “We are excited about this campaign, which is both fun and educational,” said Susan Kajura, Chief of Party at Children First. She said special emphasis will be given to Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC), but the dramas also target OVC caregivers, child protection committees, teachers and school development committees and children all over Zimbabwe.

USAID Health and Education Team Leader Peter Halpert also hailed the program. “We enthusiastically support the radio drama, which seeks to raise awareness among children on ways to protect themselves against abuse and what to do if it does occur.” USAID is funding the program through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which works to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on orphaned and vulnerable children.

In addition to Radio Zimbabwe listeners, program organizers plan to reach an estimated 55,000 students through “listener groups” established in 53 schools and community-based organizations in the Harare and Umzingwane Districts.

Children First is implemented by World Education/Bantwana in collaboration with John Snow, Inc. and other national and international partners. Children First is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, which has provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 40 years. For more information on USAID programs in Zimbabwe, please visit www.usaid.gov/zw.

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