

# Involve children in scientific research

A paradigm shift is happening in the world of research. Ugandan researchers are moving away from conducting research on children to doing research with children. Simply put, doing research with children engages children as architects of the research rather than just being researched on.

Children constitute a significant proportion of our communities and the natural way to obtain information about them is to do work with them as researchers and informants.

Recently, the AfriChild Centre, a

child-focused research organisation in Makerere University, conducted research on risk factors of violence against street-connected children. Here, street-connected children aged between seven and 13, were involved in data collection. These children conducted interviews among their peers and also took photos of areas they considered safe and unsafe. The advantage with this approach (doing research with children) is that it enables researchers understand what children think about the issues that

affect them. The appeal is for many researchers to adopt this modus operandi.

Nonetheless, while doing research with children, researchers ought to balance the objectives of the research with the safety and wellbeing of the participants. Particularly, researchers ought to obtain informed consent from children and their parents/guardians; minimise harm to the participant children; protect their privacy and be culturally sensitive.

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