

# ACYO Informed Consent Policy

## *Purpose of the Research*

This research project, *the Vulnerability of Jamaican Youth to Skin Lightening*, was conceptualized because of what seemed to be an increase in skin lightening practices among teenage youth in the island. Skin lightening products are very popular and attract significant revenue in many countries of the world. In Jamaica, the popularity of such products has been public discourse for many years, and over that period there has been a noticeable increase in the numbers of Jamaicans that are practicing some form of skin lightening. Aside from supermarkets, pharmacies, wholesales, and local shops that resell imported skin lightening products, there is also knowledge of an economy in the production and sale of indigenous skin lightening products.

It is my intention to use the research medium as a means of seeking and obtaining knowledge about the driving forces of skin lightening in Jamaica. Secondary Research that I have conducted revealed that there are several driving or motivational factors. Although the Ministry of Health facilitated a campaign on Skin Bleaching, there was no targeted research seeking to find out youth vulnerability, influences and knowledge about skin lightening. This research will be an instrument for gaining and sharing information about youth vulnerability to, influencers of, and knowledge about skin lightening. The research will generally seek to: Gather information from participants about their experiences with skin lightening; involve participants in the planning, shooting and editing of the video; involve participants in the schools' education programme; involve participants in the schools' survey programme; and involve participants in a focus group discussion session with other teens who do not use and/ or use skin lightening products.

The ultimate aim of the research is to expose direct and indirect targets to information, from different sources and perspectives, about skin lightening and thereby lead them to make an informed decision about their own practice of skin lightening. The provision of open and objective information about skin lightening is important, because in our case the direct target are teenagers, whose *Right to protection from harmful and dangerous substances* is not being realized. Through information sharing I hope to influence the 'right' choice.

## **Core Activities**

This Project is expected to be completed by May 2010. It will involve the execution of different activities at different time periods; therefore some tasks/ activities will not run concurrently over the proposed period. The following is an outline core tasks:

- In-depth Interviews
- Focus Group Discussion
- Video Preparation Session
- Video Interview #1
- Video Interview #2

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- 10 School Surveys
- Additional Footage from YouTube
- Schools' Educational Programme
- Video Editing
- Video Screening
- Final Edits
- Distribution (Child month)

## ***Procedures***

This research will be executed on the basis of mutual trust and respect amongst all stakeholders. In light of this, parties will make an effort to use positive and non-discriminatory language and behaviour, as well as talk about those practices, when they are experienced. It is expected that all stakeholders will work together as a team, and recognize the fundamental principles of human rights. This research is a learning process and all parties are equal actors within the process, who are fully entitled to all their human rights. Concerns, challenges, etc. should be expressed with urgency to the Project Leader or other officially named Project Representative that you trust. You will not be invited to participate in any activity without prior information and authorization from you and your legal representative (parent, guardian, lawyer, Justice of the Peace, etc.). It is therefore a must that you sign the Informed Consent Policy in duplicate, reserve one for yourself and return the other to the Project Representative. After receiving the properly signed sheet, we will proceed with the research activity. I understand that the issues of concern here are sensitive, personal and involving minors; therefore you are required to indicate the type of involvement on the Informed Consent Policy. This is a participatory Project and will therefore strive to be sensitive to and encourage on-going dialogue about concerns, discomforts, feelings of withdrawal, etc.

## ***Right to Decline Participation***

This is participatory Project; your involvement is ultimately dependent on you. On account of the fact that you are a minor (under 18 years) your parent or guardian's consent is also required. We respect you and your parent/ guardian's right to decline participation in this Project if that is your desire; however, I would encourage you to voice all your concerns to the Project Representative before declining, as your fears maybe the result of inadequate information or misinformation. If you are declining to be a part of this Project, please indicate at the appropriate section provided.

## ***Right to Withdrawal***

Just as you have a right to refuse participation by declining to enter the research in the first place, you also have a right to withdraw at anytime during the research. The basis of your desire to withdraw is private, but we would love if you could share it with us, so that we can improve the next time around. If you wish to withdraw from the Project please request, sign (in duplicate), and return one copy of the Project Withdrawal Form.

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## ***Consequences of declining or withdrawing***

There are no negative consequences to declining to be part of or withdrawing from the Project. This is a social research project, and therefore can only proceed ethically if you have the will to continue and has given us permission to continue. Your wish to decline or withdraw will be respected and your identity and personal information will be protected. If you previously participated in footage, a meeting will be held with the concerned parties to agree on strategies for confidentiality and anonymity.

## ***Factors influencing participant willingness***

Skin lightening is a personal issue that has received significant media and public attention, including a Government sponsored three months campaign discouraging its practice. Public critique and dismissal of skin lightening is therefore one of the factors that you must consider in your decision to be involved in this Project. It is important that you know that this research Project will be conducted in Jamaica, but the video will be distributed to an international audience. The video will be placed on sites such as YouTube and the HUB, and will be distributed to Jamaican schools and made available through youth clubs and libraries. In addition, ACYO will seek to make this issue of skin lightening amongst youth a national one because we ultimately aim to make youth aware of its damaging effect and encourage behavioural change. The film will be screened amongst in-school and out-of-school youth, as well as community organisations, parent teacher's associations, professional associations, the media, and government agencies. From these screenings ACYO will seek to make a wide cross-section of Jamaicans aware of the issue and recognize that it breaches the right of children to protection from harmful and dangerous substances. Skin lightening is a practice that is most common amongst women globally and nationally, but increasing numbers of males are practicing skin lightening. It is important that male participants consider and discuss with the Project team feelings about safety and disclosure, because there are societal stigmas/ labels in Jamaica which associate the practice with homosexuality in men. This can be very damaging for you therefore ACYO encourages you to discuss with us strategies for revealing your story from the preliminary stages of the Project. Such concerns can be solved by tailoring specific aspects as we shoot footage, for e.g. voice and facial distortions. Participants should also be aware of the emotional effect of sharing personal information with others.

