



**HOW ARE THE CHRISTIAN MEN FELLOWSHIP (CMF) IN  
KUMBA-CAMEROON  
ENGAGED IN THE WORK FOR THE POOR, PARTICULARLY  
ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN (OVC).**



**MASTER'S THESIS IN  
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## **Abstract**

This paper seeks to investigate the engagement of the CMF of the Presbyterian Church Kumba Cameroon, in their work for the poor, particularly OVC. And also to know the related courses of their vulnerability status which might affect their growth, and development. My sole objective was to identify and census orphans and vulnerable children and determine their medical, educational, nutritional, housing, employment and legal needs. The approach of this work involved the church represented by the Christian men fellowship (CMF), NGOs, civil society, traditional authorities, and off course the divisional delegation of the ministry of social affairs representing the six sub-divisions of meme in Kumba. This consists of a door to door search of OVC from village to village in the Kumba sub- division using some church trained volunteers in the field of social work. A well structured questionnaire and vulnerability scale were used to identify these OVC and their need. The divisional delegation of the ministry of social affairs carryout supervision and validation, a survey was and 1802 orphans and vulnerable children were identify in the Kumba municipality amongst this number given, the CMF is hosting and supporting 786 OVC while the rest are under some NGOs in the Kumba municipality and its environs. It was also found that quite a host of these OVC lack birth certificates, with almost (90.5%) with related health problems and (9.3%) with HIV infections while few of them very little or no meal a day. Quite a number of these orphans and vulnerable children are drop out from school for are simple reasons that, either because of poverty or because one of the parent is sick and need somebody to take care of. Another reason will be than an average family will prefer to send the boys to school and allow the girl to stay home and talk care of the younger brothers and sisters. About half of them live with grandfathers or foster families and one third of these families need income generating activities to support these OVC. In this regard, there was a need for the provision of basic education, birth certificates, medical treatment and nutritional needs for the orphans and vulnerable children in the Kumba municipality,

The UNICEF UNAIDS and USAID developed a global strategic framework guide responses to care and protect OVC in the context of HIV and AIDS by providing anti-retroviral treatment to affected children and their parent and also the sensitization of the general public on the prevention of these pandemic disease. It was also noticed that majority of these OVC has lost or both parents either due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic or other related courses of which make vulnerable to the society such as conflict, war and border crisis, during this many parent will lost their lives and may children will be displaced to other villages and nearby towns were they will become vulnerable to the society. And for that reasons, the CMF of the Presbyterian

Church Kumba is coming in to exercise diaconal work to meet the basic needs of these OVC.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS Syndrome	-	Acquired Immunodeficiency
AVR	-	Antiretroviral
CMF	-	Christian Men Fellowship
CIG	-	Common Initiative Group
FBO	-	Faith Based Organization
FAO Organization	-	Food and Agricultural
HIV Virus	-	Human Immunodeficiency
ICJ	-	International Court of Justice
KIDSS system services	-	Key International and develop
LWF	-	Lutheran World federation
MINAS	-	Ministry of Social Affairs
NACC Committee	-	National Aids Control
NGO Organization	-	Non Governmental
OVC Children	-	Orphans and Vulnerable
PCC Cameroon	-	Presbyterian Church in
SAP Program	-	Structural Adjustment
UNICEF Children Emergency Fund	-	United Nations international

UNAIDS HIV/AIDS	-	United Nations Programme on
USAID International Development	-	United States Agency for
UNO	-	United Nation Organization
YCW	-	Young Christian Workers

## **List of Tables and Figures**

Figure.1 map of Cameroon

Figure. 2 Map of The Ten Regions of Cameroon

Figure. 3 The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon Logo.

Figure. 4 The Christian Men Fellowship Group, Kumba-Cameroon.

Figure. 5 The Map of Kumba Municipality.

Figure. 6 The Amusement Park, Kumba.

Table.1 Primary school

Table. 2 Secondary School

Table. 3 Vocational Training

## **Table of content**

Abstract

Acknowledgement

Acronyms and Abbreviations

List of Tables and Figures

## **Chapter one**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 My concern.

1.2 Research question, research hypothesis.

1.3 Objectives.

1.4 Operational Definition

1.4.1 Orphaned and Vulnerable Children.

1.4.2 Definition of a Child.

1.4.3 Definition of an Orphan in Cameroonian Context.

1.4.4 Vulnerable Child.

## **Chapter two**

2.1 Brief history of Cameroon.

2.2 Geographic of Cameroon

Figure 1 map of Cameroon.

2.3 Demographics of Kumba

Figure 2 Geographical site of Kumba Municipality.

2.3.1 Population.

2.3.2 Religion.

2.4 Presbyterian Church in Cameroon.

2.4.1 The Origin of Christian Men Fellowship (CMF) Kumba.



## **Chapter Three**

- 3.0 Methodology
- 3.1 Research Strategy
- 3.2 Data Collection
- 3.3 Choice of Respondents
- 3.4 Target Groups for Data
- 3.5 Data Analysis
- 3.6 Responses to the Questionnaire
- 3.7 Time Frame
- 3.8 Challenges Encountered
- 3.9 Personal Reflection

## **Chapter four**

- 4.0 Theories
- 4.1 Theory of Diakonia.
  - 4.1.1 Transformation
  - 4.1.2 Reconciliation
  - 4.1.3 Empowerment
  - 4.1.4 Inclusiveness
- 4.2 Theory of Gender
- 4.3 Theory of Poverty

## **Chapter five**

- 5.0 Empirical study
- 5.1 Statistics of OVC in Sub-Saharan Africa
- 5.2 Situation of OVC in Cameroon.

- 5.3 Factors Contributing to the Increased of OVC in Cameroon.
- 5.4 Preventive Strategies and Government Intervention to OVC.
- 5.5 Faith Based Organization (FBO)
  - 5.5.1 Definition of Faith Based Organization
  - 5.5.2 The Role of Christian Men Fellowship (CMF) in Caring for the OVC
  - 5.5.3 Efforts Made by the CMF as a FBO in Reducing Spread of OVC
  - 5.5.4 Activities/Response of the CMF as FBO in Preventing and Caring of OVC
- 5.6 Family Tracing and Reunification of the OVC in Kumba

## **Chapter six**

- 6.0 Critical analysis of the activities of the Christian men's fellowship (CMF)
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Strength of the Christian men's fellowship (CMF).
- 6.3 Weakness of the (CMF).
- 6.4 Opportunity
  - 6.4.1 Advocacy
  - 6.4.2 Stigma and Discrimination
- 6.5 Threats

## **Chapter seven**

- 7.0 Recommendations for Action and Conclusion
- 7.1 Recommendations for Action
- 7.2 Conclusion.

References.

Appendix

## CHAPTER ONE.

### 1.0 Introduction

According to (M. Daniel Carroll R and John William R, 2004 p. 49), just because we live in a fallen world, life will always has the tendency to be devalued, we as humans shall find ourselves in situations in which it becomes very difficult to uphold our ideals. And as we strive in life death becomes that which must at all costs be avoided.

The above mentioned statement is thus insinuating that in the present of disease, war and famine, there will be always Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) among our community: as it is worth mentioning that at the down of each day, children are orphaned, abandoned and displaced due to the havoc cause by some tropical diseases and/or the most commonly talked pandemic of HIV/AIDS which today in Cameroon 183,232 are orphans due to this pandemic out of the total of 144,565 millions orphans found in Cameroon (Comite National de Lutte Contre Le SIDA, 2010, p.55); the growth of poverty and inequality; the increasingly talking point of social exclusion; lack of support of those with disabilities or learning difficulties; as well as people who are displaced through civil conflict/war and those of environmental disasters – like the tsunamis. So instead of focusing only on HIV/AIDS as the cause of increased number of Orphan and Vulnerable Children in our communities, it will be rather important to look at the phenomenal context of the OVC as a bigger-picture. Which thus entails that the various communities affected, had no choice, rather than to support and/or look after their orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC). In accordance with what the Bible says: “There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land” (Deuteronomy 15:11). Yes, even in the best societies under the most enlightened laws, the uncertainties of life and the variations among citizens result in some people becoming poor. In such cases the Lord thus commands that generosity and kindness be extended to them. Moreover, as humans in a fallen world, we should endeavor to recognize through faith and in relation to God’s purpose to humankind that we are not the disposers of life but its servants for His sake.

Just as Blaikle and Barnet are thus testifying that Africa is the most advantageous place for effective care of OVC due to the combination of the issues of familial and communal care, rather than that of institutional care (Blaikle and Barnet, 1992; UNICEF, 2001). In other words, the model of care preferred in Africa is at the range of community based as its thus entails the keeping of a child in a family environment in their own may be tribe or village. And although I cannot condone with what I am about to say, that by

following the `foot-steps` of the people of Africa, the global-world communities can be able to learn how to work with them (Africans) as they care for millions of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC).

There is fear that OVC will obtain less education, thereby worsening their own life chances, as well as the long-term economic prospects of their countries (Nsagha DS, Bissek ACZ, Nsagha SM, et al.). But it is good to know that the response level of most of the communities thus varies greatly in education, skills and resources. But my main focus on this study is to ensure that the OVC thus has access to Education and/Training. And it is based on the initiative taken by a faith-based group the Christian Men Fellowship (CMF) of Presbyterian in Cameroon couple with the multilateral support from the UNO, to of course, identified some of the most needed model of good practices and supports to the OVC across the town of Kumba, south west region of Cameroon. And it is good to know that the assistance to OVC in Cameroon continues to be carried out primarily by individual families, faith-based groups and other small organizations, and successful programming reinforces the capacity of these support systems (UNICEF UK, 1990). Generally, in a context of poverty characterized by the basic necessities and the erosion of solidarity; it is unfortunately evident that orphans' are a separate group that should be given some attention that required specific and individual attention because it is obvious that the challenges of orphans and vulnerable children are increasingly a threat to their survival, growth and development. A claim supported by (Serey S, Many D, Sopheak M, et al.), justifying there is a fear that OVC will no doubt obtain less education, thereby worsening their own life chances, as well as the long-term economic prospects of their countries.

And I want to believe that the original concept of Diakonia and Christian Social Practice got their inspiration from these aspects of how to cater for OVC. So said, and to the best of my knowledge, Diakonia thus refers to Christian Social Service – comprising of some sort of compassionate and solidarity based services towards those in need. Or in a nut shell, the term Diakonia means philanthropic care and practice that entails love of humankind. And of which the church has been using this concept increasingly to look after the needs of OVC and to enhance social welfare and of course social security services to OVC. So, diaconal work worldwide thus examines social needs, develop ideas and influence policies that will impact the concepts of social exclusion and poverty.

### 1.1 My Concern.

My concern is that, in some parts of Cameroonian cultures there is this mystic beliefs that lead some people to assume that a child who is born with some sort of disability, thus possessed evil spirit and/or could be a direct outcome of a curse. And most often, these families usually dispose of the unwanted child with the pretext of freeing themselves of the purported curse. Meanwhile, another sad assumption is that some of them (parents) knowing

clearly that they will not be able to cope or provide the most basic physical needs for the disable child, usually decide to abandon the child to an orphanage, bearing in mind that the child will have a better life at the expense of the supposed orphanage. And whereby, most of these orphanages barely provide just food and shelter to these children but of which these children will need education, training and of course, a family. So, as Christ followers, we should have the concern to care for the OVC, just as the Bible says “Do not deny justice to a foreigner or fatherless child” (Deuteronomy 24:17). In other words, God will always fight for orphans and also loves them as their father, but His word thus commanded us to “defend the cause of orphans”(Isaiah 1:17).

But what actually prompted me to carry out this project was this live story which happens in my community, Kumba, the south west region of Cameroon: about a mad lady, who was found in the street pregnant under labor, was taken to the hospital for delivery and she gave birth to a baby girl. Two month later the lady was carry together with her little baby to a Kumba-based Presbyterian Church rehabilitation home where she was taken a good care of. But four years later, she ran away from the rehabilitation and she was found along the street again together with her baby. Unfortunately, for her, her four year daughter was discovered to be a deaf. People however, always pass by and offer something for them to eat, but she could not allow any one touch her baby. Moreover, her community had always been so vigilant towards her for fear that she might harm the baby since they know that she was mad. One morning, some of her daily donors realized that this lady have been sleeping for long as they pass by and offer money and food to her baby. Ironically, the baby could not realize that her mad mother was dead. But later during the day it was realized that the mad lady was dead. The police came for intervention took the baby and handed over to an orphanage which was control by this Faith-Based Organization (Kumba-based Presbyterian Church Christian Men Fellowship). They took her and gave her all the necessary financial support, gave her a sound educational training. At the age of 18, Mesodi was adopted by a Christian family where she spent the rest of her life happily. Thanks to the work of the Christian Men Fellowship (CMF) of Presbyterian Church in Cameroon.

