Northwest University

Helping Ethiopia Raise Her Own Children Through Local Adoption

Amen Farra
Thesis Project II Practicum GLST 5972
Professor Forrest Inslee
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*** Author's Notes:

Acknowledgements

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Curriculum Introduction

Natural disasters and diseases such as HIV/AIDS have left Ethiopian children without families; many of these children live on the streets and desperately need support. An effective response to this crisis is possible only when multiple sectors of a community work together. The long-term goal is for the children to be mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy. They must also receive a basic education. Essentially, these children need a home and adults who care for them. One of the most meaningful ways, that Ethiopian residents can respond to this crisis is to adopt a child who is living on the street.

My concern about this situation has led me to work toward a master's degree in International Community Development, and my thesis project for my degree will include a proposed curriculum that provides detailed information about the process Ethiopians must take to adopt a child. To help, nonprofit organizations, local churches, police departments, and public hospitals should establish a partnership to develop community strategies that will help Ethiopians adopt these children. My proposed curriculum will detail specific ways in which this partnership, led by the nonprofit organization Haset's Vision, must address and adjust three of the country's critical concerns: 1) helping people to reform their beliefs about education, 2) offering support for adoptive families around issues of trauma care, and 3) providing training for the care of special needs children.

To help orphaned Ethiopian children living on the streets, I propose that non-profit organizations, local churches, police departments, and public hospitals establish a partnership to develop strategies that will inform and aid Ethiopians and others permanently living in Ethiopia to adopt orphaned Ethiopian children. Toward that end, I have prepared a 4 Module training session of the pre-adoption process. Each module will provide the background causes and

consequences of living on streets so that the new adopting parents learn and understand how best to meet the needs of a child or children they are adopting.

Adoption

This unique educational training is designed for individuals or parents who are planning to adopt a local Ethiopian child. It is very important for adoptees to know about the background of a child they are adopting, for they may have a history of HIV/AIDS, STD, Female Genital Mutation (FGM), and/or rape. Most important, the parents need detailed information about the child's medical history; for example, they need to know of any physical or mental illness, especially when adopting a child with special needs. Although the process of adoption is long and includes documents from government officials, court, church leaders, and medical records, additional trainings will aid all involved in the process.

Why is adoption important?

Every person has a different understanding and perspective about adoption. People decide to adopt a child/children for many personal reasons. Some parents adopt children because they are unable to have biological kids due to infertility. Some women have medical conditions that need special attention and possibly puts their lives in danger to be pregnant. Adoption gives vulnerable children a home, family, access to school, and an overall healthy lifestyle that supports their growth and development mentally, physically, and spiritually. Also, adoption gives a chance for adopters to experience love and caring by sharing their lives with their adopted children.

What can Adoption change?

For Ethiopia, hunger is common thing and on-going, a problem that has never seen a solution; it most affects those who live with low to no-income. Growing up, I watched street

children going around houses every single day begging for any left-over food; it was a very painful experience. As a child from a middle-income family, I knew it was morally wrong, but I did not yet have lasting ways to help them. Sometimes, I gave them some food.

I have witnessed street children being insulted and turned away when they begged; I've seen them isolated and sometimes beaten after being mistakenly taken as thieves. I have also witnessed them searching for food in garbage bins; some eventually got sick from food poisoning, and left untreated, they died. Unfortunately, the food I offered to some street kids didn't last more than one meal. I had no networks, knew no organizations, or anyone who might take the issue seriously and address it. I wondered what they'd done to deserve their awful lives. It reminded me of when Jesus' disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (NIV, John 9:1-2). However, I knew that they didn't then and don't now deserve to starve or be mistreated for begging. They deserve love, care, and respect just like all other children who live with their families. Witnessing all these bad acts hurt my heart, but I could do nothing to help them at that time.

Later, I earned an undergraduate degree in Counseling Psychology, hoping to use it to help these children. I soon learned I needed additional experience, training, and further education such as a Master's degree or PhD. So, I returned to study and enrolled in the MAICD program at Northwest University.

The entire process of my research for my thesis project has made me willing to leave my comfort zone and explore new things. Throughout my fieldwork in Bahir Dar, I observed several things that relate to my project. I have seen children on streets begging each person who passes by and young women carrying crying babies while begging to passersby. I learned a perspective of this situation from Ephrem Mulatu, a director of Hope Ethiopia (HE), one of the non-profit

organizations I had a privilege to visit during my summer fieldwork. He mentioned in his interview that "young women, who live on streets are at high risk for rape, unwanted pregnancy, and accidental suicides due to overdose" (Ephrem). This female lifestyle is at the heart of my thesis work. I also know that most poor Ethiopian women who choose to abort their babies using traditional medicines (Herbs-related), lose their lives. I directly observed that the lack of education is greatly affecting Ethiopians, especially women, and of them, especially poor women. I have interviewed an Ethiopian American Ambassador for Haset's Vision, location of my fieldwork, as well as a Haset's Vision media manager. Haset's Vision is a foundation named after the Pastor Ambelie's daughter Haset who envisions a world in which there are no hungry, hopeless, uneducated or uncared for children. I also spoke with an Ethiopian nurse who has adopted Ethiopian orphans herself and knows the Ethiopian adoption process. These experiences have enhanced my understanding and perception of the situation.

If Ethiopia is to raise her own children, something needs to change, and education will be the foundation of that change. To support my thesis and to provide a model of the broad, cultural, yet vitally practical education that I believe is necessary to start this change, I have written the following teaching curriculum. It both creates awareness and offers resources so that change is possible.

MODULE Training

The following is a training module designed to be used in the classroom for those who want to adopt local Ethiopian orphans. The modules will cover the different topics related to the Ethiopian street orphan situation, including cultural practices, gender bias, drug use, illness (particularly HIV/AIDs and STDs), counseling, FGM, and factual awareness of these topics and

more. Module 1 focuses on information about HIV/AIDS and STDs and identifies questions,

topics, and activities to be covered during each of the 7 training sessions.

MODULE 1 OVERVIEW: HIV/AIDS AND STD

Session	Guiding Question	Topic	Activity	Objective	Time
1	What do you know about HIV/AIDS & STDs?	Introduction and history of HIV/AIDS and STDs in Ethiopia	Ice Breaker and group discussion	Trainees will learn about HIV/AIDS & STDs plus their history and timeline in Ethiopia.	2 hours
2	What are the symptoms of HIV/AIDS and STDs?	Who is at risk?	Case study and Group discussion	Trainees will learn and understand the symptoms of HIV/AIDS & STDs	1 hour
3	How does HIV/AIDS affect the victims' lives?	Social life: Isolation	Case study and presentation	Trainees will learn how to approach an infected individual.	1.5 hours
4	How are HIV/AIDS & STDs perceived in Ethiopian Culture?	Religion and Community leaders	Role Play	Trainees will learn how to spread awareness about HIV/AIDS &STDs in Ethiopia	1 hour
5	What are the treatment options for those with HIV/AIDS & STDs?	Confidential HIV/AIDS and STD testing	Team Posters	Trainees will learn about available public resources (consulting, testing, counseling and rehab centers) for infected individuals.	1.5 hours
6 A	How to prevent HIV infection from spreading?	Lifestyle: healthy habits	Role Play	Trainee will learn and understand about pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), testing and testing.	1.5 hours
6 B	What did you learn?	Wrap Up	Survey and training evaluation Ppt: Presentation	Trainees will have an opportunity to explain what they have learned from the training about HIV/AIDS & STDs.	2 hours

Session 1: What do you know about HIV/AIDS & STDs?

       HIV/AIDS is one of the leading causes of death in Ethiopia. Since1986, HIV/AIDS have mercilessly killed uncountable populations, leaving their beloved ones numb and vulnerable and highly affected by the virus. Because of Ethiopia's lack of health care, many HIV/AIDS infected people don't know that they are affected, so they do not seek medical treatments. The virus is identified in an individual only at the very last stage (untreatable) or after the person is dead. However, no one can ignore this threat. "Knowing" puts married couples at less risk. However, because one person can transmit the virus to another, if a victim's wife is pregnant, and unless she follows medical procedures, the baby will most likely get the virus as well.

       Substance use such as alcohol is dangerous because it is one of the main factors that causes people to be out of control. For an example of Ethiopian substance use, consider the following:

> Khat (an evergreen plant with amphetamine-like properties) and alcohol are widely consumed among the youth of Ethiopia. However, their relationship to risky sexual behavior is not well described. This study was conducted to describe the magnitude of risky sexual behavior (unprotected sex and early initiation of sexual activity) and its association with Khat and alcohol consumption in Ethiopian youths. (Alemtu, Atalay, et al. 3)

Substance abuse is also believed to be one of the factors for sexually risky behavior in HIV transmission. According to the article by Alemitu, Atalay, et al., "Hard drugs like heroin and cocaine are very rarely available in Ethiopia" (4). Khat, however, is very accessible since it is produced locally and widely used in the country.

Activity 1: Ice Breaker and group discussion

Introductory Questions:
- What is your name?   - Where you are from?   - What is your occupation?   - Why are you here?   - What do you know about HIV/AIDS or STDs?

Session 2: What are the symptoms of HIV/AIDS and STDs?

HIV is a disease that is asymptomatic until it reaches the crucial stage. As it worsens, the infected individual might feel pain in the throat, fever, fatigue, or as in most cases, none of these symptoms. Once the disease progresses and turns into AIDS, the infected person starts to lose weight, sweats during sleep, and suffers loss of appetite.

As Tsion Abera, one of my interviewees, described, she did not feel pain or experience any of the symptoms associated with the disease. She said, "I did not know that I was HIV Positive until my husband died five years ago" (Tsion Abera). Most people live with the virus for many years without knowing they are infected. Mrs. Abera did not know when or how she got the virus until her husband passed away; she got his medical record which showed his HIV positive result. At that time, she took the test, and the result came back as HIV positive. Mrs. Abera kept her results to herself for many years, but later decided to reveal her illness to her beloved family, close friends, and community members, all to help spread awareness.

Activity 2: Case study and Group discussion

The following case study taken from the WHO staging system for HIV/AIDS

<u>**Case Study: Bertukan**</u>

Bertukan, 19, meets a man, Solomon, whom she likes very much and who lives in the same town. Handsome, funny, and a few years older, he has his own butchery. Solomon is unaware that he has been living with HIV for 3 years. Solomon and Bertukan become a couple. They have unprotected sex as Bertukan, a secretary for a medical office, has been on OCPs (oral contraceptive pills) for a year.

Questions:

Do you think Birtukan is at high risk to be infected?

