



Zambia EMPOWER Child Labor Prevalence Study in Eastern Province

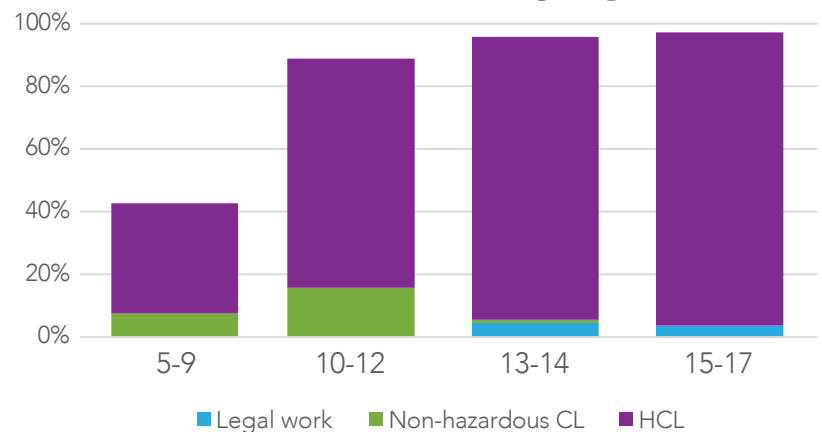
EMPOWER: Increasing Economic and Social Empowerment for Adolescent Girls and Vulnerable Women in Zambia prioritizes girls that are already in, or at risk of, child labor. Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), the project conducted a child labor prevalence survey in the project area in five districts (Chipata, Katete, Petauke, Lundazi and Chandiza) of Eastern Province.

Using child labor definitions that are consistent with international guidelines and the legal framework for Zambia, the survey found that a high percentage of children are classified as being engaged in hazardous child labor, or HCL (Figure 1). Over 90 percent of children over age 12 are in HCL, and girls are slightly more likely to be in HCL than boys at all ages. However, the reasons these children are classified as being in HCL are different than we might expect; most of them are lifting and carrying loads that are too heavy for their size.

Moreover, most children in HCL are working for their families, not at an outside paid job. The majority are doing agricultural work on the family farm, and a substantial group (22 percent of girls) have earned their HCL classification only through fetching water and wood for the family.

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Work status by age



Reason for HCL classification for children aged 10–17

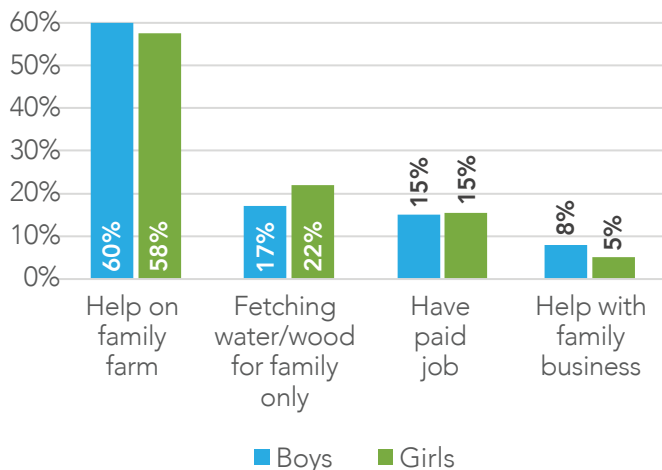
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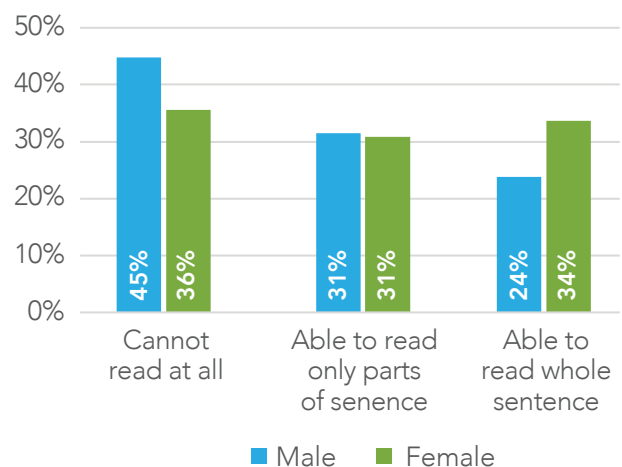
Of great concern is the low level of literacy found by the survey. Children aged 10-17 were asked to read a simple sentence at the Grade 3 primary level. Nearly half of the boys (45 percent) and more than one third of the girls (36 percent) were not able to read the sentence at all.

These key findings must be communicated to parents, local authorities, government leaders and all who have a stake in developing Zambia’s key human resource. Maintaining low literacy levels and engagement of children, particularly girls, in hazardous child labor will not accelerate the country’s goal to achieve its national and international commitments for Zambian children.

Type of work of children aged 10-17 in HCL by sex



Reading ability of children aged 10-17 by sex



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