As regards the struggle against these unwanted situations of OVC in my community, Kumba, I could realize that there will be some sort of reduction in the number of OVC in my community in particular, and in the world as a whole: Thereby, reducing the effect of HIV/AIDS; the growth of poverty and inequality; the increasingly talking point of social exclusion; lack of support of those with disabilities or learning difficulties; as well as people who are displaced through civil conflict/war and those of environmental disasters. And it will not be hard to believe that this is a good example for others to

emulate and care for OVC in our communities. That is while I was moved couple with the good work of this faith-based organization to support orphans and vulnerable children, for there are leaders of tomorrow.

But had it been the Kumba-based Presbyterian Church Christian Men Fellowship had not intervened in the upbringing of Mesodi, then there is no doubt that she would have been out there into the streets with no real good communication skills, as regards her being deaf at birth (i.e. it could have been impossible to communicate with her because of her not knowing any of the sign language). In fact, she could have not been able to read nor write at that her tender age. And it is worth mentioning that Mesodi's future would have been likely that of sleeping in the streets, dealing with drugs, and/or prostitution: as maybe she would have been a victim of trafficking taken into custody and her body being sold to men's dirty pleasure, entirely against her own will. Or she would have still committed suicide so as to ease her miserable life. On the other hand, at the age of 18, Mesodi would have been lucky enough to get a job but due to her lack of communication skills, she will no doubt end up with a very low pay-package.

## 1.2 Research question/research hypothesis.

- 1- Who are orphans and vulnerable children?
- 2- How do you identify someone as orphan and vulnerable children? (Door to door, Village to village and Family to family)?
- 3- Why it is important that a faith-based organization is involve in catering for orphans and vulnerable children? -Because of their attachment with the love of God.
- 4- Why it is important that a faith-based organization made up of men are involved in catering for children instead of women? -According to African context, men are considered to be head of the family.
- 5- Is their engagement oriented towards Christian ethics?

## 1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this thesis are to find out the role of the Christian men's fellowship (CMF) of the Presbyterian Church kumba-Cameroon are catering for orphans and vulnerable children with their designated intervention in the areas of OVC Educational training . Also to examine how men are able to care for the orphaned and vulnerable children rather than women, according to the African context and Cameroon in particular. This study, on the hand, will thus explore how the CMF can ameliorate some of the conditions of these categories of children through the putting in place and identifying the

basic needs as well as social structures and partners who can assist the orphaned and vulnerable children in Kumba.

Finally, what is `behind the mask` of this study is to do something that will make a difference in the lives of OVC in Kumba in particular and around the world in, general. Although the said project is not designed or meant to resolve all of the problems related to OVC, it is in a way meant to lead the reader to maybe think, pray and hopefully contribute further, to the amelioration and reinforcement of the support for the orphaned and vulnerable children around the world.

#### 1.4 Operational Definition Issues.

It is most often convenient for the readers to be conversant with some of the key words being used in most of the academic and popular writings, so as to understand and follow up the language and context of the subject, of the writer. In this regard, I will thus present some common definitions issues and their sources.

##### 1.4.1 Orphaned and Vulnerable Children.

Generally, the concept of OVC as far as I know, does not conform to any universal definition and thus varies across countries in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, OVC definition studies that were conducted in South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe, there appeared to be a consensus that the age limit for OVC should be 18years and these countries appeared to support the construct that the loss of either one or both parents would thus indicate a situation of likely vulnerability (Alicia Davis, 2006). In the same vein, according to (D. Skinner, N. Nkomo and S. Mfecane, 2004), the term “orphaned and vulnerable children” was introduced due to the limited usefulness of the tight definition of the construct of orphan-hood. But ironically, orphans remain the focus of much of the academic and popular writing, on the grouping “orphaned and vulnerable children”, rather than all vulnerable children.

It is also good to know that community definitions of OVC are most often, differ from that of the government. For example, assistance to children by the government is directed usually by a particular age limits and any child that falls outside those limits may be excluded (Linda M. Richter, Julie Manegold, Riashnee Pather, 2004).

Furthermore, different organizations and in different circumstances, will also describe certain subpopulations of children with the public health community. For instance, the term “Orphans and Vulnerable Children” is commonly associated nowadays, with the HIV/AIDS epidemic and among



organizations working with the HIV/AIDS community (John Ehiri, 2009, p.480).

Meanwhile, I could then say, the remainder of the OVC definitions according to (Skinner, Tsheko, Mtero-Munyati, Segwabe, Chibatamoto, Mfecane, Nkomo and Tlou, 2004, p.2) is thus centered on three-core areas of dependency:

- 1- Material problems, including access to money, food, clothing, shelter, health care and education.
- 2- Emotional problems, including experience of caring, love, support, space to grieve and containment of emotions.
- 3- Social problems, including lack of a supportive peer group, of role models to follow, or of guidance in different situations, and risks in the immediate environment.

#### 1.4.2 Definition of a Child.

A majority of influential humanitarian organizations and the United Nations, through its Convention of the Rights of the Child, thus define a child as any person under the age of 18years (1989, Article 1 and cited by Jennifer G. et al., 2009). But (Skinner D. et al., 2004) in support of this claim, went further to elaborate that a child is still someone who ultimately depend on the period of dependency of the parents or caretakers of the household. And this period of dependency could be extended considerably, due to some unforeseen circumstances like serious illnesses.

#### 1.4.3 Definition of an Orphan in Cameroonian Context.

Generally, the term orphan is sometimes problematic in the sense that “its meaning varies among cultures and is potentially stigmatizing” (Levine, Foster and Williamson, 2005, p. 3). Meanwhile, (Barnett and Whiteside, 2006) in the same vein, thus emphasis that there is no absolute definition of an orphan, because these definitions are most often a function of some sort of social roles and for that reason, shall always vary between cultures.

As per the above mentioned analysis, a frequently cited definition of the term orphan is a child younger than the age of 15years whose parents are death (UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID, 2002). Or as the Guerze people of Guinea in one of their metaphors, thus refer to nice, durable shoes as “orphan’s shoes”. In other words, as regard the motif of who is an orphan, they are telling us that, everyone knows that the orphan is too poor to afford more than one pair of shoes and that she will always walk everywhere with that same pair shoes for a long period of time (Philip M. Peek and Kwesi Yankah, 2004).

Finally, in Cameroonian context, different cultures thus reveal some sort of universal construct as per the concept of solitude, and ultimately the misery, that the orphan represents. For example, one of the Beti's proverbs talks of "Unfortunate orphan: never eats good food", that literally reflects and symbolizes hunger that of course, routinely befalls the orphan (Bikon 1975, p. 110; cited by Philip M. Peek and Kwesi Yankah, 2004, p. 656).

#### 1.4.4 Vulnerable Child.

I would say just like with the definition of an orphan, the concept of vulnerability will be also difficult to define, as no single definition thus adequately captures what constitutes a vulnerable child (Skinner et al., 2004). But (Rabiatu Ibrahim Danpullo, 2008) thus define a vulnerable child as a child whose survival, development and wellbeing is threatened as a result of the lost of one or both parents, or any child living in a situation qualified as social risk and street children.

CHAPTER TWO.

2.0 Legislation and OVC Welfare Support in Cameroon.

2.1 Brief history of Cameroon



Map of Cameroon (Retrieved from [http://www.theodora.com/wfb/cameroon\\_geography.html](http://www.theodora.com/wfb/cameroon_geography.html))

Cameroon is in West Africa, and situated north of the equator on the Gulf of Guinea covering a land area of 465,400 square kilometers (World Road Statistics, 2006). Its estimated population by the U.S. State Department

(2007) is currently at 18,060,382 million people. But as of 2014, the estimated population is 23,130,708 million and a growth rate of 2.6% (Fact Monster, 2014). Cameroon is thus referred as “Africa in Miniature” just because of its diverse topography and biodiversity, climate and culture (Agro-Hub, 08/01, n.d.). Cameroon is however, ethnically and religiously diverse with over 250 ethnic groups/tribes. Meanwhile, the Christians population is 53%, Muslim 22%, and the indigenous African 25% of the religions (World Language, 2007). Urban population growth in Cameroon is at 5%, with 52% of the population living in rural areas, 70% of the workforce is thus engaged in agriculture; and 13% are engaged in Industry and Commerce (U.S. Department of State). There are ten provinces in Cameroon and only two are Anglophone – Northwest and Southwest provinces. With its Bilingual nature, the French speaking Cameroonians (Francophone) thus occupied three-fourth (3/4) of Cameroon population (Njeuma, 1990).

Map of The Ten Regions of Cameroon



Retrieved from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/20/Cameroon\\_provinces\\_english.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/20/Cameroon_provinces_english.png)

Cameroon is the only African nation to have been colonized by three European nations: Germany, Britain, and France (Makuchi, 1958). As from 1884, all of present-day Cameroon and parts of several of its neighbors became the German colony of Kamerun, with Buea as its first capital and later Yaounde. This colony was later partitioned after the First World War, between Britain and France under a League of Nations mandate (i.e., June 28, 1919) with the French gaining the largest geographical share, transferred outlying regions to neighboring French colonies, and ruled the rest from Yaounde. Meanwhile, the Britain's territory – a strip bordering Nigeria from the sea to Lake Chad, with an equal population was ruled from Lagos (Van den Berg, 1993, p. 5). As Van den Berg thus asserted, Cameroon later gained independence in January 1, 1960 for areas formerly ruled by France and in October 1, 1961 for the territory formerly ruled by Britain. So, after independence in 1960, both the Western and Eastern parts of Cameroon was reunited, at first federatively in 1961 and after 1972 as a United state (Ngho, 1996).

It is good to know that, since independence, Cameroon was ruled by the former late president Ahmadou Ahidjo, until November 4, 1982, when he unexpectedly, resigned and handed over his powers to the Prime Minister, Paul Biya. And he (Paul Biya) has been in power in his capacity as president of Cameroon since 1982, Chairman of the Cameroon People Democratic Movement (CPDM), and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (Gary Cordner, AnnMarie Cordner and Dilip K. Das, 2010, p. 27).

## 2.2 Legislative Support of OVC in Cameroon.

It is worthy to know that psychologically, orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) thus suffers from insufficient affective development, trauma and stigmatization which of course have a negative effect on their socialization process, health and education. This category of children can also be exposed to other risk such as living on the street, being most often, in conflict with the law and all sorts of violence, exploitation and abuse (UNICEF/DPSE, & MINAS, 2006).

Most often, in Cameroon, the death of parents may be disastrous to OVC because their extended family members usually seize all property left behind by the diseased parents (Rabiatu Ibrahim, 2008, p. 117). And as a result of this fact, these supposed children may be separated from each other as they have no choice but to go and live with foster parents or other extended family members, whereby, this may also crop up with the problem of them being traumatizing because of lack of love and affection.

It is also good to remind ourselves that orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) usually experience stigmatization and discrimination from the rest of the community. And of which this might result in inadequate socialization (Alison Dunn, 2005, p.p. 9-10) and thereby, preventing them from seeking and having the necessary assistance needed for their protection, care and support a situation which renders them more vulnerable. A claim that is fleshed by UNICEF (2006) as the situation of stigmatization and discrimination usually erodes the protective environment of OVC and will no doubt increases their vulnerability.

I will be feeling some sort of indebtedness, if I don't talk of the "Psycho-Social Effects to OVC" because it is already known that HIV/AIDS and other tropical diseases; displacement through civil conflict/war, environmental disasters – like the tsunamis, etc, thus pose a huge psycho-social and mental health challenges ranging from depression, panic, abandonment, helplessness, suicide and self harm (Lorraine Sherr, 2005). And it is for this supposed claim that all the OVC projects in Cameroon – like The national programme for the support of OVC; The BI-Multi Project; The Integrated project for the fight against HIV/AIDS and support to OVC; The African Synergy/FAO projects, etc, thus lay a lot of emphasis on the psycho-social support of OVC and their care-givers through home visits, dialogue and counseling (Rabiatu Ibrahim, 2008).