What should Birtukan do if she finds out about Solomon's test result?

Is it ok for a couple to stay together if they both test as HIV/AIDS positive?

Clinical Case Study#2 AETC0NMC/ PRODCASTS

Session 3: How does HIV/AIDS affect the victims' lives?

In developed countries, HIV/AIDS affects the lives of the victims, but it does not affect as them as much as it does those in developing countries such as Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, once people get an HIV positive testing, they don't always follow a doctor's orders for better health. Since there is no cure, the infected person believes HIV is the end of their life and any that additional resources like counseling or medical treatments are not important. They live life like they are dying today, and they don't take precautions to avoid infecting others or even to live longer themselves through care and treatment.

Activity 3: Case study and presentation

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Case Study: Tagelu

Tagelu is a 35-year-old woman who comes in for evaluation of low back pain. She has been divorced for 5 years (after 12 years of marriage); she is not currently dating or sexually active and has not been since the divorce. Afraid of her HIV test result, she refuses testing. Her brother had died of AIDS 12 years ago. In addition, she is afraid that she will be isolated in her community if her tests come back positive, and if anyone knows about it.

Questions:

How do you counsel her after her refusal to get tested?

Presentation: Work on the overall process, starting from how to convince her to get tested, how to counsel her after the test results, and if necessary, how to inform her about the symptoms, treatments, and further procedures.

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Session4: How are HIV/AIDS & STDs perceived in Ethiopian Culture?

Ethiopia has a collectivist culture that believes in working together, failing and achieving together. Most important, Ethiopians value culture and religion over anything, including education, career, and wealth. They consider diseases such as HIV/AIDS as an ancestral curse rather than as disease. Because they lack education about it, each individual perceives HIV/AIDS differently. For example, most people who think HIV transmit from one person to another do so by touching, hugging, kissing, or socializing, so acknowledging the disease completely isolates the infected person. Revealing a positive test result is similar to committing suicide because of the responses they get from the families and community. The person with HIV diseases is viewed as unclean, so people socially distance themselves as much as possible.

Activity 4: Role Play

Group 1: HIV/AIDS Negative	Show how Ethiopian people live with people who are NOT infected by the virus (Activities: Church, social gathering, schools and in the neighborhood activities.)
Group 2: HIV/AIDS Positive	Show how Ethiopian people live with people who ARE infected by the virus (Activities: Church, social gathering, schools and in the neighborhood activities.)

Session 5: What are the treatment options for those with HIV/AIDS & STDs?

There is no cure for AIDS. However, there are medical treatments (HIV- Antiviral) a medication that helps to slow the progress of infection, supports the immune system, and also reduces the risk of infecting other people. An individual with HIV/AIDS is advised to follow a healthy lifestyle such as exercising, eating healthy food, getting adequate hours of sleep/rest, and following-up with their doctors plus using counseling for their mental well-being.

Activity 5: Team Posters

Group Activity
Discussion: Discuss possible treatments for HIV/AIDS?
Poster: Make posters using information learned and external resources
Presentation: Present your work to the classroom.

Session 6: How to prevent HIV infection from spreading?

One of the main ways that the virus spreads and is transmitted to another person is through sexual contact. To prevent the spread of the virus, the infected person must be responsible not to transmit it by not having sexual contact, especially unprotected sexual contact. Other ways of prevention include not sharing needles and cleaning all products or used objects, especially those that have come in contact with blood. Most important, a pregnant woman who closely follows medical procedures can prevent her baby from getting the virus both while in the womb and through breast feeding once the baby is born.

Activity 6A: Role Play

Healthy habits and lifestyles Vs. Unhealthy			
Group 1:	Healthy What is it like to live with HIV/AIDS with a healthy habit and lifestyle?	Group 2:	Unhealthy What is it like to live with HIV/AIDS with an unhealthy lifestyle?

Session 6B Activity 7: Wrap-Up: What did you learn?

	Definitely	Quite A bit	Somewhat	Not at all
This module taught me the symptoms and treatments of HIV/AIDS well?				
This module taught me about the history of HIV and how it is perceived in Ethiopia?				
This module is useful to help spread HIV/AIDS awareness?				

Module 2 focuses on risks of homeless women and girls who live on the streets of Ethiopia. Each session contains guiding questions, topics and activities that will equip and prepare the trainees with detailed information about the lifestyles of these vulnerable females. Most important, this module will help trainees learn how to approach young females on streets before beginning the process of adoption.

MODULE 2: FEMALE RISKS OF LIVING IN THE STREETS OF ETHIOPIA

Session	Guiding Question	Topic	Activity	Objective	Time
1	What are the risks to "street females" of Bahir Dar, Ethiopia?	History of females who live on streets in Ethiopia	Class discussion	Trainees will learn the history of these females and the causes of the problems.	2 hours
2	What do Ethiopian culture and religions believe about bridal abduction and rape?	Bridal abduction and rape	Case study and group discussion	Trainees will learn about Ethiopian illegal practices related to culture and religion.	1.5 hours
3	What are the consequences of Female Genital Mutation (FGM)?	Female Genital Mutation (FGM)	Scenario and group discussion	Trainees will learn and understand about the consequences of FGM.	1.5 hours
4	What available resources can lead to possible solutions to these problems?	Solution	Group discussion and presentation	Trainees will learn how to identify solutions for the problem.	1 hour

Session 1: What are the risks to females who live on streets of Bahir Dar, Ethiopia?

The homeless girls and women who live on Ethiopian streets are at high risk for rape followed by unwanted pregnancy and later abortion. Although rape and abortion are illegal, street women and girls are usually isolated and vulnerable. When about 13, these young girls get their periods but do not have a place to shower or change, which adds to their vulnerability and which can also cause other health problems. Studies done by Yirga, Wondimu Shanko et al. indicates that to change this situation, females who live on streets deserve and need access to cleaning supplies and water:

> Many factors are known to have contributed to the health problems of street/homeless persons. The list includes: exposure to adverse weather, crime, overcrowding in shelters, unusual sleeping accommodations, poor hygiene and nutritional status, alcoholism and drug abuse. Due to those exposures homeless children were reported to have high rates of developmental, emotional and nutritional problems. (2)

The problems they encounter an early age carry on and affect their future adult lives. Adding to this bleak picture, they also lack basic education, advice from adults, and support from mentors. This lack will eventually affect their mental, physical, and psychological. and spiritual health.

Activity 1: Class discussion

> **Discussion questions:**
>
> What did you know about street life in Ethiopia before this training?
>
> What is your take away from session one, Ethiopian history?

Session 2: What do Ethiopian culture and religions believe about bridal abduction and rape?

Ethiopian culture believes in arranged marriage and bridal abduction. Although these acts are illegal, people still practice them for the sake of respecting their cultures, and for some, their

religions as well. Ethiopian culture does not take the consequences of bridal abduction seriously

nor consider how this practice affects women's lives. Women who live in rural areas are more

affected and at higher risk for bridal abduction than those who live in the cities. Once a group of

men forcefully abduct the young woman as a bride, they take her to a different rural area or city

and rape her. They will not return her even after raping her. Instead, the abductors send

messengers to her parents' house to tell them that this practice was pre-planned and purposefully

done, and that her parents should not expect her to return. No one will get involved, not the

parents, friends, spiritual leaders, or the police, because respecting and honoring their culture and

religion through this bridal abduction practice is more important than the life of the young

woman. Most important, even if she escapes the abduction, she cannot return to her family,

because she will bring shame to her family and community. In addition, rape that is forcefully

done to a woman who is abducted as a bride, perhaps left neglected to find her own way, or

given in an arranged marriage is not considered as rape. Ethiopia is a male dominated country,

and many of its men may believe they have the power and right to do anything they like to these

unprotected, vulnerable women who are powerless, and voiceless.
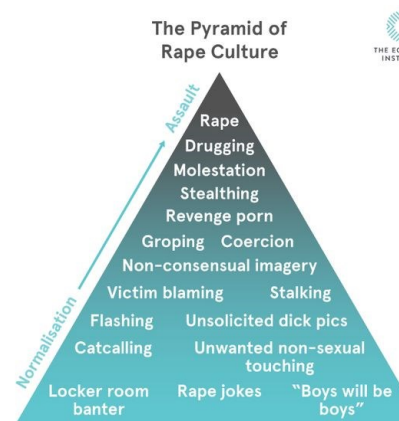
Source: 11ᵗʰ principle: Consent!

Activity 2: Case Study

Tsega, a male interviewee during my summer trip, had witnessed multiple bridal abduction and female genital mutilation (FGM) practices. He was raised in a culture where, as a male he had to support his community when they practiced such illegal activities in secret. He shared with me that "the main reason for the practice of FGM is reduction of female sexual hyperactivity," and "FGM forcefully proved a girl's virginity, thereby improving the marriage prospects of unmarried girls who have undergone the procedure" (Yirga, Wondimu Shanko et al 1) Tsega added that he's a brother of two sisters who have been living with men who abducted them, and that he has learned how to live with accepting and respecting the cultural expectations even if he doesn't feel comfortable about the practices.

Discussion: How can people like Tsega help stop the illegal practices like (FGM) in Ethiopia without disrespecting the culture or religions?

Session 3: What are the consequences of Female Genital Mutation (FGM)?

There are short-term and long-term consequences of Female Genital Mutation (FGM). The short-term consequences include low morale, low-self-esteem, lack of confidence, as well as stress and depression. The long-term consequences include complication during childbirth, sexual dysfunction, and increased risk for other diseases such as Fistula complications, HIV/AIDS, and more.

The following figure indicates the number of countries in Africa that practice Female Genital Mutation (FGM) in percentage as of year 2017.
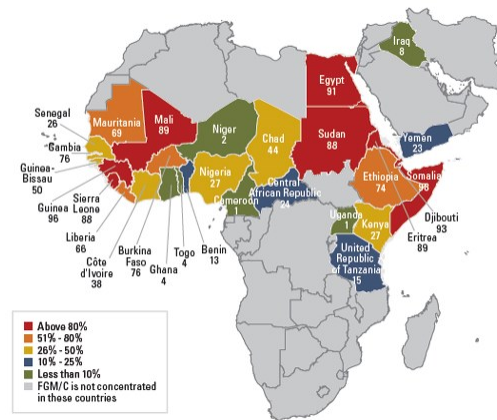
Activity 3: Scenario

Scenario

You are a nurse, and one day you are in theatre providing anesthesia for a 16-year-old girl of East African origin who is undergoing an emergency laparotomy for suspected peritonitis. There is no relevant previous medical history and no safeguarding concerns have been raised. A theatre nurse, inserting a urinary catheter, is having problems doing so and asks for your assistance. You notice an unusual appearance of the external genitalia with several small scars and some fibrosis which distorts the view of the urethra. You are able to place the catheter with some difficulty, and the operation proceeds uneventfully thereafter.