## ***Prospective Research Benefits***

This social research project will benefit youth and others who are living in Jamaica, regardless of their individual vulnerability to the practice of skin lightening. The benefits include:

1. 3000 teenagers across 10 high school located in Kingston, St. Andrew, and St. Catherine knowledgeable about:
  - a. the impact of the practice on the individual
  - b. the impact of the practice on the society
  - c. the active ingredients in products

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2. Research report articulating research findings, including:
  - a. Youth vulnerability
  - b. Causes and motivational factors
  - c. Pervasiveness of the practice
3. Video on *Youth Vulnerability to Skin Lightening and Human Rights*
4. Training curriculum and resource materials for sensitizing young people about skin lightening
5. Identification of counselors to work along with students who wish to change their practice/ behaviour
6. Public recognition of the practice of skin lightening amongst youth as a human rights issue
7. Draft policy addressing the practice of skin lightening amongst Jamaican youth

### ***Incentives for participation***

Participants will be given a small research stipend for participating in research activities. This stipend will vary depending on its source: personal, project grant, donations, sponsorships, etc. This is a social research project which will benefit the entire Jamaican society, and it is therefore assumed that you would desire to be a part of information sharing and research for the good advancement of your country and humanity.

### ***Research organizers contact information***

Project Leader: St. Rachel Ustanny

Telephone: 450-0580

Email: [eloraconsulting@yahoo.com](mailto:eloraconsulting@yahoo.com)

### ***Research participants' rights***

Participants are entitled to all rights outlined by the United Nations Charters, but for a quick reminder of some that are applicable here, you have the right to:

1. Decline prior to commencement
2. Withdrawal after participation commences
3. Privacy and confidentiality
4. Anonymity
5. Informed Consent
6. Parental Consent
7. Full information about the Project
8. Information about rights
9. Information about potential consequences

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## ***Strategies for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity***

Participants and their parent/ guardian should indicate below what information they would like to be kept confidential. This will enable the research team to make special preparations for taking photos and video footage, as well as guide how we frame the stories.

## ***Parental knowledge and consent***

On account of the fact that participants are minors (under 18 years) their participation in this Project must be supported by parental knowledge and consent. In order to enable us to proceed with your participation a parent/ guardian must give his/ her consent below.

# Informed Consent Form

## Parent:

I (Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_ parent of \_\_\_\_\_ consent to the participation of my child in the in-depth or face-to-face interview activity of the *Skin Lightening Project* of ACYO, to be held on Saturday, December 1, 2007. I have read this Policy, and I am aware of the consequences of my child's involvement/ participation in this interview. I give consent to  him  her for the following:

- Receiving educational and human rights information about skin lightening
- Being interviewed only
- Being interviewed and tape recorded
- Being interviewed and photographed
- Being interviewed and video taped
- Self recordings (for the Project) using a mini video recorder
- Self recordings (for the Project) using a tape recorder
- Sharing information (for the Project) about feeling and experiences through poetry, prose and journals
- Name being used in research productions: video, training materials

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Participant

I (Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_ consent to participating in the in-depth or face-to-face interview activity of the *Skin Lightening Project* of ACYO, to be held on Saturday, December 1, 2007. I have read this Policy, and I am aware of the consequences of my involvement/ participation in this interview. I consent to:

- Receiving educational and human rights information about skin lightening
- Being interviewed only
- Being interviewed and tape recorded
- Being interviewed and photographed
- Being interviewed and video taped
- Self recordings (for the Project) using a mini video recorder
- Self recordings (for the Project) using a tape recorder
- Sharing information (for the Project) about feeling and experiences through poetry, prose and journals
- Name being used in research productions: video, training materials

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Release Form

I hereby grant to the Afro Caribbean Youth Organisation, its successors, sponsors, employees, distributors, licensees and assignees (the 'Producers'), the unrestricted permission, right and perpetual license to use my name and make still and motion pictures of me and sound recordings of my voice (the 'Materials'), and to reproduce, exhibit, broadcast, advertise and exploit all or any part thereof, in and by any media now known or hereinafter to come into existence throughout the entire world, in connection with their film, the working title of which is the *Vulnerability of Jamaican children to skin lightening and its effects*. (the 'Film') or any derivation thereof.

The Producers shall own the copyright and all extensions and renewals thereof and all rights in the Film and in the Materials, which shall be deemed a work made-for-hire for the Producers pursuant to Jamaican copyright laws.

I understand and acknowledge that the subject matter of the Film will deal with issues and events of a personal nature to me and members of my family, which may be depicted in a light favourable or unfavourable to me or my reputation, at the sole discretion of the Producers, and I hereby waive any claim to any moral rights or any violation of my rights to privacy, publicity or confidentiality pursuant to the statute or common law in connection with the Film or any other use of the Materials.

As the Producers propose to act in this Consent and Release forthwith, I hereby declare it to be irrevocable, and hereby release the Producers from any and all claims, liability, actions or demands whatsoever in connection with the use of the Materials of the Film.

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Date

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Address

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Telephone Number