As from the above mentioned particular vulnerable situation of OVC, in Cameroon, it will be good enough to apply the different provisions and ministerial circulars that can increasingly give access of OVC to their basic social services, thereby reducing their vulnerability and thus re-enforces and redress the protection issues they need, just like other normal children. In this regards, several inter-ministerial circulars in Cameroon, were drafted during a workshop organized by the Department of Child Protection (MINAS) with the financial assistance of UNICEF, in November 2006. And the effects of these circulars are of course aimed at facilitating some sort of maximum access of OVC to basic and secondary education, health, legal assistance and professional training. So, as (Rabiatu Ibrahim, 2008) thus puts it, "The signing and application of these circulars will go a long way to increase the access of this category of children to the basic services they are likely to be missing" (p. 119).

Below are some special dispositions in the Civil Code of Cameroon that support and take care of OVC.

1. The OVC can thus benefit from the provisions of Law No. 96/03 of July 4, 1996, which provides that children have the right to treatment when sick and other health services.

2. There is a provision at the level of Social Services health structures, especially the “Protection Maternelle et Infantile” (PMI) centers created by Ministerial instruction No. 00739 of April 2, 1993. These centers are supposed to do free testing, give free treatment, prenatal consultation and psycho-social support to poor families, which will no doubt include the OVC and their foster families.
3. In the educational domain, article 7 of Law No. 98/004 of April 14, 1998, thus guarantees equal access to education without regard to sex, political, philosophical and religious orientation and social, cultural linguistic or geographical origin. (It is good to note that the draft Child Protection Code contains specific provisions for the protection of OVC).
4. Law No. 2005/015 of December, 2005 punishing Child Trafficking and Slavery is also instructive.
5. Another important provision is that of grabbing of their property by the extended family members after the death of their parents. In this regard the Civil Code still applicable in Cameroon today provides in its articles 724-725 that legitimate children stand in the first place to inherit the property of their parents and cannot be deprived of this right (Article 756 of the same Civil Code also gives inheritance rights to an illegitimate child after recognition by his/her father). In most cases, after the death of their parents, the administration of their property becomes vested on their personal representative usually a relative, designated by the family council until the children reach the age of majority.
6. To protect OVC from illegal placements, and adoption, articles 343-370 of the same code, are instructive. As well as article 344 that stipulates as per adaptation of OVC – that for the adoption to take place, the adopter must be at least 40 years of age if single. But for married couples, one of the spouses must be at least 35 and they must have been living together as husband and wife for a continuous period of at least ten years (The draft Child Protection Code provides for more supple conditions and procedure in the area of adoption). All the above mentioned provisions are gotten from the book: *The Socio-Legal Perspective of Child Protection in Cameroon*, written by Rabiātu Ibrahim, (2008).

## 2.3 Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC).

### 2.3.1 Brief history of PCC.



The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon Logo.  
Sources: ([www.pccweb.org](http://www.pccweb.org))

The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC), founded in 1884 by the *Basel Mission Church in Kamerun* with the intention of being an external arm of the "original" *Basel Mission* in Switzerland. As an arm to the Mother Congregation, it was thus likely to continue and maintaining the theological ideology of that Church. But in 1957, the PCC became independent from the Basel Mission although its finances until 1993 were still handled by a Basel Missionary (Paul Gifford, 1988, p. 281). It was basically an Anglophone church (i.e., having its stronghold in the Anglophone part of the country). Not until it is today represented all over the ten regions of Cameroon as a result of Anglophone migrants who moved to other parts of the country in order to fill government positions or to start businesses. And today PCC has approximately one million members in around 1,364 congregations.

The PCC has since modified its name twice, in response to the Constitutional changes that Cameroon has undergone: 1st October, 1961, following the Reunification (Presbyterian Church in West Cameroon) and, 20th May, 1972, (Presbyterian Church in Cameroon) with of course expanded responsibilities.

### 2.3.2 The Executive Bureaus of PCC.

The Moderator is the spiritual as well as executive head of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. According to the PCC constitution, the Moderator is allowed two terms of five years, with a third term permitted "in exceptional circumstances" (Rabiatu Ibrahim, 2008, p. 182).



### 2.3.3 The Christian Men Fellowship (CMF).



The Christian Men Fellowship Group, Kumba-Cameroon.  
Sources: ([www.pccweb.org](http://www.pccweb.org))

In Cameroon the Church is called upon to be a watchman for society; hence it cannot distance itself from societal concerns. Most often, the symbolic acts of the Church are carried out through its social arms, for example, the Christian Men Fellowship (CMF). The CMF thus challenges human oppression, subordination, human right abuse and marginalization, and seek to restore human freedom, dignity and self esteem (The challenges of NGO in Anglophone-Cameroon, p. 4).

This Fellowship helps men cope with the enormous socio-cultural and economic changes which are taking place within the Cameroonian society, and thus encourages them to participate in shaping everyday life within the Church. For this purpose, the growing movement, which currently counts over 14,869 members, uses a wide range of activities in order to promote encounters and offer formations and further education. The goal is to enable as many people as possible to participate in shaping their communities' ecclesiastic and social life.

## CHAPTER THREE.

### 3.0 Methodology

#### Introduction

This chapter is focusing on the methodology use to study this thesis, which includes; (section 2.1) the research strategy describe the systematic order use in studying this thesis, (section 2.2) the various sources of data collection for this thesis, (section 2.3) the choice of respondent for this thesis, (section 2.4) the targeted group for the collection of data, (section 2.5) the procedure for analyzing data, (section 2.6) responses from groups on the questionnaire, (section 2.7) time framing for the questionnaire, (section 2.8) the challenges encountered in the course of this thesis, (section 2.8) personal reflections.

#### 3.1 Research strategy

I will use a qualitative research method, which will equally suit the respondent. The qualitative approach in social science will be use to gain insight into the attitudes of people, their behaviors, their value in the society, the concern in a particular situation, their motivations, their aspiration, their cultural background and lifestyles (Bryman, 2012). In order to get into people insight, I will use the case of the men because according to the African context, men are being considered to be head of the family and a sole provider of the basic needs of the family, however, this is not the case. Today men and women must be empowered to assist in all the activities in the society and in the household in other to provide the best for their family, in this case gender equality is guarantee. I also prefer the qualitative approach because it involved in its basic form the analysis of any unstructured data, including open ended responses, literature reviews, web pages and pictures.

#### 3.2 Data collection

I will like to precise here that field work observation was not carry out in this study. But I was able to collect data in a single period between the months of January and March 2015, with a designed questionnaire consisting of semi-structured questions with probing as the data-collection instrument. And the questionnaire was sent by e-mails to the Christian men's fellowship (CMF), of the Presbyterian Church and other churches in the Kumba municipality, I equally sent it to the divisional delegation of the ministry for social affairs, NGOs as well as the divisional delegation of the ministry of women empowerment and family in Kumba Cameroon. The questionnaires were carefully constructed and design to provide systematic information in a particular subject (Bryman 2012).

I also had an elaborated communication with other actors involved in the development, evaluation and continued strengthening of the CMF initiatives, which can ameliorate some of the conditions of this category of children; through Skype and Viber to collect more data.

Furthermore, I also use my own knowledge for what I know as a Christian from that same congregation, data was also collected from the CMF documents and reports on their annual convention and seminars, books, encyclopedias, journals. I also collected books and articles from the library of Diakonhjemmet University College and the Menighetsfakultet (MF). I also use the knowledge I have acquired as a master's student in Diakonia and Christian social practice during my 2 years program.

### 3.3 Choice of respondents

My research was to investigate the effort made by the Presbyterian Church in Kumba Cameroon, in their work for the poor, particularly orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). With its spiritual moral and financial support from the Christian men fellowship (CMF) being an important actor of charity and the struggle for justice. In this regards, my choice of respondents is the Christian men fellowship (CMF) in Kumba whose preoccupation is centred on diaconal work to serve mankind. In (Genesis 1:27) so God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female, this shows how God love the world, he created mankind in his own image and he gave his only begotten son to die for our sins. This shows how God so love the world and care for creation, is a good example for what the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is doing as a faith-based organization to care for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in the Kumba municipality. I got responses from the coordinator of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) Kumba Roland Ndode Koge, who was chosen by the parish pastor to coordinate my findings on behave of the church and of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) on the other hand. My findings about the activities of Christian men fellowship did not limit in the congregation, it extended to other faith-based organization and NGOs were I got some important information not forgetting the divisional delegation of the ministry for social affairs and the divisional delegation of the ministry for women empowerment and the family in Kumba were documents and reports on surveys were obtained for this studies. My research was carryout in the south west region of Cameroon were the Anglophone are been marginalized by the present detect oral regime of government, the national cake is not share equitably. I was also inform that, the congregation had other groups like the Christian women fellowship (CWF), the youth wing of this organizations the Young Christian worker (YCW) and the bible study group, this group for what I was told, had a common objectives to care for the destitute, the poor, the sick

and those who are been maltreated in one way or other through violence and injustice, implies they also practice prophetic diakonia.

### 3.4 Target groups for data

The most important factors of any research project is the reliability and validity of any information, and this information need be relevance and trustful to be published for other to relied on. It is for this reason that my research questionnaire were send to other faith groups, NGOs, churches the divisional delegation of the ministry for social affairs and the divisional delegation of the ministry for women empowerment and the family in the Kumba municipality. This questionnaire comprises a set of 13 closed questions and 4 open questions that were distributed to these groups to comment on the activities of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) and also to make sure that there is trustworthiness in all information that will be register in the course of the research (Bryman 2012). Reliability and validity was very important for this study because it will provides fairness in the study, were different views of information will be shared, the authenticity of any information will also be restored for other researchers to read and make analysis upon.

### 3.5 Data analysis

This was the most important part of the study, because it came to the point where all the information's I got through phone calls, viber, Skype and the responses I got from the questionnaire I sent to the various groups, could only be analyze and transcribe the information, and later by categorized into various themes according to the research question. It was then my place to analyze all this information and responses I gather based on both a positive and negative point of view on how OVC are supported by the Christian men fellowship (CMF), considered to be a charitable and humanitarian organization. I shall use the SWOT analysis to analyze the activities of the Christian men fellowships (CMF) of the Presbyterian Church in Kumba.

### 3.6 Responses to the questionnaire

Considering the fact that the region were my study was carryout is one of the 2 Anglophone regions of the 10 regions of the republic of Cameroon, these 2 regions are been marginalized and discriminated. For this reason, as I early mention in my thesis the region is the minority and therefore

underdeveloped were people face life very difficult in terms of employment and the lack of other basic services to other rural areas like water, electricity health services and schools.

So when I raise my intension to write about the situation OVC in the regions and how the Christian men fellowship is engage in their work for the poor, many organizations responded positively to my questionnaire since they were very happy with the work of the Christian men fellowship (CMF), a word of encouragement was sent to me by the pastor of the world wide mission church (WWMC) Kumba Rev. Dr. Nchunganyi Everistus Nchunganyi for the wonderful initiative and concern I have for this children and also the publication of this thesis so that other local and international organizations to emulate and support the work of Christian men fellowship (CMF) in caring and providing basic needs to the poor and destitute in Kumba.

### 3.7 Time frame

As I earlier said before, my questionnaire was made up of 13 closed questions and 4 open questions which I sent to the various groups for responses. I normally program a week for each group to sit and reflect on the questions and the response to give; corresponding to the degree of activities the Christian men fellowship (CMF) offer to the OVC. Other groups was just to comment on the initiative of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) being a charitable organization. However some of the responses came in time as I program some came later due to the fact that some members of the group as I was told by the coordinator was assigned to take part in a seminar in Buea, whose contribution was also very important for the responses I was expecting.

### 3.8 Challenges encountered

Considering the fact that I used a qualitative approach for my study, the method for data collection was either through a semi-structural questionnaire, e-mails, phone calls, viber and Skype. My first challenge was how to get in contact with the resort person of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) by name Roland Ndode Koge, when I got his e-mail address, I wrote him a mail, while waiting for responses he did not for close to a week, I became so sceptical about this project. A week later, i wrote the second mail expressing my intention on writing a master thesis about orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), a day later I got response from him then we stated communicating still date. It was not easy because was also afraid to

start and discussion with somebody you have never meant or see each other before.

The second challenge was how to get the responses from the groups, some responses did not come in time to enable me reflect and analyze on the data I got from the response. Apart of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) who devoted time for my study, other group did not response in time for reason that could not be disclosed to me but of on interest compare to their own private issues.

The third challenge had to do with the poor communication network system in Cameroon, information's that was supposed to be sent by e-mail could not be sent in time also because of poor internet facilities in Cameroon, and also poor telecommunication system, most often calls are interrupted because of poor connections.

The fourth challenge was the lack of finance to afford for air time credit to make calls when internet facilities are very poor, and also to motivate the resort person for findings.

### 3.9 Personal reflection

To the best of my knowledge, I hereby conclude that the method I used for the collection of data was very good and precise; most of the groups I contacted give a positive impression about my concern on OVC in the Kumba municipality. For the fact that, Kumba is the economic capital of the south west region of the republic of Cameroon, one of the 2 Anglophones regions being neglected and discriminated by the present regime in government. Access to the 5 other sub-divisions of the Kumba municipality is very difficult due to bad state of the road to other remote areas where poverty is a call for concern to faith based organizations and other stakeholder involve in the fight against poverty.

In this regard, the Christian men fellowship (CMF) has express his gratitude and encourage me for the wonderful initiative that I took to write and publish their activities and concern for OVC in the Kumba municipality. That document will be used as reference for other researchers to read and comment on the good work of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) of the Presbyterian Church in Kumba. This document will also raise awareness to the general public and the world at large so that humanitarian organizations and international donor can financially support the Christian men fellowship (CMF) to ameliorate the lifestyle of OVC in Cameroon in general and Kumba municipality in particular.

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### 4.0 Theories

In this chapter, I will use three theories which includes; the theory of Diakonia, the theory of gender equality and the theory of poverty because it is an interdisciplinary research and it required open reflection of poverty.

#### 4.1 The theory of Diakonia (THIS)

According to the church of Norway, the concept of Diakonia is simply the caring ministry of the church. It is the Gospel in action and it is expressed through loving your neighbor, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation and struggling for justice (Diakonia in context 2009, p.29). While (Nordstokke, 'Introducing diakonia in context' 2009, p .9) gave some fundamental assumption on the meaning of diakonia theologically;

'Which say; diakonia is a theological concept that points to the very identity and mission of the church. Another is its practical implications in the sense that diakonia is a call to action, as a response to the challenges of human suffering, injustice and care for creation' (Nordstokke, 2009, p.8).

The dictionary of the ecumenical movement defines diakonia as "responsible service of the gospel by deeds and by words performed by Christian in response to the needs of people it is for" (pp.40). This definition is thus asserting that diakonia is action and cannot be limited to the statements and good intentions. Secondly, it state that diakonia is been exercised by Christian. But nonetheless, it should not be understood in an exclusive way that only Christian are able to render services to the needy "responsible service", but as an affirmation of the distinctive nature of the diaconal work.

Thirdly, diaconal work has a focus to response to demanding needs of poor people. However, it is therefore, not correct to use diakonia to describe all kinds of good work; as such, our concern here is to see how diakonia has been linked to the situation of the poor, particularly orphans and vulnerable children who are being marginalized stigmatized and discriminated upon, and also how the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is exercising diaconal work in supporting and defending the right of the vulnerable, which of course they also practice prophetic diakonia as well. Thus, the most important question is: How do the FBO attend to the needs of OVC? The answer will be through diaconal work, furthermore, the activities of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) operating on behalf of the church, will be fully analyzed in this thesis.

The LWF mission document, (mission in context 2004) thus introduced three key concepts as hermeneutical keys for the understanding of today's mission: transformation, reconciliation and empowerment. These three terms are also helpful for diakonia as they clearly point to the directions of diaconal work of the Christian men fellowships (CMF) of the Presbyterian in Kumba Cameroon, their involvement in caring for the poor. Nevertheless, these key points are use by the Christian men fellowship (CMF) to care for the poor.

#### 4.1.1 Transformation

The CMF of the Presbyterian Church Kumba, has a transformation agenda to youths in and outside the congregation with theme, 'protect creation, transform creation and save the world'. It has it mission statement as commits to transformed life through community action. The transformation agenda of the CMF is seen in all their yearly programs. The OVC have been experiencing a very hard life before to meet up with their basic needs but the CMF has come to transform their situation from worst to good where they will also be regarded as part of the society and their dignity will be uplifted. The bible say "change or renewal from a life that no longer conforms to the way of life the world to one that pleases God" (Romans 12:2). To accomplish this, we have to renew our minds, an inward spiritual transformation that will manifest itself in outward actions. Considering the fact the CMF is made up of men and according to the African context that the man is the head of the family, and has the full responsibilities to care for the children. Like the OVC because of their vulnerability status expose to the society and consider as street children, the CMF is taking full responsibilities to re-orientate the life of this children with all aspirations, ideologies, structure and values (mission in context, p.32).

#### 4.1.2 Reconciliation

This is one of the most important tasks Jesus Christ left us here on earth to do and as Christians, we are bound to reconcile with each other as God's merciful gift grounded in the message. And of which God has thus reconciled the world for his only begotten son Jesus Christ who was crucified death and burial for our sin (Diakonia in context 2009, p.44). The CMF is doing it best in reconciliation because without it peace will not be reign in our society, especially when it comes to cases of border, boundaries or land dispute where two families are claiming ownership it will resulted to violence to an extend were death will occur living behind their children were they will



become orphans and vulnerable children. The CMF in its effort to reconciled issues of broken relations will try to restore peace and reconciled these two families by telling them the effects and consequences in violence which off course one of them may lost their live and their children will become fatherless. These process of reconciliation will re-orientate families so that they may take a new place in the society, empowers them for a new relations and responsibilities. (In Romans 5:10) 'For if we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life'.

#### 4.1.3 Empowerment

Considering the fact that poverty is a challenge to human dignity, the Christian men fellowship (CMF) still continue to establish diaconal practices that will lift up the dignity of orphans and vulnerable children and give them their ability to be "subjects"-both in church and society (Diakonia in context 2009, p.46).

D. Solomon in his book empowerment, social work in oppressed communities (New, 1976).

His say, "A process whereby the social worker is engage in a set of activities with the poor.... That aim to reduce the powerlessness that has been created by the negative valuations based on membership in a stigmatized group. It involves identification of the power block that contributes to the problem as well as the development and implementation of specific strategies aimed at either the reduction of the effects from the indirect power blocks on the reduction of the operation of direct power block".

J.Rappaport, in his book, the power of empowerment language, social policy 16(2), 1985, (15-21).

'Suggest a sense of control on one's life in personality, cognition, and motivation. It expresses itself feelings, at the level of ideas about self worth, at the level of being able to make different in the world around us, we all have it as a potential'.

In addition, diaconal work seek to address situation were orphans and vulnerable children because of their poor status and most especially AIDS orphans are been marginalized, stigmatized and discriminated in the society, above all been excluded. However, the vocation of inclusiveness will always be an important expression of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) diaconal work.

#### 4.1.4 Inclusiveness

In our society today, orphans and vulnerable children are often been stigmatized and discriminated upon their poor status in the community, most at time children who comes from a wealthy back ground will not like to share with the poor. However, the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is working very hard in promoting inclusiveness in our society today. Because of their physical disability, they will be excluded for one reason or the other in the society. Disabilities need support while lacking the power to have access to school or be part of the society, segregation often occur in many situations where only children who come from rich families are selected to participate in any activities in the society. When you are being segregated mean you are been treated less than human (Blatt, 1987). The church has created school, vocational training centres where OVC and other children do attend with other children without discriminating; for mankind is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27).

To conclude I can say here that diakonia means to serve and according to the African context, the word diakonia is very strange to the hearing of most Christian. Nevertheless, most faith-based organizations are expressing love for your neighbor, creating inclusive community, so that the poor should be always part of the society.

#### 4.2 The theory of Gender

In our society today, some women are the sole breadwinners of the family with increased responsibility, albeit without the same rights as the men. This is due to the fact that violent, war, border/ land dispute, and the difficulties a man faces in trying to search for a better living condition of his family. In this regards, the man who is considered head of the family according to the African context is highly exposed to serious risk, which at times may lead to dead. Living behind his wife and children who eventually faces serious financial difficulty in other to provide basic needs to the children, just because of the death of her husband who was consider the head of the family.

I will like to use the approach of (Ester Boserup 1974) to gender equality because it give the opportunity women to be given access to education or technology and they were often prevented from enjoying their rights to work as the men, they had acquired earlier as a result of modernization process. Especially when it comes to providing education to orphans and vulnerable, the girl should not excluded or discriminated upon. Gender equality should be guarantee for equal opportunity.

The Christian men fellowship has increasingly focused on gender inequality, especially on the rural young girls, as inequality between men and women is one of the crucial disparities in the Kumba municipality. A recent example of this focus was an annual report from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA 2005b), Observes that without gender equality, the eradication of poverty is simply impossible (Grobakken 2005)

It is very important to know that women plays a very important role in the society, and behind any successful man, they is certainly a woman and without a woman the world is worthless vice- visa the man. It is for this reason that the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is empowering the young girls (orphans and vulnerable children) so that they may become future leaders.

#### 4.3 The theory of poverty

Under the theory of poverty, I will use two authors as my references to guide me understand poverty. The first author is (Bryan Myers 2011); he describes poverty as physical, spiritual and social point of view. He further then emphasized on the special concern for those working for human transformation. At the same, there is another body of research that shows that female literacy is a positive predictor of many good things-lower child mortality, and successful micro-enterprise development. Thus, women offer a special opportunity if we keep them in sight and involved as part of the development process. He further say a transformational development that does not includes gender analysis and seek the empowerment of women will fail. The second author is (Robert Chambers 1983); he also describes poverty from a household perspective, that poverty has being entangled in a “cluster of disadvantage.” The household is poor in term of assets and is physically weak, isolated, vulnerable, and powerless.

The two approaches in describing poverty given by these authors are relevance to my study because they all have similar focus on the physical and social point of view as far as OVC is concerned; this will also help me analyze their physical needs as well as emphasizing on the special concern for those working for human transformation and also the empowerment of gender equality in order to fight against poverty and provides good living conditions to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC).

However, it is noted that, poverty is not just about income but also the levels of indebtedness, unemployment, poor health, educational opportunities, housing and environmental conditions and access to adequate public services. This is while, Chamber uses isolation as one of point to describe

poverty, he further says; the households lack access to social service and information. It is often remote-far from main roads, water lines, and even electricity. It lacks access to market, capital and credit. And of course children lack access to quality education. All which are efforts to care for creation and seeking responding to poverty. Their responses take many forms, including emergency relief work, medical aid, skill-training, long-term agricultural projects, micro-financed loans and advocacy at national and international levels. In other words, poverty makes the individual to lack the access to social power, not able to speak in public because they are considered powerlessness. Poverty is an interactive system that he calls the 'poverty trap' Chamber 1983, p, 103).

Especially in the rural areas, financial and economic crisis both has increase the level of poverty has challenge families and therefore, we perceive that human dignity is threatened in the context of poverty. In this case, poverty is the pathology of individual and by extension to the areas in which he/she live, which therefore come to understanding poverty is a result of individual incompetence, taking in to account the physical, spiritual and mental well-being of the individual (Bryan Myers, p 113).

Every human being is holder of equal and inviolable dignity. This should not be misconceived as though it is the fulfilment and adequate access to such goods that constitute human dignity. It has been noted that pre-moral goods are one of the several dimension along which human beings relate to other and to the world, and it is also through this dimension that dignity pertains to human life. Human dignity does not depend on the degree to which the needs that correspond to pre-moral goods are met and fulfilled. However, human beings most live in poverty, systematically and permanently deprived of basic human goods, persons are prevented from manifesting to themselves and to others the inherent dignity they already have, being good and caring for others especially the marginalized. Especial when it comes to providing good and the pre-moral goods to others such as: Shelter, Clothes, Food, Water, Electricity, etc. as basic needs to the poor in order to uplift the dignity which has being threatened.

Besides the more general observation, that knowledge seem to generate action in the field of combating of poverty the empirical data-bases for this claim is admittedly of a more anecdotal nature, consisting of unsystematic impressions from media and other types of public discourse, and even more unsystematic observations of daily, urban life. Cognitive insight and exposure to know about poverty seem to be absorbed with a certain unconcern or indifference.

To conclude this theory, I can say here that human dignity seems to be undermined by life in poverty; the concern for dignity contributes to equality, justice and the respect for human life. It also argues human dignity in its widespread version based on autonomy puts constraints on practices affecting and combating poverty, it also stresses that dignity depends on autonomy. That a notion of dignity established on a rational and multidimensional account of human life is better equipped to avoid engaging in these distinguishing practices, and to recognize a wider range of concern including the intrinsic goodness of pre moral goods for social practices directed at poverty, the failure in judgment and of the denied of the full dignity of people living in poverty. There are many mandate, limited actors in Kumba, many approaches. However, the playing field is vast and the dilemmas and challenges are unrelenting. Therefore we must continue to support the Christian men fellowship (CMF) in their effort to care and ameliorate the living standard of the poor in the Kumba municipality especially OVC.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 Empirical Study

#### 5.1 Statistic of OVC in Sub-Saharan African

Considering that, all attention focus on the crises of OVC in sub-Saharan Africa, few studies have been done, and the effects are based on their health and wellbeing. These studies have been evaluated and some factors may contribute to the insecurity which make their orphan hood status stands at risk, one of the factors includes; early sexual activity, unprotected sexual activity, as well as HIV infection among the youths in Africa, resulting from poverty, emotional distress, and lack of parental or social control over these children. With the drastic increase in adult mortality due to the spread of the HIV and AIDS, a large number of children in sub-Saharan Africa has for one reasons or the other lost or will lost but parent at an early stage of their life. Statistics have proven that, most orphans and vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa have often been care for by extended family members including grandfathers, uncles and other relatives. Considering the poor standard of families in sub-Saharan African, with the numerous responsibilities of family members to take care of, couple with the financial hardship (poverty), the family head (parents) might not be able to provide sufficient support for these children. In this effect, these children will become vulnerable to the society in order to search for means to sustain life. This tradition of children fostering has always been an essential coping mechanism in view of increased adult mortality due to AIDS. It is also the “orphans and vulnerable children crises” that is locally and culturally acceptable (Madhavan 2004; Deininger et al. 2003; Foster et al. 2000), whereas institutional arrangements such as fosterage in orphanages have been deemed adequate only in desperate situation (e.g., for street children). Households fostering orphans in sub-Saharan countries are also frequently supported (financially and otherwise) by other household in their communities (Madhavan 2004).

Considering the fact that HIV/AIDS is the main courses of OVC in African, my studies will be based on some other factors which have contributed to the increase of orphans in sub-Saharan Africa. However, AIDS orphans are not the only children at-risk. One-third of sub-Saharan African countries are currently engaged in civil or border conflicts situations and disasters. In these countries, millions of young children are been displaced to neighboring towns or villages while their parents go to war, in the effect of this many children are missing, while some of their parents are killed. Some parents migrated to other neighboring countries, living their children behind. Some families simply expelled their children early for safety or economic reasons;

they are sent to fend for themselves in nearby towns, where they eventually end up as street children and more vulnerable to the society. (Source: Social Protection of Africa's Orphans and Vulnerable Children, p: 2-3)

## 5.2 Situation of OVC in Cameroon

According to an estimate from the ministry of public health Cameroon in 2008, shows that over 543,000 people are living with HIV including 45,000 children and 300,000 women, 39,000 deaths were certainly linked to AIDS and 309,000 children were orphaned by AIDS. Considering the fact that women are more affected than men within the ages of 15-49 years, and orphans and vulnerable children who are between the ages of 0-15 year are most likely to be affected by AIDS due to their vulnerability status in the society. That is while the CMF of the Presbyterian Church Kumba Cameroon with support from the ministry of social affairs, the ministry of the empowerment and the family, international organizations, NGOs and the national AIDS control committee for the fight against AIDS and other related courses such as war, border conflicts, disaster etc. (source: <http://africa-info.org/ang/index>).

## 5.3 Factors Contributing to the Increase of OVC in Cameroon.

The factor that contributes to the increase of OVC in Cameroon is due to particular circumstances they face. Nor their vulnerability status: the vulnerability level of a child will vary throughout his/her life according to his/her family the environment, age and gender, health status and family situation as well as the environment.

The emergence of "homeless" or street children in Cameroon has been a disturbing phenomenon on the increase of orphans and vulnerable children since the beginning of the economic crises in the late eighties and the implementation of the structural adjustment program (SAP) in Cameroon with aim of reviving the country's depressed economy, in this effect government services to the poor is often easiest to:

- The reduction in health care facilities, education and social welfare spending
- The Introduction of cost-recovery and user fees eventually put health and education beyond the reach of many ordinary people.
- The Land which was use for food is now used for cash crops. Companies, establishments and CGIs can no longer have access to borrow money, they are rather obliged to low the production. The

increase in food prices rises putting every parent's pressure in sustaining the household (Sources: [www.theinternationaljournal.org](http://www.theinternationaljournal.org)).

Some other factors which contributed to the spread of OVC are due to border conflict between two neighboring villages or two neighboring countries, like the Cameroon and Nigeria border dispute over the potentially oil-rich Bakassi peninsula. Cameroon and Nigeria have come to brink of war several times over the potentially oil-rich Bakassi peninsula in 1981 and 1996 respectively, and each time of the war break out, several families lost family members not until when the international court of justice (ICJ), the UN's supreme judicial body, awarded the land to Cameroon in 2002.

Another factor is due to the Lake Nyos gas disaster which occur in the north west province of Cameroon, located about 315km(196miles) northwest of Yaoundé the capital of the Republic of Cameroon. It all happen on the 21 of August 1986, possibly as the result of a landslide at the edge of the mountain, lake Nyos suddenly emitted a large cloud of CO<sub>2</sub>, which suffocated 1,700people and 3,500livestock in nearby towns and villages (Sources: <http://en.wikipedia.org>).

Another factor is to the terrorist's attack of the Islamic group Boko haram which has put the world in to fear today, like the case of Nigeria and Cameroon in particular. This group lodge attack early the year in the north region of Cameroon living several people death and several other homeless.

Looking at the above mentioned factors you can see that many families will be affect by this, living so many parents death. Some other will be displaced for fears that they may also be killed, thereby living behind their children with little or nothing to start life with. In this regard they become orphans and street children who are vulnerable to the society. However, thanks to the work of the Christian Men Fellowship (CMF) as faith-based action, in the timely intervention towards providing the need of OVC.

The HIV and AIDS is also one of the most important factors which lead to the increase of OVC in Cameroon. Couple may die of HIV and AIDS and leave behind their children.

The lack of family planning in rural areas, to help educate illiterate parents on how to control birth rate. In this rural areas, an illiterate family will have more than five children couple with the current financial constraint in the society, either one or two of them are going to school while other most especially they girls stay home to take care of the younger once they by making them vulnerable to the society.



#### 5.4 Preventive Strategies and Government Intervention.

In response to the support of OVC in Cameroon, the government has adopted a multi-sartorial strategy for the prevention, care, and support of OVC such as:

- Ensuring government's protection to orphans by improved policy and legislation and by directing resources to the municipality in questioned.
- The mobilization and supporting community and faith-based organizations responses so as to provide both immediate and long term support to the OVC.
- Ensuring the accessibility for orphans and other vulnerable children to essential services, including education, health care, etc.
- To raise awareness at all levels through advocacy and social mobilization to create conducive environments for the OVC (Rabiatu Ibrahim, 2008).

Adding to the above mentioned government strategies and interventions that thus support the OVC, it could also be of great importance for an individual, organizations, group of persons, stakeholder, traditional authority as well as civil society to copy or follow the footsteps of the government to contribute towards make a tangible difference to communities and environments in desperate need of support. And your supposed contribution could as well help to improve the literacy rate in a deprived community.

Moreover, other preventive measures can take the following form:

- Sensitization to create awareness constitutes one of the most efficient means of eradicating poverty considered to be scandal affecting the lives of orphans and vulnerable children. And this can be carried out in various milieus such as the community and schools, targeting the children themselves, families, religious and traditional authorities. Although the main actors are of course, legal practitioners, law enforcement officers, social workers, NGOs/Associations and the civil society.
- The media can also play a very important role in informing and educating the population on practices associated with the OVC. For example, community radios can coordinate this course because of the strong link they have with the grass root elites since there are able to communicate in local languages and dialects (Rabiatu Ibrahim, 2008, p. 104).

In Cameroon, some sensitization efforts are being made to involve all the major actors mentioned above, by the Ministries in Charge of Child

Protection in collaboration with national and international partners such as UNICEF and the ILO (MINAS, 2005).

It is also important to note the existence of Social Services at the level of health structures, especially the “Protection Maternelle et Infantile” (PMI) centers created by Ministerial decree No. 00739 of April 2, 1993. These centers are engaged in conducting free HIV testing; provide free antiretroviral treatment to those affected, prenatal consultation and psycho-social support are also provided to poor families, which will no doubt include the OVC and their foster families.

It is worth mentioning that the caring for OVC has been assumed in most cases by foster or extended families as they make huge financial, physical and emotional efforts as caregivers. And this means that such families are likely to be poorer because of the increasing number of dependents and fewer earning adults. Under such circumstances, however, the OVC may witness discrimination especially the very young ones as they can contribute little or nothing to household and farming labor (Lorraine Sherr). But thanks to the different projects put in place by the government that support and protect the orphans and vulnerable children in Cameroon. For example, The Global Fund for the fight against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as a result of an accord signed between the World Bank and the Ministry of Health, in September, 2004; and The BI-Multi Project, adopted by the Ministry of Social Affairs with the technical and financial assistance of UNICEF and the French Overseas Co-operation, since 2005. Meanwhile, the Global Fund project has been extended to all the ten regions of Cameroon, the latter is thus limited to three towns, namely, Douala, Ngaoundere and Bamenda (Rabiatu Ibrahim, 2008).

Another organization designed for the purpose of assisting the OVC in Cameroon, is “A Better World Organization”. This organization is a non-profit making with legal registration No: 006/2010/AR/E30/PS in Cameroon. They have been providing help and assistance to OVC by allocating funds to the Christian men fellowship to finance some health cases in the hospitals, educating some OVC who are not able to be educated in the formal education system of the country for lack of financial capability; advocating on the situation of the children and the marginalized; accommodating and rehabilitation some of the OVC; extending financial, material and moral support to children affected by war and other natural disasters, and also carrying out environmental and moral education, and sanitation lessons in several schools in Cameroon (Stephen Knight, 2015).

It is very clear that the future of any country depends on the leaders of today and that of the leaders of tomorrow lies in the hands of our children, therefore implies children no matter his or her present situation must not be

neglected. That is while the government of Cameroon through the Christian men fellowship in its effort to care for children is working very hard with external support from international organization and NGO's in supporting orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Key international to Develop Systems and Services (KIDSS) Cameroon, is supporting the government of Cameroon through the Christian men fellowship to address the situation and needs of OVC infected HIV and AIDS and also protect orphans who are not infected or affected by the said pandemic disease in the preventions and the provision of their basic needs. The government will expand services to the OVC by implementing a program to improve their livelihood by mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS and other related causes on vulnerable households in targeted geographical areas, the end results for this project include improved government of Cameroon system and policy environment for sustainable OVC care; improved capacity of communities and local providers to provide high quality priority services for OVC and their immediate families; and strengthened links through the preventive committee.

The UNICEF has also been providing financial support to the regional delegation of social affairs ministry in Kumba through the government of Cameroon to enable them carry out joint collective activities with NGO's and the Christian men fellowship (CMF) by offering integrated care and support services to OVC all over the 10 regions of Cameroon since 2008, most especially the OVC in Kumba from the south west region. Approximately 38,000 orphans and vulnerable children have directly benefited from care and support services from the UNICEF assistance throughout the national territory. More importantly UNICEF is also engaged in supporting the government to develop a national strategy for OVC care which has now been approved and used as a policy document nationwide, in a related development statement by the UNICEF representative to Cameroon Ms. Felicite Tchibindat hope that;

“If we must ensure that OVC are not denied their right to basic Services then the OVC policy should soon be operationalized Throughout the country, it is a noble and equitable battle Which we cannot afford to lose and UNICEF will continue to Engage with all the stakeholders to ensure this”.

The government supports orphans whose parents were killed in border conflict, like the soldiers who were killed in the border conflicts between Cameroon and Nigeria over the rich oil zone in Bakassi peninsula, and also the terrorist's attacks of the Boko Haram in the north of Cameroon. During these attacks thousands of armies were killed, leaving behind so many

orphans. However, the government did not relent its effort to care for these children in providing their basic needs.