Discussion Questions:

What should your first response be?

Who should you contact?

What is your legal obligation?

World Health Organization(WHO)- Royal College of Anesthetics (RCOA) 2017.

Session 4: What are available resources that can lead to possible solution of these problems?

In the past, the Ethiopian government has not believed in addressing arranged marriage, or bridal abduction and rape as social problems. In recent years, however, women have seen some positive social changes. Many women have taken leadership roles and are working in higher levels as organization presidents, women and children advocates, lawyers and doctors. These women have helped address these problems and are caring for the health of children and women. Today, hospitals, community centers, churches, as well as schools provide counseling for women who have undergone the illegal practices. These resources are supported by the government of Ethiopia. In addition, Ethiopian women now have more rights: they can make their own decisions about their lives, including marriage and education. These are privileges, however, that do not belong to females on the streets. They still lack education, counseling, medical treatments, or any other opportunities the government now offers to women with families. This obvious disregard of their lives is why their having a caring and loving family is very important. Consequently, this curriculum also emphasizes that local adoption can help these vulnerable females have those families and access to education, support, and hope. They can eventually have a voice in their society. Adopting a young girl can enrich a family's life. Girls are great sisters and friends, later wives and mothers and career women – but for these street girls, only if they find a helping hand, an understanding and supporting family, and a healthy environment. Only then can they grow into strong, active adults.

Activity 4: Group discussion and presentation

Group A	Identify available resources for female who are undergone FGM in Ethiopia
Group B	Identify short-term and long-term goals to find possible solution to stop practice of FGM in Ethiopia
Presentation	Present your findings to the class

Module 3 is designed to teach trainees about the importance of child education, especially for girls. Also, Module 3 revisits the history of Ethiopian education, the current education system, and new projects to be implemented in Ethiopia to grant access to modern education that is supported with technology.

MODULE 3: CHILD EDUCATION/ GIRL EDUCATION

Session	Guiding Question	Topic	Activity	Objective	Time
1	What is Ethiopia's education system?	History of Ethiopian education, traditional and modern education	Introduction and group discussion	Trainees will learn the history of Ethiopia's educational system.	2 hours
2	Why are girls discouraged to attend school while boys are not?	Women in leadership (copowerment)	Study women in leadership (history) Poster: Presentation	Trainees will understand and learn the role of women in leadership.	1.5 hours
3	Why is education important?	Bright future and community development	Watch documentary short film about benefit of early childhood education	Trainees will learn the importance of education equally for both boys and girls.	2 hours
4	Is Ethiopia adopting the modern/western education system?	Traditional vs. western education (technology)	Demonstrate how to type on a computer keyboard.	Trainees will be exposed to currently available school supplies (supported with technology) for students in developing countries. Ex. How to type on a computer keyboard.	2 hours

Session 1: What is Ethiopia's education system?

Education is the most important tool for all, especially for children because they will one day take over the world. Working with children and their education system invests in their solid future and that of the world. Educating a child at an early age in their lives is more influential than doing so later in their lives. For example, a young child can easily pick up new languages, arts, math, creativity, and sports as well as other activities at an early age and is less able to do so in high school. However, early childhood education is not widespread in Ethiopia, nor is the belief that girls need education just as much as boys do. Ethiopia's culture is known for male dominance and female oppression. This lack affects education and general life. For instance, Getnet and Beliyou Haile state, "In rural Ethiopia, it is not uncommon for families to engage in off-farm employment activities to supplement farm income, which is characterized by high degree of seasonal variation" (9) In most of these cases, the males lead. As a result, women don't have opportunities to learn confidence, vision, and power to lead (copowerment, leadership).

We need Ethiopian female leadership. However, because of their sex, they often lose rights to education, and without education, they lack the confidence and skills that help them find their values and identities in ways that male children have no problem doing. As Hailes argues, "As would be expected, male children are more likely to engage in market activities. They are also more likely to attend school than female children indicating the existence of gender bias in children's time allocation" (Hailes 9). The African society that provides opportunities only to men are silently killing women, because women are being adversely affected in all human ways: emotionally, psychologically, physically, and spiritually.

Activity 1: History of Ethiopian education

Facts and Timeline of Ethiopian Education System
• Education started with church education between A.D. 1200 and 1500. • Emperor Menelik II began the modernization between 1885 and 1892. • In 1905, the secular curriculums included the study of French, English, Arabic, Italian, Amharic, Ge'ez, Mathematics, physical training, and sports. • In 1921, Empress Zewditu Menelik required every parent to teach their child reading and writing. Those who did not follow her declaration were fined $50 as punishment. • Between 1936 – 1941, Ethiopia was under the Italian colonial education system. • During the independence era between 1941 - 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie revived and developed Ethiopia's educational system. • Until 2001, Ethiopia maintained the Afro-Marxist and Post-Marxist modern education system.

Source: *https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/454/Ethiopia-HISTORY-BACKGROUND.html*

Session 2: Why are girls discouraged to attend school while boys are not?

Although boys have responsibilities in the house, the girls' responsibilities occur throughout each day. They cook, wash dishes, clean the house, feed/bathe/baby sit their younger siblings, routines that don't even give time to rest. They also shop at the market and bring water to the house from several miles away. The boys are expected to go daily with the father and work in the field, but generally only in harvesting seasons, which allows them to attend school, do schoolwork, and play with their friends. Most families do not allow their daughters to attend school because they need their daughters for housework and because they believe that educating their daughters is not important. Daughters "belong in the kitchen." Their mindset about

educating a girl is very negative, and it is difficult to change their perspectives. The sessions in this education module will help the trainee and adopting parents understand the importance of education, especially for women, so that they do not simply adopt a girl to help the family with house chores but fail to educate and support her and her potential to lead and change the world. The overall purpose of this module is to unpack the reality about the equal rights of every girl and to learn to help them get a second chance to live a better life in the future.

Activity 2: Women leadership: Copowerment

Discussion: Does this poster omit anything? What? Why is this omission significant? Discuss what you have learned in class with your group.

Session 3: Why is education important?

Obviously, education has a power to change lives of all, male and female. Educated people tend to have self-confidence and high self-esteem; they can find good paying jobs and live better lifestyles than those who are not educated. Education is like a bridge, and without this bridge, few have access to safe environments, helpful resources, and plentiful energy that ensure each individual has the potential to create, innovate, learn, lead, and change themselves, their

families, community. and society in general. Today, people in higher positions such as organization presidents, doctors, engineers, piolets, lawyers, chiefs, coaches and more, all gained these positions not through experience, but through education and training. Most developed countries prioritize education, and developing countries are doing so much better today in granting access to education to their populations. However, the children living on streets are not considered as valued citizens, so they have no access to education. They should be recognized because existence matters. My heartful purpose of this project is to value each child on the street, give them each a home, a family, and most important, access to education, because they will be able to find their identities within it.

Activity 3: Short Video

Video: Labor Center video on minimum wage
Discussion topic: Benefit of investing in early child education
Question: What did you learn from the video?

Session 4: Is Ethiopia adopting the modern/western education system?

Today, Ethiopia is doing better in supporting its education system, and changes are happening. Once Ethiopia was be known for having its own main language, Amharic, which was the only language that schools used for education. Later, many Ethiopian languages (about eighty-five) were taught in schools in different cities. Currently, Ethiopia tends to follow the education standards and system from developed countries such as America and European countries. Although the Amharic language has remained as the country's common language, most practical things and methods in the Ethiopian school system have changed. For example,

white boards and markers have replaced black board and chalk. Of great consequence, technology plays the most important role in the education system's change. Computers and personal laptops are used in almost all universities. However, the change is not easy for every school child or university students because most of them cannot afford a computer or printer to type and print their assignments. Ethiopia is adopting to the modern/western education system, but the change is not beneficial for its financially disadvantaged students.

Activity 4: The Ethiopian education system Vs. the American education system

ROOTS ETHIOPIA Explaining Ethiopian Education

Age	ETHIOPIA Grade	ETHIOPIA Stage	UNITED STATES Grade	UNITED STATES Stage
3			Preschool	Preschool
4	Nursery	Primary/ Elementary	Pre-K	
5	K1		K	Elementary
6	K2		1	
7	1		2	
8	2		3	
9	3		4	
10	4		5	
11	5		6	Middle
12	6		7	
13	7		8	
14	8 EXAM*		9	High
15	9	Secondary	10	
16	10 EXAM**		11	
17	11	Preparatory	12	
18	12			

*National exams are conducted in eighth grade to certify completion of primary education. Failure on the exam means repeating a year; after a second failure, the student can no longer attend a government school.
**At the end of tenth grade, students sit for the national exam, known as the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE). Only students who pass this exam can proceed to preparatory school; this exam cannot be repeated.

Source: *Pinterest, Roots Ethiopia, education system*

Class assignment: Compare and contrast Ethiopian education system with the U.S.

Question: What are the differences and the similarities?

Module 4 provides information about the importance of counseling to maintain the spiritual, mental, and psychological well-being of adopted children. After completing this module, the trainees will also gain access to public resources such as locations and contact information for walk-in available counseling services for families. This training is delivered through Haset's Vision organization which partners with local churches such as Kale-Hiwot and

Mulu-Wongel to offer spiritual support to those who have undergone tragic events in the past or are currently experiencing trauma and stress.

MODULE 4: COUNSELING AND SPITITUAL SUPPORT

Session	Guiding Question	Topic	Activity	Objective	Time
1	Do Ethiopian believe in counseling?	Mental well-being (A)	Class lesson Fig 1 Conceptual framework	Trainee will learn about the Ethiopian myths about counseling and other traditional practices that replace counseling.	2 hours
2	What are the benefits of counseling?	Mental well-being (B)	Class Lesson	Trainee will learn understand about the benefits of counseling and how to maintain mental health.	1.5 hours
3	How do you find counseling? services?	Role of Church and spiritual leaders in counseling	Group discussion	Trainee will gain access to public and private counseling sessions and resources: contact info, flyers, website address to access additional info about counseling.	2 hours
4	What are the challenges of counseling in Ethiopia?	Cost: Expensive? Free sessions	Group discussion	Trainees will learn about challenges that Ethiopia faces as it adopts and practices western ways of counseling instead of traditional.	1.5 hours

Session 1: Do Ethiopian Believe in counseling?

