

**THE JOY AND BURDEN OF CARING FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE  
CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY ON THE WELLBEING OF PRIMARY  
CAREGIVERS IN FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY, ETHIOPIA  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

**BY**

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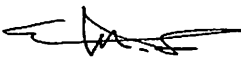
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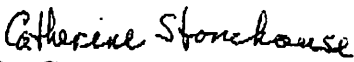
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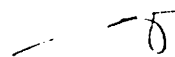
  
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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an understanding and investigation about the joy and burden of caring for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in Food for the Hungry Ethiopia Zeway Child Development Program. The study explored the factors that affect the wellbeing of OVC primary caregivers, their caring and nurturing role towards the OVC. The study provided understanding on the theoretical framework of family-based care and an assessment of its significance for childcare. It also described the theories that directly contributed and related to the wellbeing of OVC primary caregivers, and projects the logical thoughts that direct how to improve and secure the wellbeing status of the family.

The study examined a basic scientific framework for child character development and the role of primary caregivers. It gave a brief description of the scientific character and identity formation of children and the place of the caregiver or parental role in the process. The descriptions included specifics on the connection between the mental development (thinking facilities), character, identity, and social development. The content also gave description on holistic learning theories and principles for effective childcare implementation and argued that the interactive skill-based learning approach has the potential to sharpen the child's mind and thought processes in dealing with practical life experiences.

The study analyzed and presented the place of supportive community or the need of care and support for OVC primary caregivers as a key and back up those caregivers who are in extreme poverty and living with considerable wellbeing defects. Following this thought the study argued that there has been a considerable emphasis on the immediate losses and material needs of the OVC and yet the wellbeing, caring and

parental role and burden of their immediate interventionist or primary caregivers are often significantly overlooked. The effectiveness and sustainable nature of child development programs are directly related to the quality of support provided to primary caregivers, which in turn are passed on to growth in the wellbeing of the OVC. The study found out that there is a direct relation between the quality of care and support provided to primary caregivers and maintaining healthy and quality care and support to the vulnerable child. As part of the child holistic care and nurture strategy, the study provided biblical and theological precepts for caregivers, parents, and the faith community. This included instances and views from early church tradition as well.

The research used a case study method in which the data were collected using a mixed-method approach. The quantitatively structured questionnaires measured the wellbeing of primary caregivers and ascertaining issues that need to be given more attention. As a dependent variable, the condition of wellbeing depends on the status of different domains. The method is used as probing tool to move sequentially from the general investigation to the in-depth and specific study, which was set up through the qualitative tools. Through the qualitative means, multiple data collection methods such as focus group interviews, individual interviews, and informal individual interviews were carried out. These tools helped in investigating and discovering the underlying causes and effects of the caregivers' burden and sense of joy, in relation to their caring and nurturing role towards the orphan and vulnerable child. The research also looked into some other important themes, which affected the wellbeing condition of caregivers, such as relationships with supportive communities and worries for the future.

These understanding and exploration or the study led to the identification of recommendations for the improvement of the care and support approach which in turn would benefit the process of the OVC holistic care and support provided to the direct beneficiaries. The study hoped to enable Food for the Hungry (FH) Ethiopia to identify the factors that directly affect the wellbeing of primary caregiver and indirectly the OVC through the exploration of the wellbeing domain score and analyzing the burden and sense of joy that the OVC primary caregivers experience as they act out their role. Furthermore, the study recommended that the organization and the professionals need to develop a methodology and tools that can enable to make valid and sustainable intervention which improves the wellbeing of the caregiver and enhance the holistic growth of the OVC as well as the effectiveness of the program and performance of the professional engaged as a strategy developer and walk with the caregiver as social worker.

## **DEDICATION**

**I thankfully dedicate this dissertation**

**To**

**My wife, Wubite Bekle Bogale, who incessantly lifted up me and supported me to pursue and arrive at this long journey. Dear Webua, without your inspiration and humble attitude**

**I couldn't have completed this process. Your caring attitude and actions serve as a treasure and the fabric that binds our relationship, family, and ministry.**

**My parents, Solomon Tadesse and Yewegnesh Hailu for raising me in love.**

**You offered all the best you have to me.**

**My children, Dan and Nathan, for your love and patience.**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AGST	Asia Graduate School of Theology
BOLAS	Bureau of Labour and Social affairs
CDP	Child Development Program
EDHS	Ethiopian Demographic Health Survey
FHAPCO	Federal HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHE	Food for the Hungry Ethiopia
FHI	Food for the Hungry International
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
MOWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
NMEF	National Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
UNAIDS	United Nations Program on HIV/ADS
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund