

# Children First

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## **Media Awareness Campaign Focuses on Children's Rights**

**Harare, October 21, 2009** – Over 2 million Zimbabwean children country-wide will benefit from a multi-media awareness campaign on child rights by Children First, in partnership with Population Services International (PSI).

The campaign will feature a weekly radio drama program broadcast on Radio Zimbabwe as its centerpiece. Broadcast over 26 weeks, the radio drama program will be complemented by distribution of exercise packs that educators can use to guide discussions with children's groups. Children First is also providing schools with interactive CDs that will have the dramas and other educational and social support messages.

The campaign was launched in Harare today at a ceremony attended by representatives of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Childline Children's Ambassador and organizations working on children's rights.

"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.

Speaking at the launch, Amy Tohill-Stull, USAID Program Officer, hailed the program saying her organisation's commitment to supporting the initiative was aimed at filling the information gap on children's rights.

I am certain that the radio drama will successfully encourage responsible adults and communities to come together to look for ways to ensure that all Zimbabwean children have access to health care, education, sufficient food, shelter, and loving homes," said Tohill-Stull.

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.

There will be two dramas broadcast. The first drama, in Shona, is entitled "Kuziva Mbuya Huudzwa" and was developed and rehearsed in Harare by local theatre group Theory X-Media. The main focus of the drama will be creating awareness around children's rights based on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Ingwe Studios in Bulawayo developed and rehearsed the second drama in Ndebele, "Luthando," which focuses primarily on child protection. Both production companies received training on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

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 Harare and the Umzingwane District.

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Children First is implemented by World Education/Bantwana in collaboration with John Snow, Inc. and other national and international partners.