In the past, Ethiopians have not believed in counseling or any help associated with mental well-being. Instead, they have believed that mental problems are the work of the dark spirit. Most Ethiopian families isolate and lock away a child or an individual with special needs such as physical disabilities or autism. These individuals, in prison at home, are never visible to the public. The family sees mental illness as a curse that brings them shame, so they do not allow the mentally ill person to be seen outside.

At the same time, some Ethiopians find emotional care outside of counseling. For example, during my summer fieldwork, I noticed that rural Ethiopians still value their spiritual water "Tsebel" far more than they value anything else. To explain Tsebel, Ragunathan and Solomon state, "With the help of incantation, priests convert ordinary water to holy water, they spill it over the patients, and they enchant spiritual words to drive away the evil spirit from the people those who suffered by evil attack. Apart from this, priests are giving herbal remedies" (178). Rural Ethiopians use homemade remedies along with Tsebel and herbs to deal with stress. These remedies are cheap; they use them also because some do not know that counseling exists. In recent years, urban Ethiopians have tended to practice and adopt western cultures, and that allows them to step-up, explore the unknown, and think outside of the box. Counseling used to be an unthinkable topic even to raise among Ethiopians, especially around religious people. Although some still believe in mental illnesses as a spiritual attack, most urban Ethiopians believe in the power of counseling. Nowadays, hospitals and community centers use counseling as the core of their services before and after their treatments to their HIV/AIDS infected, to pregnant young women, and to youth with suicidal thoughts.
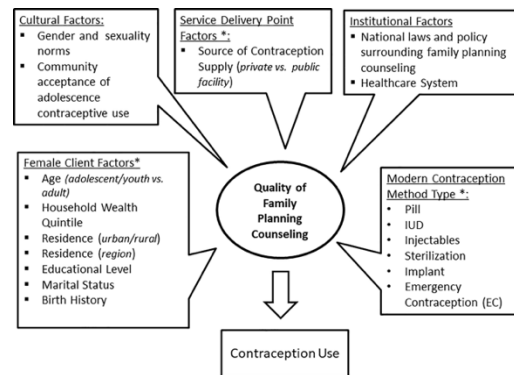
Activity 1: Conceptual framework

Fig 1. *Conceptual framework.*

Session 2: What are the benefits of counseling?

Counseling is one of the important ways to help people become mentally stable so that they can be confident, make meaningful decisions, and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Those with mental illness/disorders, special needs (disabled or autistic) as well as those who have undergone different types of traumatic experiences in the past, need counseling. Physical therapy is also used as part of counseling to help people return to their normal life routines. Although there are counselors and medical treatments in Ethiopia, they might not be affordable for most people, especially in rural areas where "the fame of traditional religious-magical healings and herbal healings in villages is due to the lack of modern health care facilities" (Ragunathan and Solomon 178). The religious practices are free of charge, accessible, and commonly used in the villages, which makes it more confidential, comfortable, and trustworthy than seeking medical attention.

Activity 2: List and explain benefits of counseling below

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

List of benefits of counseling (Possible Responses)

1	Self-awareness
2	Understanding of self and others
3	Improves self-esteem
4	Make good decisions
5	Help clarify issues
6	Confidential support

Session 3: How do you find counseling services?

Finding traditional counseling services from spiritual leaders is not as complicated as it seems. All it requires is going to one of the churches and asking one of the priests to pray for you. Seeking modern counseling could be a bit stressful for the individual who does so for the first time. As a result, medical students, volunteers from nonprofit organizations, and church youth groups make educational flyers and pass them out to people on streets, so that anyone who is confused can get answers. In the study done by Alemu, Andinet Worku, and Miguel San Sebastián, they argue that with counseling, spiritual support and antiretroviral therapy, patients infected with HIV/AIDS get a chance to survive. Without professional counseling and advising, infected individuals cannot get access to information about antiretroviral therapy. To find counseling, people should first find resources, connections through community centers, church memberships, and by attending educational workshops that are open for public.

Activity 3: Role of Church in counseling

Group discussion: discuss the types of support spiritual leaders offer

Question: How should church leaders address mental illness such as autism and disability in Ethiopia?

Session 4: What are the challenges of counseling in Ethiopia?

Professional Ethiopian counselors find it challenging to practice some western methods. The "one fits all" theory does not work, meaning what works in the western culture and in developed countries such as the UK and the U.S. might not be applicable to Ethiopia. Most professional practices as well as medical treatments in Ethiopia must align with guidelines and expectations of its religions, culture, and traditional practices. Otherwise, people will not accept new practices and mindsets. The other challenge will be cost, because as one of the developing

countries, Ethiopians do not have enough money to cover their medical expenses. If counseling

costs money, they are more likely to deny the treatment and continue with the old-fashioned

way, traditional practices. Consequently, hospitals, nonprofit organizations, local churches, and

community centers should partner and work together to educate the population about the

importance of counseling and therapy. Also, they should also be able to offer sessions free of

cost to those who are the most affected by past traumatic experiences, such as those living on

streets.

Activity 4: Challenges of counseling in Ethiopia

Group activity: List and explain the challenges of counseling in Ethiopia. Then, present it to the class.

1	
2	
3	
4	

List and explain the challenges of counseling in Ethiopia (Possible Responses)

1	Ethiopian do not believe in effectiveness of counseling
2	Lack of knowledge about mental illness
3	Financial need
4	Issues with trust or confidentiality, clients don't trust the counselor

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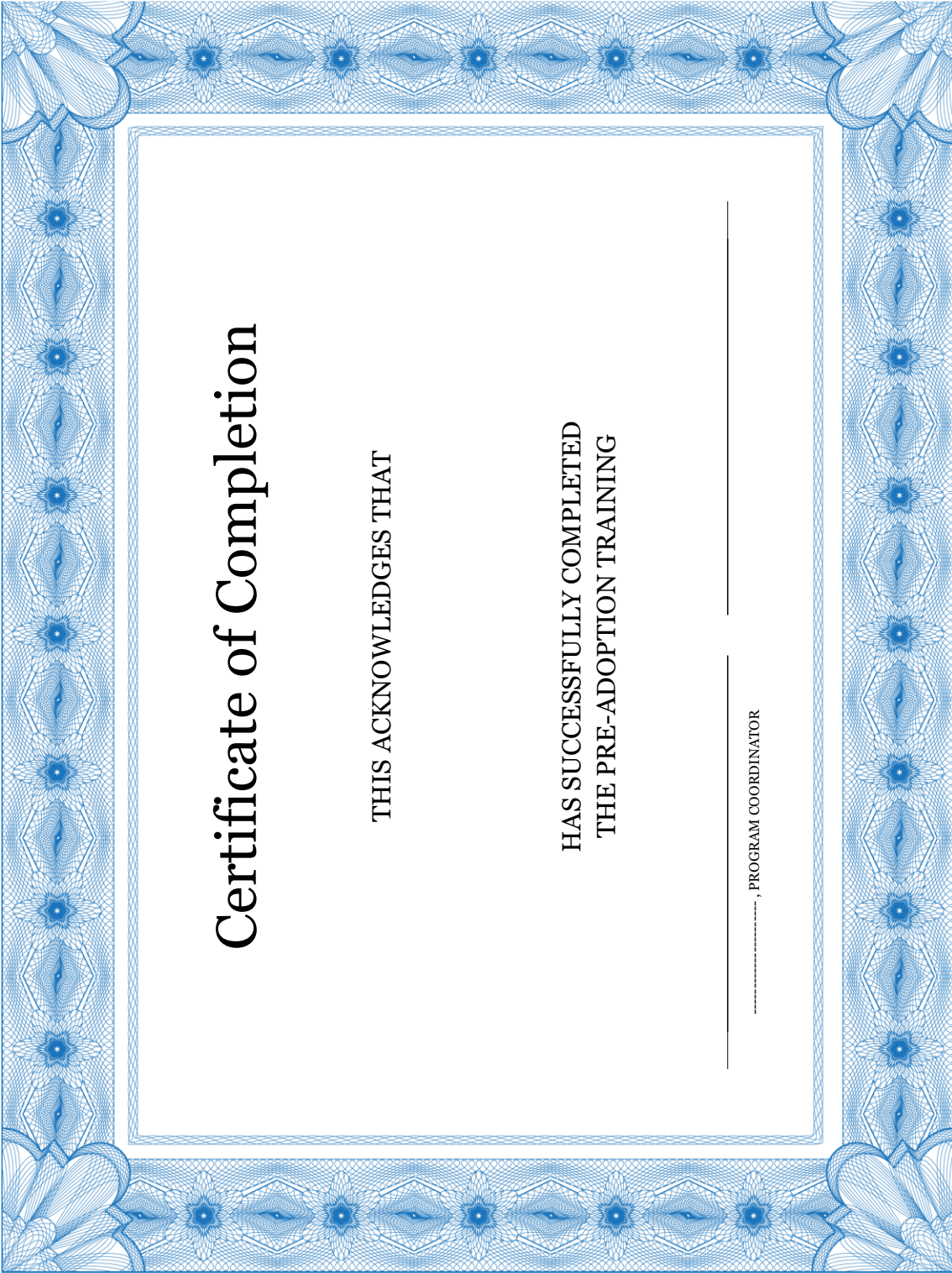
Certificate of Completion

THIS ACKNOWLEDGES THAT

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED
THE PRE-ADOPTION TRAINING

—————————, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Conclusion

Witnessing the suffering of the children living on the streets of Ethiopia has left me unsettled; I have not been able to forget it but haven't known what to do about it until I enrolled in the ICD program at Northwest University. This study has been a turning point in my life. It has made me realize that while I am privileged and free to live a healthy life, many lack physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Of those, my focus has been on Ethiopia's orphaned children. It hurts me to see them struggling to survive with no access to adequate food, shelter, clothing, or access to education and healthcare. During my summer fieldwork, I witnessed their daily life activities which includes begging and searching for leftover foods in hotel garbage. It is a cultural, economic, spiritual, and governmental problem, and no one person can change it alone. Therefore, I have created a 4 Module Curriculum to bring awareness, education, and even resources to those who work together toward potential solutions.   My thesis project calls nonprofit organizations, healthcare workers, local churches, and the Ethiopian government to action. It equips them through principles of copowerment to work together to seek answers to these complex problems that affect not only Ethiopia's present but also its future.

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Essay 1: Contextualization

My understanding of contextualization

As I understand it, to contextualize means to explain or place something in a unique way its setting, event, or idea – which gives a significant, practical perspective so that we can better understand it. For example, my project is on local child adoption in Ethiopia, and contextualization will help me reveal facts about the location, Ethiopia's diverse historical background, its languages, its culture, and its laws regarding education, healthcare, and child adoption. Contextualization offers the big picture of the situation; it helps show where the need started, how it started, the communities and organizations that are involved in making changes in it, its current status, future hopes, plans, and more. To serve the community in need, developers must use contextualization to know where to begin, what areas to focus on, and what direction to move toward for better outcomes. Most important, contextualization helps to identify pre-existing programs (if there are any), to determine what has worked, and to learn lessons from past mistakes. Knowing the background will always help developers move forward with a better plan to bring solutions to concerns the communities face.

The importance of contextualization to community development

Contextualization is an important factor for community development when it comes to designing and implementing programs, processes, and interventions. Without having adequate knowledge about the people I plan to serve, I cannot possibly meet their needs and accomplish my goals. To be successfully effective in my journey of serving others, I have to know the people, their cultures, their needs, and expectations. Most important, contextualization helps prevent the consequences of the idea that "one size fits all." For example, as a community development worker, I understand that implementing projects in developing countries by using

the western culture, ideas, and mindset might not lead to a positive impact and outcome: the solutions that are useful in western cultures and communities might not be as useful and applicable in developing countries.

Ethiopian Culture

Ethiopia has a collectivist culture that believes in the idea of gathering as a group and working as a team for a shared goal. As do most collectivistic societies, Ethiopia's culture focuses on belonging to a community. As Hofstede states, "Obligations to the family in a collectivist society are not only financial but also a ritual. Family celebrations and observances such as baptisms, marriages, and, especially, funerals are extremely important and should not be missed" (Hofstede 108). This cultural importance of family is widespread and valued in both cities and rural areas where "the fact of being together is emotionally sufficient; there is no compulsion to talk unless there is information to be transferred" (108). This collectivism is the core of Ethiopia's current lifestyle.

According to Hofstede's Insights, Ethiopia scores 20 on individualistic ratings, which shows the country's decided collectivistic culture in Ethiopia. Although there were once no childcare centers or nursing homes in Ethiopia, there was never a lack of child/elderly care. Even today, the neighbors rely on one another, and the communities have a strong connection to each other. Sons and daughters are expected to take care of their elderly parents/grandparents at home, and the children will play with elders as well. Additionally, neighbors watch after other neighbors' children while biological parents are away, and at no cost.

The country's care facilities are changing. According to Jenny Lei Ravelo's report to the Devex News as of 2009, there were about 3,822 non-profit organizations; today there are around 1,500. However, I personally know many international NGOs that focus on foster care, child

education, and spiritual support. I lived in Yirgalem, a small town with about ten to twelve non-profit organizations that partnered with local churches (Mekane-Eyesus, Kalehiwot, Meserete Kristos, Mulu-Wongel and more). These churches offer Sunday school services for children as well as afterschool worship services and activities and other programs throughout the week.

While in middle school, I was recommended by my youth leader to volunteer at one of the NGOs, Compassion that partnered with my church (Mekane-Eyesus), and I volunteered for about three years. My experience at Compassion exposed me to a new perspective about children living in the streets, children with special needs, children suffering from HIV/AIDS, children's substance use, and children's post-traumatic lifestyles. Compassion helped contextualize this lifestyle for me. As a young girl, I was limited by age, education, experience, budget, and resources to contribute to the solution the NGOs and the local churches sought to bring.

However, Compassion detailed and unpacked specific contextual information for me about the plight, and through the program, I observed different events, interviews, and programs held at the different organizations, and these organizations helped me through those difficult time.

Historical Background: **Diversity and Unity**

To better contextualize the current situation of Ethiopian street children, it is essential to know of Ethiopia's diversity, of its people, religion, and culture. Ethiopia was once considered as one of Africa's united and diverse countries. It has more than eighty-five different ethnic groups, and each has its tradition, culture and language, and religions:

The two numerical majority ethnic groups are the Oromo (34.5%) and the Amhara

(26.9%). Although the Tigre ethnic group comprises about 6% of the total population, it

[has been] a political majority in the government since 1991, …and religions include

Christianity (Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant), Islam, Judaism, and Paganism. The two

largest religious faiths are Orthodox Christianity (40.5%) and Islam (35.4%). (Adamu

18)

Amharic is the main and working language of Ethiopia. The leaders in different decades have

defined the country's main language and the preferred religious practices. In early modern

Ethiopia (1855-1930), Amharic was the official written and spoken language. Since the Amhara

Empire was in power, the Amhara cultural values dominated over those of the other groups.

After the death of the empire, Ethiopians practiced the Islamic religion until Yohannes, a

committed Orthodox Christian, came to power and forced Muslims to convert to Christianity.

During the imperial Haile-Selassie's regime (1930-1974), diversity was strong. However, "due to

the policy of national integration, the constitution declared Orthodox Christianity as the empire

religion," and "the constitution did not mention the status of ethnic groups, languages other than

Amharic, and religions other than Orthodox Christianity" (Adamu 20). Consequently, Muslims

were excluded, and Islamic schools plus teaching of Arabic as well as celebration of Muslim

holidays were banned in time.

During the Derg Regime (1974-1991), diversity seemed sound. Ethiopia made an

agreement and a land reform proclamation to address the criticism that different groups had

raised and to unify the country again. The new law declared the right for each individual to be

respected and get equal recognition as a valuable citizen regardless of religion or ethnic

difference. As Adamu explains, "The pronouncements on land reform, ethnicity, religion,

language, and cultural equality seem positively responded to many inequalities perpetrated under

the previous regimes. However, their implementation was far beyond the expectation of the

society" (21).

Although each ethnic group was given the right to speak, write, develop their languages, maintain their cultures, and record their history, one ethnic group was still dominant over the others, and this fact currently creates great conflicts among these groups. Adamu states, "It emphasizes and promotes diversity without balancing with unity, and this potentially threatens national unity and leads to tension, conflict, and disintegration"; he further adds, "So far, Ethiopia has failed to properly deal with issues of diversity but is striving to address by maintaining a delicate balance between unity and diversity" (24). This "delicate balance" shows that Ethiopia's diversity and unity is in danger unless the current government takes action to prevent further conflicts and ethnic group discontent. This delicate balance affects many aspects of Ethiopian life, even child adoption.

Child Adoption

As Getahun and Addis state, in 1974, Ethiopia was considered one of the top five countries in the world that allowed foreign adoption. According to the *Africanistes Journal,* foreigners adopted countless Ethiopian children, primarily because Ethiopian families could not afford to feed their children, clothe them, or send them to school. Until the foreign adoption ban in January 2017, Ethiopia played a major role in child adoption:

> Of the African countries, Ethiopia [was] the single largest provider of children for adoption to American families. For instance, in 2002, from a total of 337 African children adopted by U.S. families, 102 children were from Ethiopia. In 2007 and 2008, American families adopted a total of 1748 and 2315 children from Africa respectively. Of these African children, more than two-thirds were Ethiopians. (Getahun and Addis 10-11)

This number of internationally adopted children increased tremendously. The table below indicates the number of Ethiopian children adopted by American parents:
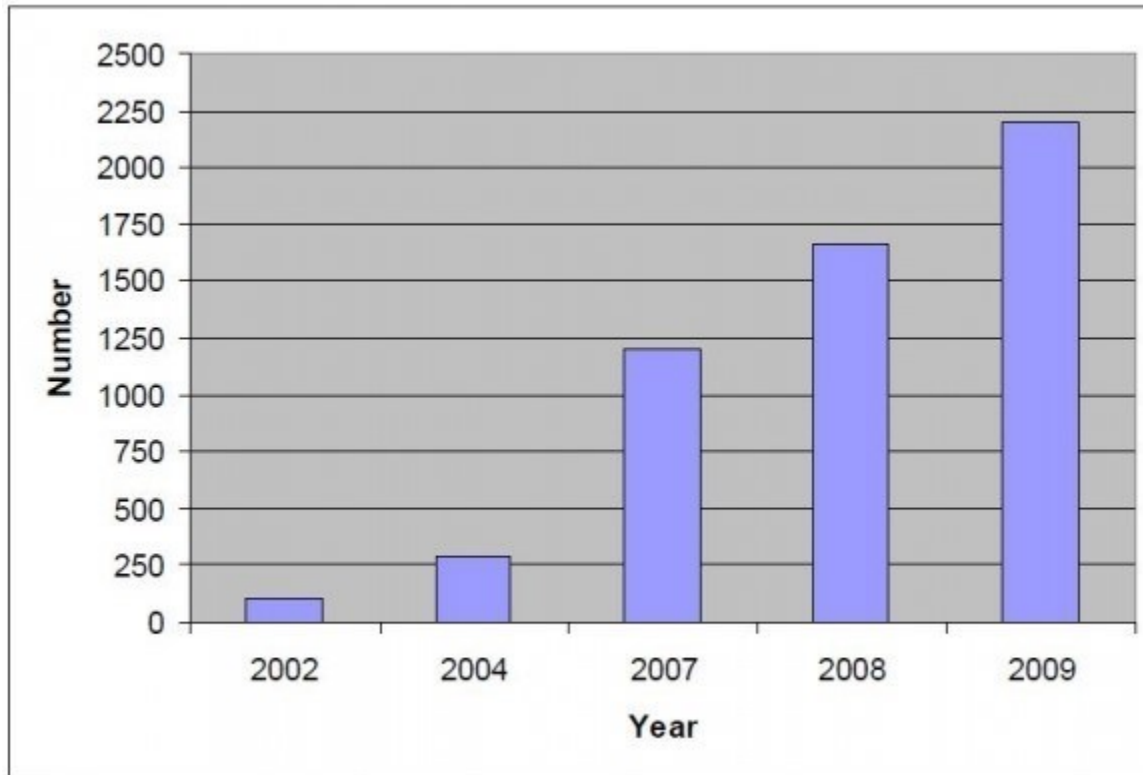
Ethiopians did not give up their children willingly. They endured many tragic events and disasters such as famine in 1984, the Red Terror, Qay Shibr between 1977-1979, and HIV/AIDS between 1990-1995; these events have forced the country to seek external support. The Euro-Americans stepped in to help by providing basic needs (food, shelter, and clothes) through the government's resettlement programs that involved the non-profit organizations and agencies that pre-existed in Ethiopia.

How do creativity and innovation figure into the contextualization process?

As one of the developing countries, Ethiopia faces challenges to change its education system, healthcare, its adoption system, and more. Through my new, innovative curriculum, I will provide detailed information about local adoption and its importance to communities and the country in general. While foreigners can no longer adopt Ethiopian children, those children, many living on the streets, still need local homes and care. To help Ethiopians understand the

process of local adoption, non-profit organizations should use my designed curriculum to train those who might be involved: new parents, teachers, health officials and staff from different organizations, as well as spiritual leaders of local churches. The ultimate goal of this project is to reach the unreached community, bring people together, and create awareness so that the vulnerable children will get the support they deserve. Most important, this curriculum and training, new in Ethiopia, will provide practical, positive methods to connect children in need to new parents, organizations, and local churches that can offer help and contribute to the vulnerable children's healthy growth and to the overall community's development.

Innovation welcomes creativity, and the two will work well together in Ethiopia's child adoption concept. As a developing country, Ethiopia has limited access to resources such as technologies, books, art supplies, games and more, which play very important roles in child development. My new curriculum provides these items and activities as creative ways to reach and teach children and adults, especially those who have never been exposed to them in the past. Most important, the curriculum uses counseling, education, and training on HIV/AIDS and health-related issues using technology as well as research that engages communities. Each of these seems contextually creative for this project.

Creativity by introducing Western culture to Ethiopian

Many educated Ethiopians are aware of the process of foreign adoption. However, they do not always know the process and the possibility of local adoption. Although changing people's beliefs and understanding about raising a street child at home is not easy, it is possible. People are capable of changing their beliefs and adopting a new belief and culture. Introducing Ethiopians to the western culture of adoption is another way of involving them in the process: if they are well educated and trained about it, they will be more likely to be willing to participate in

local adoption and to spread the awareness.

Ethiopia ranks a high score (65) on its masculinity scale, which indicates that the society is driven by competition (Hofstede's Insights). Ethiopians don't want to give away their power, integrity, or values; they prefer to stand firm in their beliefs and fight against competing ideas and values. This strength can present a challenge to those who hope to introduce new ideas and concepts. For example, local adoption has not been well known in Ethiopia in the past, so implementing the western culture and education about the adoption system there will be difficult, but it is one of the greatest paths toward helping Ethiopia to raise her own children.

Contextualization in my future vocational work

In my future career, I plan to work in an NGO in Ethiopia that serves women and children who have undergone tragic events and who have continued to suffer from their traumatic experiences. It is important for me to apply contextualization values and practices in my vocational work so that I know how to approach these women and children, serve them, and meet their needs. Without knowing their backgrounds, stories, and past experiences, the contextualization of their lives, I might not be able to create an environment that will be positive and safe for them.

Contextualization also identifies language as vitally important to this process. Without contextualization, I would have no idea of the language to use to communicate with the community I will be serving, and without communication, community development work is impossible. According to Adamu, "Consequently, more than 20 languages are being used as a medium of instruction in the primary education in different regions" (17). Then developers must create a network with government officials, pre-existing NGOs, and agencies in Ethiopia, and that is possible only through language. Hofstede states, "Communication in trade languages or

pidgin limits exchanges to the issues for which these simplified languages have words. To establish a more fundamental intercultural understanding, the foreign partner must acquire the host culture language" (389). Developers well know that explaining oneself in a different language is difficult, that using the host language is essential. And he also said that "without knowing the language, one will miss a lot of the subtleties of a culture and be forced to remain a relative outsider. One of these subtleties is humor" (390). Contextualization builds in the influence of language and culture so that developers have a better chance of success.

Conclusion

In community development work, developers should prioritize contextualization. Without contextualization, serving people is impossible, especially those who are different from us, because values, expectations, and needs are different from one culture to another. As a person who is planning to serve people of my community who share the same culture, background, language and more, it is important to pay attention to details. Myers states, "We need to know who we are (identity and purpose), where we are (location in the world and the universe), what went wrong (making sense of the poverty, pain, and injustice we see), what we must do (what must change and how it can be changed), and what time it is (how our past, present, and future fit into this picture)" (55). This statement defines contextualization. Since I moved to the United States about nine years ago, many things have changed and will continue to change through time. Having updated information about the current status of Ethiopian cultures, the laws, education system, healthcare system, human rights, and more will guide me to the correct path, so that I can meet the community's need, solve problems, and successfully achieve my goals.

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Essay 2: Qualitative Research Methods

As a youth ministry leader at my church (Medhane-Alem Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Seattle), I am expected to attend most of the events and to help when I am asked. One of the events for which I was asked to help was at a fundraising dinner event for Haset's Vision Organization. This organization was founded in 2015 by Pastor Ambelie Negash and Fasica Negash and named after their daughter. The organization has a yearly event to raise money, and I enjoyed helping with preparations, interpreting to American guests, and even cleaning afterward. At the end of the event, the director of the organization, Pastor Ambelie Negash hugged me and said "thank you for being willing to help," and his reaction made me think of becoming more often involved with fundraising events even if I am not required or asked to volunteer. At that time, I knew little about volunteering, but I had recently been to the MAICD program at Northwest University, a program that required field work somewhere. In my mind that night, I had already decided that I would visit and volunteer at the Haset's Vision in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.

In the summer of 2018, I was privileged to visit Haset's Vision in Ethiopia; I met the staff and the children who were enrolled in the education and meal programs. Their excitement was beyond my expectations. I was able to tour the area and see where the children play and study with tutors. Unlike the children still living on streets of Bahir Dar, children at Haset's Vision have food to eat, clothes to wear, and an opportunity to learn and develop, none of which they had access to before enrolling in Haset's Vision. I was shown to the photos from 2015, the first day they had started the programs, to help me differentiate and recognize the improvements they had made in three short years. Their goal was definitely to help the children physically, but most important, the organization offers the children spiritual support. This support is vital to their growth, especially for those who struggle with special needs and who have had past traumatic experiences.

When I attended Haset's Vision's fundraising event for the second time in April 2019, the organization considered me as part of the staff instead of as an external supporter. They invited me to the event as a guest speaker to share my summer's visiting experience at their site. After the event, I spoke to my pastor with whom I have an ongoing relationship though my local church and asked if I could do my fieldwork in Ethiopia; he agreed. After I got my confirmation from my professor, I was excited for the time to come, not only because of my fieldwork, but also because I was thrilled to do my fieldwork in my birth country, Ethiopia, where I speak the same language and share the same culture with the people living there today. However, I soon learned that my fieldwork required more from me than my enthusiasm to help at Haset's Vision. As Bonnie Stone Sunstrein and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater suggest, "No matter how interested in and enthusiastic we are about a possible field-site, we must be conscious of our comfort levels and even potential dangers in investigating certain groups or places" (119). I was not aware of the professional process qualitative research that any academic fieldwork requires.

Why is qualitative research important?

Qualitative research gives researchers physical hands-on experiences and helps them gather specific information in many different ways such as through observations, different perspectives, and through survey feedback. Most important, it teaches researchers how to conduct interviews that often provide necessary information for the project. In fact, Bonnie Stone Sunstrein and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater state, "Sometimes the best interviews come from a comment, a story, an artifact, or a phrase you couldn't have anticipated" (220). Besides interviews, photos, videos, audios and more about the place of the fieldwork are considered valuable data. Merriam and Tisdell call qualitative research a naturalistic study because it takes "… place in a real-world setting rather than a laboratory, and whatever was

being observed and studied was allowed to happen naturally" (7). Also, qualitative study helps the investigator to be curious about the subject and to avoid being predictable. Since it is discovery-oriented, the researchers cannot determine or control the study. Instead, researchers have to learn how to be patient through the process; they must become willing to explore new ideas, thoughts, and perspectives as well as challenges throughout the fieldwork.

Qualitative research is likely different in each fieldwork location. For instance, developing countries such as Ethiopia do not have immediate media information about actions and events happening in the country. Especially in rural areas, technology and the internet are sometimes unavailable. Qualitative research, then, is very valuable because it opens doors to resources that technology cannot access. For example, Ethiopians know the "coffee ceremony" indicates a well-known information center. Wherever there is "a coffee," there is new information. Ethiopians brew fresh coffee from grinding the beans on up, and the brewing smell invites in the neighbors and even strangers. Stephanie Counsel is a manager at Hope Ethiopia (HE) who shared her opinion about the importance of qualitative research, saying, "My knowledge about Ethiopia was limited and I am glad I had an opportunity to learn and gain access to information through my coffee ceremony experiences" (Stephanie Counsel). In Ethiopia, men and women gather, have a cup of coffee, and talk about their daily life experiences, new things they've seen, heard, or read in the newspaper. They exchange information, and they repeat this same process every day. A qualitative researcher, even in a rural Ethiopian village, can gain access to information from newspapers, chats over coffee, public markets, and interaction with people. They can gather symbols or a piece of art, and they constantly find more ways to gather data.

Artifacts might not seem important, but according to Bonnie Stone Sunstein and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater, qualitative researchers can find meaning in them. They argue, "An outsider is more likely to notice them and wonder where the objects come from, what they're used for, who makes them, and why they're made the way they are," and "all of these facts become clues to the traditions, rituals, values, and behavior of a cultural group" (126). Based on the artifact, researchers can ask open-ended or close-ended questions to strengthen their fieldwork. It is important to pay attention to details because what we might consider as useless, others may think have a unique meaning and value; qualitative research, then, is a vitally important method in that it allows researchers to contextualize, to deeply familiarize themselves with the concerns, the area, and the study in general.

Seth M. Holmes, an ethnographer researcher has demonstrated the characteristics of qualitative research methods well. He did his fieldwork in an unfamiliar place among people he did not know. They spoke a language different from his, and their cultures were different, too. He gained important data through his strong listening skills, observation photos, audios, interviews, and personal notes. His book *Fresh Fruit Broken Bodies* explains his experience; it also includes his challenges as an outsider, a white man. His situation forced him to witness the suffering of field workers, too, and he writes, "During the first year of my fieldwork, over five hundred people died in the Tucson Sector of the border alone" (Holmes 8). He valued his qualitative field study to the point of risking his life.

Qualitative Research and ICD Values

International Community Development is obviously about community development; it focuses on the people of these communities, their identities, cultures, background, and religions. It also focuses on their needs and expectations. I believe that ICD respects and values people's differences within the community and still seeks to serve them in ways they deserve. Most important, ICD is all about humanity; it prioritizes the most vulnerable, suffering, neglected and oppressed, and it believes in working as a team for shared goals over individual success and achievements. As stated in the "The Well-Prepared International Development Worker," community development is as follows:

> … a broad area that encompasses the community-specific work of the front-line development worker. It includes: teaching, implementation of community participatory processes and learning, establishing a philosophy of community development, including best practices, balancing cultural context with the need to address life-threatening problems, consideration of consequences (intended, unintended, positive and negative) of development programming and decisions, understanding and appreciating the history of local community development, understanding of current models of community development, development of local leadership, capacity building, longevity and sustainability, and entrance and exit strategies. (Boan et at. 435)

Accordingly, an ICD worker must learn to be prepared to change priorities in development work based on need. The qualitative researcher must always expect the unexpected, accept challenges, and take risks to collect valuable data for the study. International Community Development is an ongoing process with both short-term and long-term goals rather than onetime projects. It

measures the changes and improvements any implemented projects have made as well as evaluates what has worked and not.

Qualitative research reveals the hidden part of the study. During the qualitative study, researchers will have authority to help individuals to think outside of that box. Qualitative researchers learn to see a certain issue from multiple perspectives. They identify the issue, its cause, possible contributors to the cause, the proposed solution, and the resources available to support and solve the problem. Learning qualitative research in ICD helps researchers expand thoughts, ideas, plans, perspectives, and eventually better opportunities and resources to find a solution to a targeted problem. Qualitative methods focus on community engagement, involve participants in the study, and bring empowerment to community development by creating awareness of a problem, offering possible solutions, and by making viable access to resources.

The qualitative research method can explore complex studies more thoroughly than can quantitative research, and its values are strong listening skills, empathy, and context sensitivity. International Community Development (ICD) uses these values because they help researchers gain adequate knowledge and experience that better equips them to serve the community. As Merriam and Tisdell suggest, researchers learn to learn about the group that is being studied; they know that "to understand the culture of a group, one must spend time with the group being studied" (29); otherwise, qualitative research is not complete. An individual working in international community development is expected to be open-minded, curious to explore and learn about new things, have strong empathy, and be willing to engage with communities that have different backgrounds, cultures, languages, religions, and more. An article, "Effects of Spiritual Change on the Re-Entry Adjustment of Christian Young Adult Humanitarian Workers," explains that an international community worker should have a

listening ear and speak without judgment (Wartenweiler and Eiroa-Orosa 183). An international community development worker is considered a leader who is willing to walk into the unknown with confidence, to be accountable and responsible, and not to be afraid to take risks for a better outcome of the shared goal.

Qualitative Research in my Fieldwork

Before my fieldwork began, I had planned to interview only the director of the program and some of the staff members as they have detailed information about the organization (Haset's Vision) where I'd do my study. However, after learning about qualitative research and how much authority it offers to research, I could not wait to use it. I loved that qualitative research gives me the freedom to move around and bounce back and forth between resources. Qualitative research did not limit me to doing only interviews, but it taught me a variety of ways to collect data from interviews: forming different types of questions (open-ended or close-ended), observation, statements/re-statements, stories, and shared experiences.

Pastor Ambelie Negash, the director of the program, walked me through the process of visiting and doing my fieldwork at Haset's Vison. He introduced me to possible challenges I might face because of the country's current political status and tribal conflict. I had earlier met Pastor Meseret Nigusu, the manager of the program at Haset's Vision, and he helped me learn what to expect and how to prepare ahead of my arrival. As members of a Christian faith-based organization, the staff expected a fieldworker to be a Christian or have a Christian background. Since I was coming from the United States, they expected someone who did not know the culture or the language well, and these expectations helped me to accomplish my fieldwork as an outsider. Everyone wanted to participate in my project – the director/manager, the rest of the staff, the volunteers, and the children enrolled in the organization.

They were aware that I needed detailed information about the organization, its programs, and the new projects waiting to be implemented. They were happy to help because as Pastor Ambelie Negash said, "We have a desperate need for a volunteer, because people who have come to Haset's Vision to visit in previous, did not continue to come or have an ongoing relationship with the children". They value someone who is trying to learn about their organization through research, someone who wants to share new ideas, thoughts, and perspectives about their new projects. They appreciate a researcher who is curious and inspired because they believe that curiosity leads to exploring new visions, to creativity and innovation which are some of the aspects they hope to see their visitors and volunteers share.

In the first few days of my fieldwork, I attended the organization's pre-planned events such as the end of school celebration where the teachers gave testimonies about the organization and explained how it is helping each child. They read grade reports and awarded most of the children for improvements during the school year. In the first break, I interviewed one of the staff members, Tsion Abera, who tearfully said, "These kids you saw getting awarded were not even able to write their names when they first came to Haset's Vision." If not for qualitative research, I might not have known to observe different activities at the event or interview people. With it, I gained real-time reactions and read body language as participants responded to my interview questions.

During my fieldwork, I visited the city of Bahir Dar and learned about its people. I visited spiritual places and saw different artifacts such as a cross and the meanings behind them; I also visited buildings that were built hundreds of years ago as well as historical museums. Learning the city's context helped me know how the people of Bahir Dar value their culture and religion. By using qualitative research, I paid special attention to the city's humanity. The children

where I did my fieldwork are hungry; they are hungry for people and for love. My simply

hugging them and doing a high five and run around with them brought joy to their hearts and to

mine. Without being with them and providing what they needed, my fieldwork study would not

have been accurate. Qualitative research empowered me to interact with educated men,

oppressed women, vulnerable children, and children with special needs. I communicated with

them using my language, Amharic, and they felt comfortable being around me. The fact that I

was a young woman, open-minded, curious, and willing to be challenged made them admire me.

The qualitative research method has been very useful in my fieldwork. It has helped me

demonstrate my study beyond my expectations by letting me think outside of the box.

Qualitative Research and Proposed Project

Education is one of the most important factors for a human being's welfare and growth.

As a community development worker, I believe that serving the community to meet their needs

starts with directing them to resources that can educate them or opportunities that give them

access to education. My proposed project is a curriculum made for training purposes to create

awareness about HIV/AIDS, STD, female genital mutation (FGM), bridal abduction, mental

disorders, and the importance of child education. In addition, I explain Ethiopian substance use

including Khat (chatt/Khat), a dangerous plant that "contains two alkaloids, cathinone and

cathine". It has been used as a traditional chewing leaf for generations in Somalia, Yemen, and

Ethiopia especially in Muslim communities (Lallanilla 1). I believe my curriculum will

contribute to community development by closing the educational gap. My fieldwork has proven

the fact that as do many in a developing country's population, the people of Bahir Dar lack

knowledge about the concerns my curriculum teaches. At the same time, through my fieldwork, I

have seen the "missing pieces" of the people of Bahir Dar; I have seen that they value religion,

experiences, and culture more than education and knowledge, regardless of the consequences, and I hope to teach them that this kind of thinking is very dangerous for the current and coming generations.

My fieldwork also taught me that the people of Bahir Dar believe in spiritual assignments rather than in mental illnesses, and because of it, they refuse to see doctors. They fear they will lose their identities if they do not accept and follow the culture, so they secretly perform illegal practices such as female genital mutation (FGM) and bridal abduction. My proposed project intends to train new parents, non-profit organization staff, and church leaders so that they are well equipped and know how to respond to such situations and practices. Qualitative research is a must for every community development worker, especially those working in developing countries. As a community developer, I have used it to help me provide an in-depth understanding of and detailed information for my project, one I am designing to serve many in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.

Conclusion

The qualitative research method has helped me grow because it helped motivate me to become more curious about different steps forward. Through my fieldwork, I have identified my own strengths and weaknesses which have helped me to work hard for improvement and change. Every time I accepted and overcame a challenge, I was rewarded with new skills, responsibility, and respect. Doing qualitative study in my fieldwork has also connected me with wonderful people from different organizations such as Love and Care and Hope Ethiopia, people who can help me with my project, and people with whom I would not have had access otherwise.

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Essay 3: ICD Values

It's been a learning curve for me in ICD, but I have found more than I expected, even hoped for, as I move on prepared into my service life. I have learned about my own strengths and values and how, through copowerment, even "co-leadership," I can further strengthen my own plans for my goals to fight social injustice. This plan means I finally understand social justice, my relationship with it as a person and as a Christian, and my personal and spiritual growth in moving outside "my own" to embrace others.

Before I started the master's degree program in International Community Development (MAICD) program, I was not aware of the value that my life could show. The name of the program itself relates to serving others, communities around the word. It was a challenging transition for me. I collected resources, read books and articles, watched videos, did research, and thought, "I am doing something for people in need of my service." I hadn't understood that the ICD program starts with self, with me. I had never thought about my education or experiences as part of a valuable journey that has the power to transform me. Through the ICD program, however, I have learned about my own value, skills, confidence, abilities, challenges, strengths and weaknesses, and this is an ongoing process that is helping me grow in my education as well as in my spiritual life. Because each day I am being exposed to new experiences, opportunities to learn, and perspectives about community development, my transformation process strengthens my relationship with individuals, community, and God.

Personal Transformation

As a believer, I know that the life of a Christian should represent Christ on earth and that includes respecting and loving others through my words and actions. However, I have been driven more by the idea of respecting those who respect me and loving those who love

me than the reverse. Because I have always been surrounded by "my people" in "my circle," it has never clicked in my mind that I have to go above and beyond and to be willing to sacrifice in showing my respect and love to those who do not love me or Christ.

The ICD program has given me opportunities to look at myself and realize what I am missing in Christian's characteristics. In reading *the Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life,* I learned that "God is inviting you to look inward, perhaps to pay attention to the motives or needs behind your desire to interact with others" and that "God calls us to grow by drawing us beyond our comfort zones, stretching us to develop the non-dominant side of our personality" (Thompson 159). God wants me to spread his love to his people, especially those who do not know him and have relationship with him. The transition between my old self (before ICD) and my new self (after ICD) was smooth, but it was not visible to people nor noticeable to me. However, through this process, I have learned that I am transforming into a better person and a strong individual who is willing to serve people and God as I am expected to.

There is a proverb that my mom mostly used to say at home, "If you are not in my shoes, you will never understand what I mean." This saying did not bother me as a young girl, because I thought 'her shoes will never fit me anyway' or 'why is she even talking about shoes now?' At that time, my mind was not sure about the purpose of using metaphors, and I was not curious to know the meaning behind it. Growing up, I have heard multiple true stories about people being mistreated because of their race, gender, status, or other differences from their community members. I have witnessed children on streets with no adequate access to shelter, clothing, school, and most important, food; I have known that they survived by eating leftovers collected from the garbage. As a young girl, I felt helpless because I could not provide them with any of their needs. One thing I kept on reminding myself was that I can do "something" in the

future even if not now. That was my intention because I knew that what I was hearing and seeing was a complete mess, unfair, and against my belief as a human being and as a Christian.

I believe that coming from Ethiopia, a developing country, has affected me in good and bad ways, but it has definitely opened my eyes about social justice. Ethiopia has a male dominated culture, and it discourages women from being educated and leading. Most important, that dominance takes away the rights of women about decision making (even about their bodies) and leaves them feeling mental, physical, and emotional as well as spiritual abuse. During my Kenyan research, one of the female participants responded as follows:

> …patriarchal and dominance of men in leadership positions was a factor, the exposure and orientation of boys and young men to leadership provided them with role models and mentorship while the absence of women in leadership denied women mentorship resulting in development of stereotypical perceptions which made them shy away from responsibility… and another: certain cultural values were pertinent to women in leadership, in the sense that honesty, commitment, transparency, caring and respect were values that had been consistently portrayed by the few women in leadership, and it was the same values that had made them outstanding. (Choge 34)

Patriarchy fosters social injustice. Everything that men have done against women for temporary pleasure and to exercise power over them has cost the lives of many, and this misuse of power is against the actual law and God's moral law. As Moe-Lobeda states, "Life lived in ways that cost other people their lives, where alternatives exist or are in the making and where political action toward them is possible, is not a moral life" (Moe-Lobeda 26).

It's clear that my background has shaped the way I perceive social justice. As a woman, I have always wanted justice for women, especially those who have undergone major negative

experiences such as rape, miscarriage, or being affected by HIV/AIDS, disabled, or living with a

special need. I hope to serve as an influence for social justice in the future in two ways, through

counseling that is based on my university education and on spiritual support because of my faith.

To live a life of justice is not easy, but it is not impossible either. It requires patience, time,

money, and even major sacrifices that might cost a life. Moe-Lobeda warns, "Christian ethics

begins with the recognition that how people treat each other is determined not only by

interpersonal relationships but also by social structures." (185) God wants and expects me to

treat others, care for them, and love them the exact way I wanted to be treated, cared for, and

loved. Also, Moe-Lobeda advises prioritizing people, saying, "The priority of human need over

profit is solidly rooted in human rights discourse and Christian tradition" (219). Regardless of

their race, age, gender, background, religion or any other differences, people, all of us, are

created in God's image.

Social justice in my future vocation

My future vocation is about advocating for women who have undergone rape, female

genital mutation (FGM), miscarriages and different abuses (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual

as well as substance abuse). The research by Carolyn M. West, the author of *Violence in the*

Lives of Black Women: Battered, Black, and Blue indicates the following:

> Women with a history of repeated sexual victimization and exposure to other forms of
>
> violence, such as witnessing violence, experiencing beatings in childhood, and having
>
> family members or close friends who were murdered, were at significantly greater risk of
>
> perpetrating violence. Those who were victims of violence at the hands of their intimate
>
> partners were also more likely to report engaging in physical fighting. Thus, the women's

own violence was coupled with another troubling aspect of their lives: vulnerability to

repeat victimization. (51)

I will focus on empowering women and supporting them in the process of discovering their inner

potentials, values, and energies. My future vocation should also focus on providing access to

education, career training, health information, and more job/career opportunities for women who

have not had these opportunities before. I hope to serve as a future influence for social justice by

uncovering the fact that the world needs more female leaders in village to government positions.

According to Kuenkel, "More women could drive a new way of doing business that would be

more collaborative, more community-centered, and more partnership-focused" and another

participant added that "by adding more women to leadership teams, the overall effectiveness

would increase" (43).

I hope to work with organizations that service communities so that they allow women to

explore the world around them and contribute to community development. Also, "it is not only

about adding women to leadership seats; it is also about the ability of all of us to expand our way

of co-creating and integrate seemingly different but actual complementary approaches"

(Kuenkel 43). I do believe that women are naturally curious about the ways of the world, and

that will help them to focus on things differently than men do because they pay attention to every

small detail, perhaps ones that men miss.

As I am working on a thesis project that focuses primarily on vulnerable children, I often

learn from the process of the project. For example, I recently learned that helping the vulnerable

children and providing them access to education is a great way of investing in the future. The

children who are equipped well with adequate education now will be great leaders of the

future, and they will not tolerate social injustice or abuses of nature and of other human

beings. Creating a generation that stands firm against discrimination, abuses, and illegal use of power starts with a small move. To serve as an influence for social justice in the future, I personally encourage each individual and community, religious leaders, and governments to be responsible and to take action now. The article by Feigh argues that "faith communities are in a powerful position to take on the responsibility of providing good quality prevention education as a way of living out the community's beliefs in a real and concrete way" (26). It is very painful to imagine what each vulnerable child is going through and as Thompson says, "Suffering makes us aware of our need for a larger framework of meaning and purpose in life" (5). I believe that as a Christian, I am "called" to glorify God in every step I take in my everyday life, and my caring for needy and helpless children will please him even more. According to Thompson, "The spiritual life invites a process of transformation in the life of a believer," and "it is a process of growing in gratitude, trust, obedience, humility, compassion, service, and joy" (8.). In my understanding, justice is time-sensitive, and to work against injustice, I do not need to wait for future: small moves matter, starting now.

My understanding of copowerment

Because I intend to lead in the fight against social injustice, I must understand the importance of copowerment. I believe that connecting and working with people who relate to me in ideas, thoughts, and goals should help us all make a significant and visible improvement in our work and support throughout our journey. I also understand that copowerment is one of the characteristics of leadership and that true leadership without "teamwork" is not possible. Overall, according to my understanding, copowerment is co-leading; it is "collective leadership."

As Kuenkel says, humans are meant to team up and work together for shared goals because "no matter how important our contribution may be, we exist in a web of relationship" (66),

and this copowerment will truly help us to be successful in what we plan to accomplish in our works. As a person who comes from a collective culture, I already believe in the power that a group of people brings over that of only individual work; in collective leadership, each person will have a chance to get involved, remain engaged, and contribute to a shared goal. Although mistakes and failure may occur in the process of copowerment, having a team to share the difficult times and celebrate at the time of victory has a positive outcome.

How will I accomplish these goals? As defined in *Living your Strengths*, "A strength is the ability to provide consistent, near-perfect performance in a given activity. This ability is a powerful, productive combination of talent, skill, and knowledge" (Winseman, Clifton, and Liesveld, 7). Identifying my strengths has helped me to recognize my values. According to the StrengthFinder assessment, one of my top five strengths is an "includer"; it means I have a natural ability to include, involve, and engage others in the process of growth. The includer focuses on inviting people to contribute their ideas, visions, and abilities to support a shared area of development. I have noticed that my "extrovert" personality is also playing a very important role in gaining strength to include others. I believe in diversity, and I value each individual's presence in a shared project because it gives beauty when everyone adds different perspectives into our work. Most important, I have learned that copowerment is about giving opportunities for others to lead along with me, to be responsible for the idea and projects I am implementing. It helps me to allow my team members to experience what it means to be in charge so that I learn about their potentials and trustworthiness. I also understand that copowerment could be another way for me to give back to my community and to prove that there is more beauty in harmony than in a solo performance.

As an extroverted person, I enjoy meeting new people, exploring new things, and learning from others who are different from me. Although I was raised in a Christian family, most of my friends as a child were Muslims and boys. I have always been a curious girl who was fearless to ask questions about anything and willing to go beyond limitations for the sake of learning something new. My intentions and focuses were about developing new skills every day, being open-minded to learn from people, and admitting my failures so that I can learn from my past mistakes. My personality from my young age has carried over and shaped me to be who I am today. I think that one of the greatest gifts I am blessed with is that of "self-examination." Thomson, in *Soul Feast*, mentions self-examination as an exercise that pushes us to ask, think over, and evaluate self before saying something to others or making decisions. When I co-empower, co-create, and co-lead in my future work, I would love my self-examination to be a useful method in helping my team move forward and bring positive outcomes. Currently, there are injustices around the world, and the world needs our attention, involvement, and action for change. If we are equipped with the right education, training, and experiences, we will create a better future for current and future generations.

Theology or philosophy of service

My own theology or philosophy of service is to give back to my community and to give with no expectation of anything in return or in exchange. The idea of giving back to "my community" refers to my people, or my comfort zone, and those to whom I belong to because I feel loved and respected. My theology and philosophy of service has developed through time, however, and I have come to a new understanding of serving people, especially those who are different from me and "my people." In the Bible, Jesus speaks to this "people" topic:

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who

love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what

credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full … but

love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything

back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Highest, because he

is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (NIV

Luke 6:32-36)

Jesus asks us to act the opposite of what the world expects us to do and tells us that following the

word of God says is simply having a sense of humanity.

The fact that my theology or philosophy of service is developing is very important

because it will influence my growth in all directions, as well as my future vocational choices. I

recently discovered that the leadership and forgiveness, reconciliation and peace are the most

important characteristics in community development. In *Exclusion & Embrace* by Miroslav Volf,

I have learned about creating a chance for forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace:

[B]y placing unattended rage before God we place both our unjust enemy and our own

vengeful self-face to face with a God who loves and does Justice … in the light of the

justice and love of God, however, hate recedes, and the seed is planted for the miracle of

forgiveness. (124)

My serving community by planting seeds of forgiveness is unique. I believe that theology

encourages Christians to pay special attention to those who are lost and vulnerable:

This responsibility of bearing God's image ought to define our relationships, as we are to

reflect God's image to each other and have that image reflect back to God

in everything that we do. … and to reflect God's image is to reflect love to others in the

form of care, compassion, and concern for their well-being … and to act justly is to

represent God's love to each other thereby honor the image of God in the other person as

well. (Clawson 20)

These passages have helped me consider and pay attention to developing my theology of service

as I have begun focusing on reaching out to all people.

Conclusion

Looking back over my experience of the ICD program, I see that my background, my

values and activities have impacted me in the great way. It has not been an easy journey, but with

each step I have taken forward, I have grown both mentally and physically stronger. I am

thankful that I have learned to discover my inner potential through individual research during my

fieldwork and group discussions. I am aware of the existence of social injustice in the world, and

my intention and future goal are to contribute to community development through my career to

find solution to the problems related to social injustice. As a leader, I accept that I am

responsible to create awareness of issues that arise every day, and I will do my part by engaging

with communities, spiritual leaders, and the government. I am open-minded, willing to learn, and

trained to serve my community in better ways. No step is small; each step I take in making

change for the future matters and counts as great value. The fact that I am learning about social

injustice in different places helps me know what is expected of me as individual, a Christian, and

a leader. The International Community Development (ICD) program has added texture to my

educational journey and life in general. I have been educated, transformed, challenged, and

equipped.

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