

## Community Perspectives on Research Consent Involving Vulnerable Children in Western Kenya

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### Abstract:

Involving vulnerable pediatric populations in international research requires culturally appropriate ethical protections. We sought to use mabaraza, traditional East African community assemblies, to understand how a community in western Kenya viewed participation of children in health research and informed consent and assent processes. Results from 108 participants revealed generally positive attitudes towards involving vulnerable children in research, largely because they assumed children would directly benefit. Consent from parents or guardians was understood as necessary for participation while gaining child assent was not. They felt other caregivers, community leaders, and even community assemblies could participate in the consent process. Community members believed research involving orphans and street children could benefit these vulnerable populations, but would require special processes for consent.

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