## 5.5 Faith-Based Organization

### 5.5.1 Definition of a Faith-based organization (FBO)

Faith-based organization is defined as any religious groups or congregation whose activities is oriented towards a spiritual dimension (in consistent with their theological beliefs about the spiritual nature of human beings).

According to the African context, faith-based organization has a long tradition of working for social change and reform in society related to poverty. Faith is often part of an individual's identity. This gives faith-based organizations a considerable legitimacy in the activities that they carry out to eliminates the scandal challenging to human dignity. The World Bank's "voices of the poor" study<sup>1</sup> found that

"Religious leaders and institutions in developing countries. Faith groups can inspire confidence and trust and are often seen as more embedded in, and committed to, local communities. They are often the first groups, which people turn to in times of need and contribute to in times of plenty." Faith-based organizations make an important contribution to poverty reduction through:

- The Provision of services and humanitarian assistance: FBOs are important providers of services particularly in poorer regions.
- Restoring resilience and peace in our societies: faith-based organizations can contribution in resolving and reducing certain types of conflicts and reconciliation for peace to rained.
- The implementation of good capacity building support for development and global advocacy: FBOs are institutions which thus creates national and international coalitions of actions to support the poor (Sources [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)).

In a book by Gerard (2006, p, 840): "faith matters: FBOs, civil society and international development." Gerard distinguished five main categories of FBO's among which are:

- Faith-based charitable or development organizations which mobilize the faithfulness in support of the poor and other social groups, and which fund or manage programs which tackle poverty and social exclusion in our society;
- Faith-based socio-political organizations which interpret and deploy faith as a political construct, organizing and mobilizing social groups

on the basis of faith identities but in pursuit of broader political objectives or, alternatively, promote faith as a socio-cultural construct, as a means of uniting disparate social groups on the basis of faith-based cultural identity;

- Faith-based missionary organizations which spread key faith message beyond the faithful, by actively promoting the faith and seeking converts to it, or by supporting and engaging with other faith communities on the basis of key faith principles;

The Christian men's fellowship (CMF) of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon falls under the second category of FBO operations under Christian churches like other FBO, the CWA of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Cameroon Baptized convention health service of the Baptized church. They all have a common goal to serve mankind and care for creation. The Christian men fellowship falls under the second category because, its objectives are focus on charitable work to the poor and it is also involved in the fight against poverty. They also provide the basic need to OVC in the society, and other related problems concerning social exclusion, especially the case of orphans by AIDS who are often stigmatized and discriminated upon.

#### 5.5.2 The role of the CMF as faith-based organization in caring for OVC

The Christian men fellowship is a religious group like any other faith-based organization whose role is to provide spiritual, moral, and financial support on the basis of charity to the poor and marginalized people in the society, particularly orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). The group's role is to spread the good news following the Protestant doctrine in a holistic manner.

The role of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is to preach the word of God to the orphans and vulnerable children so that they may grow in His grace. Spiritual maturity does not come easily but we should try to persevere to be like Christ through the reading and meditation of His blessed words. The Christian men fellowship also ensures the education of OVC. Beyond basic standard to which access is guaranteed for all children, they are also provided with accommodation in a good and a rewarding environment that facilitates socialization in the society, for them to feel that they still have parents in Christ to care for them. The Christian men fellowship (CMF) plays an important role in protecting the rights and dignity of OVC, especially in the situation where they are, discrimination and stigma frequently occur due to poverty. The Christian men fellowship (CMF) prepares them for rehabilitation so as to repair their physical, mental, or social defects in life, their socio-economic empowerment in order to overcome the scarcity of

resources within families and facilitate access of the OVC to basic social needs.

They also play vital role in providing to the OVC with adequate health care, for the poor conditions in which they lives before, which can expose them to various ailments that are the basis of different disease that can lead to dead. Above all they ensure that the OVC are been provide with an affective, emotional, psychological and social follow-up in cases of depression and metal problem and other related illnesses like the HIV and AIDS. These needs are fundamental to their balance because on account of their immaturity, they lack the required cues for life in the society. The Christian men fellowship (CMF) also has a mandate to provide nutrition to OVC in order to ensure their survival to withstand external stresses that may impact negatively on their physical or mental disposition. Reintegrate the OVC so as to establish and/or renew the physical, psychological and social contact with their immediate environment, the community and society as a whole, furthermore, every human being needs physical and emotional protection for their development. The orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) can therefore best flourish if reassured about a harmonious and fulfilling family and social life. It is worth noticed that the orphans are most exposed to the risk of been infected by the HIV and AIDS, because of their poor standard of living in the society, they are forced to do prostitution to raise money for their living. The principal mode of transmission of the HIV and AIDS in Cameroon is through sexual intercourse. An unprotected sexual intercourse is the most common method of transmission of the virus.

The Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF) has registers OVC who are living with the HIV and AIDS, by giving them financial support for their tuition fee, feeding and health care, some of them are also send to vocational training school to learn a trade to help themselves in future.

The Christian men fellowship (CMF) play an important role to prevent the spread of the HIV and AIDS, by paying particular attention to the young girl who are orphans, because of the economic hardship due to poverty, they may be used for sexual slavery or trafficking. They advise the young girl who are up to the age of maturity to avoid unwanted pregnancies and not to have multiple sex partners, denounce forced marriages, embrace abstinence till marriage. They provide Anti-retroviral treatment to HIV and AIDS positive orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Furthermore, free voluntary testing and counseling are being provided to OVC so that their various statuses can easily be identify and handle.

Considering the fact that gender equality is a pressing issue in our society today, the children men fellowship plays a vital role in preaching in church

the necessity for gender equality. By nature it is said that women are the weaker sex, regarding the situations of female (OVC). There is a tendency that gender discrimination might occur in this case; however, the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is protecting the right of these girls.

Evangelization: One of the pillars of Christianity is archived by the CMF movement through bible study, singing and outreach to the under privileged like the orphans and vulnerable children which is my main preoccupation of this thesis, the sick, the homeless and those under incarceration for various reasons.

### 5.5.3 Efforts made by the CMF as a faith- based organization in reducing the spread of OVC.

The Christian men fellowship (CMF) is working very hard to reduce the spread of OVC through; the sensitizing couples on family planning issues so as to reduce the amount of children they may have, and better educate the few they have to higher level of education. These sensitization is done by visiting families in rural areas and talking to them the effect and consequences' of having too many children. In urban areas people are inform either through journal, internet, seminars, etc.

The Christian men fellowship (CMF) has created common initiative groups (CIG) to help support poor farmers with farming equipments and products to facilitate them in the cultivation of their crops so that they can ripe more in large quantities and sale to sponsor their children to school, and also provide good medical facilities to the entire family.

The Christian men fellowship (CMF) also sensitized the public on the effect and consequences of violence and border dispute which off course will lead to death living behind orphans and vulnerable children.

The Christian men fellowship also provides free HIV/AIDS screening to public, to let people know their various statuses. Those who are tested positive, are been given anti-retroviral treatment better manage their HIV/AIDS status in the society.

The Christian men fellowship (CMF) advised families who are living on restricted areas, such as mountains, valleys, industry zones and mashed areas where natural disaster has no alert human being.

### 5.5.4 Activities/Response of the CMF as faith- based organization in preventing and caring of OVC

The activities of the CMF movement are not limited in scope. They are involved in every aspect of the society helping the poor and the needy while spreading the gospel. A look at the activities of the CMF movement below will highlight the socio-economic out reach of the movement, in fulfilling God's mandate for creation, has embarked on the following project to support the poor, particularly orphans and vulnerable children.

In kumba, the Christian men fellowship (CMF) working indiscriminately to improve the status of the young girls by empowering them to intervene in all aspect of life as equal with all other citizen in the community irrespective of their situation (Murray 2005). It has being noted that, for AIDS to be eradicated in our society the right of women and of course the young girl must be strengthened and the asymmetrical power relation between men and women must be altered. It is also true that the vulnerability to AIDS of a women increases than men, and it for this reasons that the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is trying to sensitize the young girls avoid early sexual initiation due to traditional marriage customs and sexual violence. Introduce formal education, and the provision to contraceptive and condoms.

The CMF movement evangelizes through visits to hospital pray with the sick. Financial supports are provided to the sick for food and medical bills. While the sharing of the word may include all willing patients in the hospital wards, financial supports are mostly directed to the less privileged like the orphans and vulnerable children. During this hospital visits, conversation are geared towards encouragement and hope.

Visits to prisons and jail cells around the country to share the word and love are also organized. During such visits, members share the word with inmates and provide them with useful advises on how to properly rehabilitate. Discussions to help reduce the returning rate of inmates to jail house are held. The members who have skills in the field of counseling contribute more in the activities. These discussions usually lead to follow up programs within the church to help reformed ex-convicts to get integrates in the society. The movement usually select from inmate who come from the less privileged backgrounds especial orphans and vulnerable children because many of them get to prisons in the first place as a result of a struggle for survival or because of their vulnerability, they can be use by the society to commits crime of any form.

The evangelism outreach also extends to other orphanages as well. Some of these institutions are facing several challenges and need timely interventions to address their pressing issues at hand. Visits to such institutions make it possible for help to be properly channel. Such visits are accompanied with



discussions with the residents to understand their experiences and also with the administration to how they can be assisted.

The movement sometimes organizes visits to select families that may come up either through word of mouth or public information or from charity organizations. Some families are so under privileged financially and educationally that can't even go to appropriate institutions to address their situation. During such evangelistic visits, such families can benefit of the goodwill of Gods people.

The CMF movement organized workshops and campaigns for free or at reduced cost to the under privileged to address issues that are not affordable to them. Good examples of such workshop include healthcare expose on burning issues like the HIV/AIDS and other diseases like hepatitis etc which have a societal stigma attached to them. Free screenings are usually conducted and follow up provided for any positive cases. Also information and screening for diseases like diabetes and blood pressure issues is a regular. Another important healthcare issues which impact the under privileged is family planning and sexual health, these will help parent to follow up with birth control and limits the amount of children. The CMF being a movement to membership from all works of life usually uses its expert members for free who help in such meetings and programs.

Empowering of the under privileged is the goal of the CMF and consequently the church. It is understood that sometimes the lack of information is the root cause of many ills down the line. To be informed, one need to be able to read and write so education is primordial and that is while the CMF has consider education very imperative for the OVC. With increasing cost in Cameroon, the under privileged especial orphans and vulnerable children are condemned to life a life of perpetual poverty. Because of this, the CMF movement tries to address this aspect of the live of its community. Regular adult educational programs are organized by the committee when possible and some selected kids are being placed on scholarship to a level for them to be able to read and write while not becoming the future president of the republic of Cameroon.

The CMF provide psychosocial support like counseling to orphans who have lost one or both parent, and are face serious depression on biological parent care. The Christian men fellowship (CMF) offer to the OVC a Godly character to live in unity to obtain God's blessing. They counseled orphans on carrier selection, behavioral change mentally and spiritually.

The Christian men fellowship provides shelter to orphans and vulnerable children in its youth center were food, clothes, shoes are been to help meet their basic need. With much emphasis on the young girls who are consider

the weaker sex, which can easily course discrimination and gender inequality, in this regards, the FAO representative in Cameroon observed that high level of malnutrition and anemia among women are due to intra-household distribution of food, which often means that the women do not consume adequate amount of food vice-visa the young girls (Grobakken 2005). The church has constructed dormitory in most of it congregation in Kumba and also in its youths centre were the orphans vulnerable children are been given accommodation under the support of the Christian men fellowship (CMF).

The Christian men fellowship take full responsibility of their health care costs and social protection. It is also noted that the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon runs schools and medical facilities where these children are being taking care of.

The Christian men fellowship provides free medical facilities to the orphans and vulnerable children.

Because of the low proportion of girls attending school in the rural areas in Kumba due to lack of sufficient fund, from their poor parent, the girl child stay home to take care of the younger sibling while the boys manage to school with limited sponsors from their parent, family/relatives. For this reasons the Christian men fellowship (CMF) has introduced a program called 'let's educate the girls'. This project is aimed at making door to door sensors in the Kumba municipal as well as the rural areas to know the amount girl who attend school in each household. After this sense, the girls will encourage to go to school as well as the boy to promote gender equality.

