



EMPOWER Project Launches in Zambia



US Ambassador to Zambia, Eric Schultz delivering a speech. Photo credit: Gilles Kasongo

On June 6, 2017, United States Department of Labor (USDOL) officially launched the project “Increasing Economic and Social Empowerment for Adolescent Girls and Vulnerable Women in Zambia” (EMPOWER), which aims to reduce the prevalence of child labor in the Eastern Province of Zambia. The project launch took place in Chipata district of the Province. At its opening event U.S. Ambassador to Zambia, Eric Schultz, Provincial Permanent Secretary, Chanda Kasolo, and EMPOWER Project Director Beyant Kabwe, gave introductory remarks and highlighted EMPOWER’s project objectives implemented by Winrock International and partners

Panos Institute Southern Africa (PANOS) and Women and Resources in Eastern and Southern Africa (WARESA). The project received \$5 million from the USDOL to implement its objectives over the course of four years, from 2016 to 2020.

EMPOWER will operate in the Chipata district, which includes Chipata, Chipangali, and Kasenengwa, and the Lundazi district, including Lundazi and Chasefu. It will support four long-term outcomes: (1) Adolescent girls engaged in or at high risk of entering child labor have increased access to acceptable work and high-quality training opportunities; (2) Vulnerable women whose households have children engaged in or at high risk of entering child labor have increased livelihood opportunities; (3) Public awareness on child labor and gender equality is increased; and (4) There is greater collaboration between the government and private sector on the promotion of acceptable work for adolescent girls and vulnerable women.

EMPOWER Launch Opening Event

Ambassador Schultz stressed the U.S. government’s commitment to support development

“THE EMPOWER ZAMBIA PROJECT IS A FLAGSHIP OF THE LET GIRLS LEARN INITIATIVE.” – AMBASSADOR SCHULTZ

in Zambia, stating, “Zambia is a major recipient of United States government assistance, totaling more than \$500 million this past year alone (i.e. 2016); the \$5 million EMPOWER project is just one small part of that assistance.” Shultz continued, “The EMPOWER Zambia project is a flagship of the ‘Let Girls Learn initiative,’” urging stakeholders to give as much support as they could to this project. Provincial Permanent Secretary reiterated the Zambian government’s efforts in combatting child labor and the strides it has made in the ratification and domestication of international instruments against child labor.

Its opening event included entertainment from a dance group and school children who performed sketches addressing how the EMPOWER project is important for communities to participate in. A rural-based business woman told a story about a similar project that empowered her economically while living with a disability. High-level officials from the provincial government offices and the United States Embassy in Zambia attended the event, as well as district government representatives from seven districts: Chipata, Chadiza, Petauke, Lundazi, Katete, Mambwe and Vubwi, representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector organizations, and the media houses.

The event aired live in most parts of the eastern Province and also aired in parts of Malawi and Mozambique. It was covered by the Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS), which used recordings in different news and current affairs programs on national television and radio. Interviews were also conducted during the live broadcast.

The project launch not only introduced EMPOWER project as an initiative designed to address child labor through economic empowerment initiatives for vulnerable communities but also opened avenues for constructive engagement and

collaboration with key partners and stakeholders from the public, private and civil society that participated in the event.



From left: PS Chanda Kasolo, Ambassador Eric Schultz, and Project Director Beyant Kabwe after cutting ribbon. Photo credit: Gillies Kasongo