Scholarship is also giving to OVC to study in the primary and secondary school. The enrollment this academic year 2014/2015 has increase drastically compare to year, see statistic on fig1 and fig 2.

Table.1 Primary school

Class	boys	Girls
1	3	4
2	5	1
3	-	2
4	1	6
5	2	5
6	1	3
Total	12	21

Making a total of 33 orphans and vulnerable children been sponsor by the Christian men fellowship for the primary school.

Table. 2 Secondary school

Form	Boys	Girls
One	2	5
Two	1	3
Three	6	2
Four	2	1
Five	1	3
Total	12	13

Making a total of 25 orphans and vulnerable children been sponsor by the Christian men fellowship for the primary school.

The Christian men fellowship offer vocational training to orphans and vulnerable on various specialties and trades in the Rural Training Center (RTC) of the Presbyterian Church Kumba, so that they can be self employed in any specific field of studies. See Fig 1 on the number or orphans and vulnerable children who are undergoing training in this center. This training is offer to these children in other to better prepare for the job market. The Christian men fellowship makes sure that these children have all their basic vocational training tools, pay their tuition fees. They are also sent for internship to various company and enterprise for field work training.

Table. 3 Vocational training

Sex/No	Fishing	Poultry farm	Hair dressing	Tailoring
Male	10	15	6	11
Female	7	12	25	19
Total	17	27	31	30

Making a grand total of 105 orphans and vulnerable children been sponsor by the Christian men fellowship. However out 105 orphans and vulnerable who are been scholarship 65 of them are been accommodated by the Christian men fellowship while the rest are from other NGOs operating in the Kumba municipality. There is a saying that, teach a child how to fish and he will fish better, rather than to give the child fish every day. Which therefore implies the Christian men fellowship is educating these children that they can the future leaders of tomorrow.

## 5.6 Family tracing and reunification of the OVC

The Christian men fellowship (CMF) is working very hard in tracing relatives of OVC by conflict. And it thus requires a program of tracing and

reunification: the registration of OVC, who either because of the economic hardship (poverty) or others who were escape because of war/border dispute, have now relocated them self back home and need to trace their immediate families so called orphans and vulnerable children. For this process to be successful, the Christian men fellowship men fellowship makes sure that personal history of the OVC must be registered. And this information are usually very difficult to obtain from younger children, especially in the case were the child have been traumatized. However the CMF tried to trace some family who have clear evident of their immediate family members, then identify OVC will be handed over to them. From my finding, I was told that Christian men fellowship has witness and resolved problem of family tracing and reunification.

## CHAPTER SIX.

### 6.0 Critical analysis of the activities of the Christian men fellowship (CMF)

#### 6.1. Introduction.

There is no doubt that men, are the pillars of most churches as they usually control the activities of the church. It is base on this fact that the Christian men fellowship of the Presbyterian Church in Kumba is formed. The motto of the group is base on (Philippians 2:4) which say; Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others, truth and service to the lord.” The men fellowship usually comprises of men filled with passion to see other men find salvation, inner peace, serve humanity and fulfilling in life through Jesus Christ. In the chapter, I will use SWOT analysis to discuss the activities of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) in their work for the poor.

A SWOT analysis is s planning method that are used to evaluate the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objectives of the project and also identifying the internal and external factors that characterized the positive and negative achievement of the objective. The acronym of SWOT is:

- S stands for strength: it is the characteristics of the project that give in more advantages related to others.
- W stands for weaknesses: it is the characteristics of the project that give in more disadvantages related to other.
- Stands for opportunities: it is the elements that the project could exploit to its own convenient and advantage.
- T stands for threats: it is the elements that could be of disadvantage to the project or cause problem to the project.

(Source: [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org))

I will further discuss the SWOT analysis on how the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is engaged in their work for the poor, particularly orphans and vulnerable children (OVC).

#### 6.2 Strength of the Christian Men fellowship (CMF)

Since the Christian Men Fellowship of the Presbyterian church in Kumba act as a voice of the voiceless in the church the organization is very well structure and very strong in term of policy formulation that led to the protection of OVC in the society. The group is headed by the president

democratically elected to serve a two terms of five years each. The motto: of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is truth and services to the lord. The group draw it inspiration from (1Corinthian 3:2-23) Jesus Christ is our solid foundation; every Christian should build his or her lives on that solid foundation which is Jesus Christ.

Border conflict is one of the cases where orphans and vulnerable children are being produced, in the sense that when two families are fighting over boundaries the men are the want to go for the fight while the children stay behind which can eventually cause death of the either side, consequently the children will become orphans. In situation like this, the Christian men fellowship (CMF) has always come to the intervention and peace building in leading the role in promoting the processes of dialogue and reconciliation. This process of dialogue and reconciliation is to let the party involved to know the consequence of conflicts which of course is death. These gestures have given an added value to the Christian men fellowship for promoting peace and conflict resolution. Frequently social and political conflicts have religious undertones. In such situations, the Christian men fellowship (CMF) often has the specific competence to call such leaders to responsible action. This has been crucial when dealing with issues related to the HIV and AIDS pandemic and efforts to eradicate dangerous customs such as female genital mutilation in the Kumba municipality.

The strength of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is that they are not perceived as external actors, but rather as related ministries in the sense that they operate within the same horizon of interpretation as religious authorities. Their social rootedness in the context is likely to contribute to sustainability and continuity after a certain project has been implemented and realized. In effect, the expected result is whether the project has been achieved for the benefits of the society especially to the poor.

Most of the CMF's objectives thus comprise of working towards giving the OVC maximum care, appropriate medications, education and love. And all these could only be achieved through a safe environment thus created by the CMF so as to enable the OVC to achieve the maximum quality of life. The CMF has also established its services so as to redress the issues of poverty that exists and thus affects families in the Kumba Municipality. And they have been able to create their own projects that can generate great income within them, such as poultry farming and will in return be able to sell chickens/eggs to the municipality in question for a good profit.

Currently, the CMF looks after 65 children. And these children are being taken care of providing them with their basic needs like clothing, food and the church also make sure that their school fees are paid in due course..

### 6.3 Weaknesses of the Christian men fellowship (CMF)

For the simple reason that the Christian men fellowship does not take final decision on some key issues make it weak. The resident pastor of the church has to be contacted before any major project to be carry out by the group is approved, in some cases the president and the pastor may disagree on which project to consider first. This system of operation by the Christian men fellowship of the Presbyterian Church in Kumba can course the delay of project or project failure as the case may be. It is of great important to the church that the president of the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is given full right to take vital decision that will led to the success of the group. Other challenge includes;

The lack of sufficient found to run the activities of the group which includes providing the basic necessities of the orphans and vulnerable children; education, food, clothes shoe.etc...

- Most importantly poor road net work especially were my studies were carryout, the road are very bad to access the rural areas of the region were people are suffering of poverty.
- The lack of volunteers and expertise in the field of social work and as well as pastoral care-given and counselor to help facilitate the work of the CMF is caring and supporting the OVC.
- The lack of anti-retroviral treatment to AIDS orphans and other essentials drugs for other related illnesses effecting the OVC. This have been a very difficult for the Christian men fellowship (CMF) in providing anti-retroviral drugs to AIDS orphans couple with the limited financial support they have as support from the church, the government and other international organizations like the World health organization (WHO), the United nations international emergency children fund (UNICEF).
- The lack of fully equipped medical facilities and the provision of essential drugs to OVC, who are suffering from cycle cell anemia and tuberculosis, malaria and the provisions of mosquito bed nets to OVC.
- The lack of sufficient equipments in the vocational training centre to help facilitate the training of the orphans and vulnerable children, in the various specialties in different field of work so that they may be trained in their chosen trade and become employed or become self employ and exercise the knowledge acquired during their study.
- The lack of internet facilities and information technology, to help facilitate their activities as well as informing and sensitizing the public on issues related the HIV and AIDS prevention as well as the control

of birth rates (family planning) the use of contraceptive pills and condoms to prevent unwanted pregnancy among young girls.

#### 6.4 Opportunities.

Given the strategic position of the Christian men fellowship in the church it has numerous opportunities to see to the growth of the church by its humanitarian services its render to the public such as; Taking care of OVC, visit to hospitals and prisons distribution of books to pupils in the primary school and the given of scholarship to less privilege and intelligent students. The researcher discovered that the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is a big door for people to join the church and be a member of this group together we can support OVC through the following;

##### 6.4.1 Advocacy.

Considering the fact that the right and dignity of these OVC under regarded due to poverty, the Christian men fellowship (CMF) is the voice to the voiceless. Advocacy biblically refers to as speaks out for those who cannot speak, for the right of all the destitute speak out, judge righteously, defend the right of the poor and needy (proverbs 31:8-9). Because of the challenges that has affected the dignity of the orphans and vulnerable children; they are marginalized, stigmatized and discriminated upon their situation in the society whose voice have been silenced (Diakonia in context 2009, p, 94).

##### 6.4.2 Stigma and Discrimination.

In our society today, issues of stigmatization and discrimination are very common in our day to day life. Especially when it comes to the situation where you have lost one of your parent or a family member either through HIV/AIDS or you are been consider as been poor, he/ she will be stigmatized and discriminated upon the said causes of your vulnerability. Stigmatization occurs when others devalue a person or a group of persons like those of OVC, because they are associated with a certain disease. Must at time especially when it comes to deal with children, they will not understand that situation like that are very real in our life, today you are up and tomorrow you can be down. However, the CMF in its capacity as Christian organization, the issue of stigma and discrimination among the orphans and vulnerable children is their top agenda in sensitizing other fellow children that before God every human being is equal. (Genesis 1:27) so God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.



## 6.5 Threats

The Christian men fellowship faces some threats when it comes to dealing with human being, there is always a problem of disagreement to agree on matters on decision makings in the adoption of project and support to the orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Members at times feel like resigning from the group, due to conspiracy between one another which leads to gossiping, which later courses the group to have two different factions against the decision taken by the president. However, there is no organizations without threats, when the threats arises there is always a solution for it. Especially a Christian organization, the lord is always there to spiritually guard the deliberation to arrive at unique decisions in the interest of the oppressed.

## 6.6 Discussion and Findings.

In Cameroon, the UNICEF usually partnered with the government to support research on OVC, with the sole aim of contributing towards the improvement of the conditions of OVC. But the churches too are not left out in this fight of ameliorating the living condition of the OVC in Cameroon, through their faith based organizations (FBOs). For it is said that the churches are the most influential source of care and support as they are best able to identify needs and support interventions for OVC in every municipality.

In this study, I am currently working within the Kumba Municipality, in the South West Region of Cameroon that is in great needs to satisfy the basic needs of the OVC. However, this study is thus limited to the diagnosis and intervention of the OVC through the putting in place and identifying the basic needs as well as social structures and partners (like the NGOs/CBOs) who can assist the OVC in the Kumba Municipality. There is no doubt in my mind that the above mentioned initiative will of course contribute to the amelioration and reinforcement of the support for OVC through facilitation of better coordination of intervention in their favor, reinforcement of actions for the protection of their rights. And finally, the intensification of the fight against discrimination and stigmatization, educational and health needs.

So, in a Knut shell, this study was conducted in the above mentioned Municipality to of course gain information about services offered to OVC by the Christian Men Fellowship (CMF) of Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, so as to identify the Principle of SWOT (i.e., the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threads of a given situation under review).

Generally, the results so far thus reveal several stepping stones as regards the demanded services for OVC in the Municipality of Kumba. And some of the common problems that were diagnosed from this Municipality thus emphasized the desperate need in providing basic needs like, food, shelter, clothing, education, and care, to the OVC in the municipality in questioned.

However, according to (Donald Skinner and Alicia Davis, 2006) some of the problems thus experienced by the above mentioned organizations were expressed as:

- Shortage of staff and the lack of skilled staff members.
- Coordination and communication between the CMF and the other organizations in the Kumba Municipality are non-existent, which of course results in the duplication of services, which in itself posed more problems.
- The CMF need the community participation in order to deliver services to the OVC, effectively. Because in most of the communities the responsibility is most often, shifted to the CMF with very little community participation in interventions.

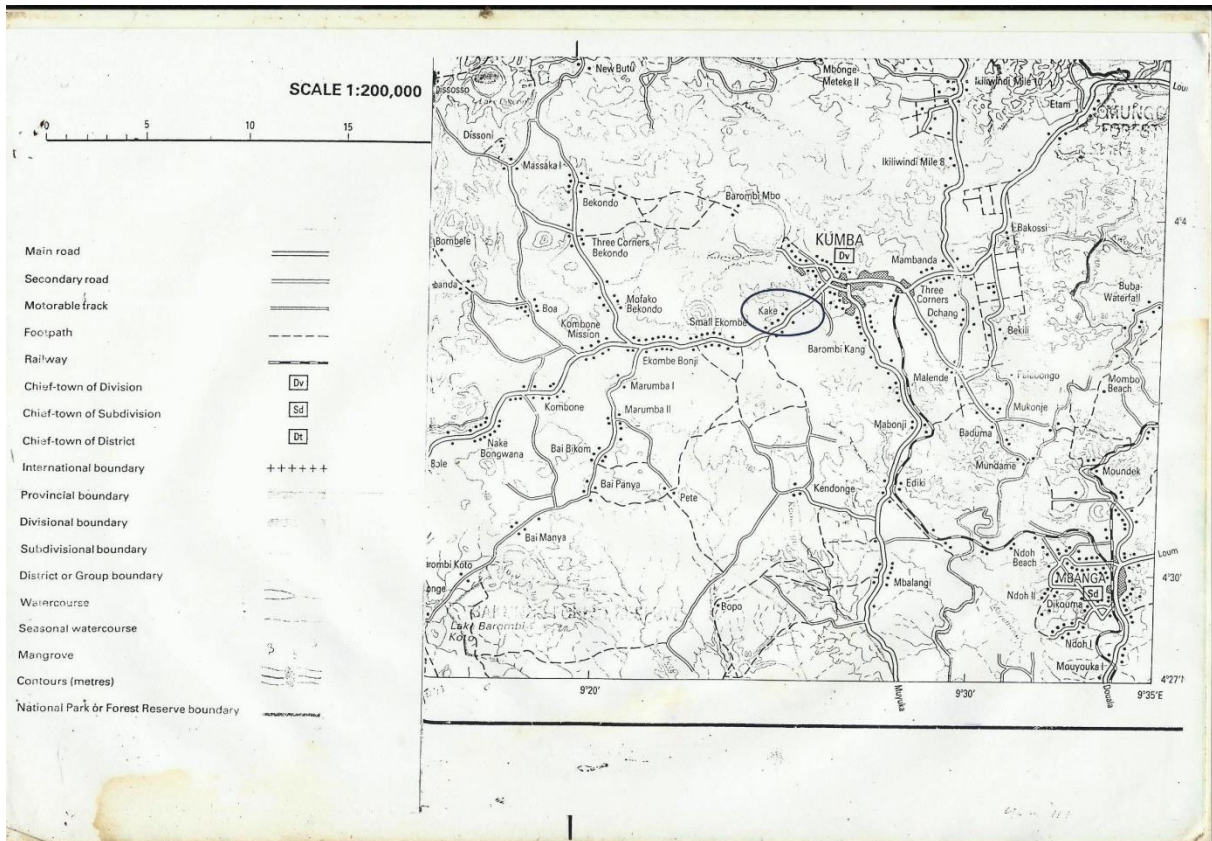
Ministry of Public Health (MINSANTE): Is the second ministry of importance in the role they play towards the amelioration of the living condition for the OVC. MINSANTE mostly focus on the health related issues of the OVC, such as HIV/AIDS protection, and/or primary health care. MINSANTE also works closely with the other coordinating agencies (FBOs/NGOs/CBOs).

Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB): Usually helps with the identification of OVC at various schools in the municipality and later assists the OVC with Foster Care Grants. So it is thus obvious that the above mentioned ministries all provide critical services needed by the OVC in the Kumba Municipality.

Since this study has thus identified and envisaged most of the problems of OVC: it will be of utmost importance to urgently follow up with the needed services thus envisaged so as to enhance the desperate situation of the OVC in this community. So the CMF have to work together with the local community members in order to provide the necessary skills that are needed, to effectively provide the services that are lacking for the OVC in this municipality in questioned. (Donald Skinner and Alicia Davis, 2006).

#### *6.6.1 Brief Description of the Kumba Municipality.*

The Map of Kumba Municipality.



The Amusement Park, Kumba.

Below is a brief description of the town of Kumba in which the study was carried out.

- The town of Kumba is of course the biggest town in the Southwest region of Cameroon. Although it is the largest town in this region of Cameroon, it is still not the capita. This town is also known around

the country as “K” town and is the economic capital of the Meme Division.

- According to the 2005 population census, Kumba is having about 144,268 inhabitants. It is a trade centre for cacao, coffee, oil palms and has a timber industry as well.
- The town is a local road junction in the Anglophone Region of Cameroon that runs to the Nigerian border at the town of Mamfe, to the Korup National Park at the town of Mundemba, and to the Mount Koupe Region to the east of Cameroon.
- And the main activities of the people of this region are farming and trading. Which of course makes it one of the main commercial towns in the country and these commercial activities has thus attracted the interest of foreigners especially the Nigerians (the Igbos), who are the main controllers of a greater percentage of the Kumba town's main market.
- The town of Kumba is also the terminal of the country's railway company (CAMRAIL), coming from the country's economic capital, Douala.
- The biggest geographical and/or touristic attraction in this town is the Barombi Mbo Lake, a large crater lake which is located about two kilometers northwest of the central town.
- The Kumba Municipality is of course, controlled locally by a government-appointed mayor known as the Government Delegate and the paramount local chief, HRH Fon Victor Esemi Sango Mukete who is also the founder of the Mukete Plantations Limited, measuring over 200 square kilometers in the different localities in Meme Division of the South West Region of Cameroon. Due to the cosmopolitan nature of the Kumba Municipality, the Bafaws now form just a percentage of the general population of the city and have thus lost many aspects of their culture, except for their language which is now spoken mostly by the elderly and some of the younger generation. Politically, there has been some sort of power struggle between the Government Delegate appointed by the government and the paramount chief, in recent years, that has sometimes spilled over into local violence in the Municipality of Kumba.
- The dominant spoken languages are English, French and/or the local (Pidgin English) - which is a simplified version of a language that develops as a means of communication between two or more groups that do not have a language in common. It is most commonly employed in situations such as trade, or where both groups speak languages different from the language of the country in which they

reside. A pidgin is not the native language of any speech community, but is instead learned as a second language. They allow people who have no common language to communicate with each other. Pidgins usually have low prestige with respect to other languages. (Retrieved May 20, 2015 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/pidgin>).

- But the indigenes of Kumba are the *Bafaw* of the Bafaw ethnic group. A language which is similar to *Bakossi*, *Douala*, and *Mboh*.

#### 6.6.2 Situation of OVC in the Kumba Municipality.

There is no exact number of OVC in the Kumba Municipality. But the following points thus listed below will no doubt describe the conditions of the OVC in the Kumba Municipality:

- Generally poverty is a major contributor to vulnerability in children.
- The safety of OVC in the municipality has thus raised further concerns because of crime, violence and abuse that usually occurred every now and then. However, the CMF is thus considering opening a place where OVC can be cared for. Although one participant was of the concerned that the government is not in any way providing enough efforts and commitment to help the OVC.

#### 6.6.3 Stigma and Discrimination Against OVC.

Stigma as thus defined by (Donald Skinner and Alicia Davis, 2006) is referring to that which is either internalized or enacted. Whereby the internalized stigma is that felt by the illness within – a feeling that others will stigmatize him/her due to his/her conditions. Meanwhile, the enacted stigma, on the other hand, is referring to the non-responsive behavior aimed at someone due to the fact that he/she is suffering from a certain illness that is not acceptable by the society.

#### 6.6.4 CMF Plans to Assist OVC in the Kumba Municipality.

It is a normal routine that every municipality in Cameroon is obliged by law to approve a well two to six years development plan for the supposed municipality. This procedure however, thus need a design that will truly develop and give a beautiful face lift for the community in questioned.

Most often, the reality is to provide a set up that will mobilize and prioritize the use of the developmental strategy and be able to align the internal

capacity systems with that of the supposed stated developmental objectives. This will also, in a way, enables some sort of important and meaningful designs of the supposed community.

So the supposed developmental plan of Kumba Municipality thus outlines their supposed strategic plans as regards the amelioration of the conditions of OVC. And their key aims are to reduce the multiplication of the OVC rate by making sure that they establish some sort of community care culture and to train social workers in OVC awareness, so as to be able to inform the community members on their field work. So the following goals were outlined as regards the amelioration of the living conditions of the OVC in Kumba Municipality:

1. To make sure that children are protected legally and socially towards all forms of discrimination and abuse.
2. To be able to work in good partnership with others who are showing concern in the issues of children rights.
3. To be able to established some sort of children's general assembly at the various local levels.
4. To be able to come up with all forms of discrimination against the OVC. (Donald Skinner and Alicia Davis, 2006)

#### 6.6.5 Services Rendered by the CMF to the OVC of Kumba Municipality.

The Christian Men Fellowship of Presbyterian Church Fiango-Kumba is a faith based organization (FBO) with about 83 members. They see and run its community activities around the OVC as a common generosity of its religious commitment. The CMF has been successful in providing some sort of community care to OVC such as providing them with the awareness and preventive measures of HIV and AIDS, and other related tropical diseases.

This faith-based organization has successfully realized a number of other initiatives, like the establishment of a deal with most of the local community bakery to supply bread to the various OVC groups in the municipality. They are able to provide food parcels every month to the OVC, consisting of maize, kidney beans, soya beans, rice, milk, oil and peanuts.

#### 6.6.6 *The Vision of the CMF.*

As regards the OVC, their principal concern is to see into it that these children are duly cared for within their various families. And in doing so, the CMF is thus committed to restoring hope to this group of children, by

making sure that meaningful changes thus occurred to as many families as possible. And they of course view this as a National Priority.

More of their objectives involve striving toward giving the OVC maximum care and a reasonable support in the form of shelter, clothing, food, education and medications. And it is thus obvious that all these could only be achieved through a safe environment that has been created by the CMF so as to enable the OVC to achieve the maximum quality of life.

#### 6.6.7 Challenges Faced by the CMF.

The CMF thus faces several challenges in the execution of their work for the OVC in the Kumba Municipality. And most often they are in need of solutions that are of course beyond their capability and thus relate to most roles that they play. Some of these challenges are summarized below:

- The greatest of the challenges experienced by the CMF is the lack of funding. Although through the various coordination with other FBOs, the most needed resources can always be maximized to take care of the demanding set-back of the OVC.
- Another main challenge faced by the CMF was the continuous increase in most of the demands for the OVC but lack of various forms of manpower.
- Next in the list is the imminent training of skillful volunteers who can be able to support and sustain the running of the issues of OVC so as to reduce duplication of services.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION AND CONCLUSION.

#### 7.1 Recommendations for Action.

Mindful of the fact that steps has been taken towards the needs of OVC in the Kumba Municipality of Cameroon, the needed services are still limited, in spite of the various efforts put in place by the Christian Men Fellowship (CMF) of Presbyterian Church, Kumba-Cameroon.

From the information gotten during the study of this project, a number of clear recommendations for action were prioritized as regards the various interventions for the supposed OVC in questioned. And these recommendations could of course become well understood when more research is being carried out in the Kumba Municipality, as well as obtaining wider experience during the process. Moreover, in other to come out with a good response at the most needed level of the OVC, there should be some sort of clear knowledge that could be use to understand the situation of the OVC in this municipality (more systematic data collection is highly needed and must be translated in to better response.

During the study of this project, participants were asked to give in their opinion what they think will be important in the way of delivering the most needed services within the Kumba Municipality as regards the issues of the OVC, and the following suggestions were provided:

#### *Community concern*

The Kumba population has seen the important of the CMF in doing diaconal work, and has deem it necessary for the community to be involved and support the CMF in their numbers, financially, spiritually and morally in order to meet the need of the OVC so that they may also feel that no matter the absent of their biological parents, has no effect in their life as far as the provision of their basic necessity are being met. The Kumba population also felt that more humanitarian organization should be created to work in collaboration with CMF in order to help eradicate poverty in the Kumba municipality, in a short period of time: so that the lifestyles of the citizens can be improve for the interest of future generations. There was also the need for the CMF to emphasize for the respect of gender equality, as for every human is equal before God.



### *Training of staff*

There should be the need of well qualified social workers in the field of diakonia and Christian social practice to help provide good quality service to the poor. The CMF has very few volunteers who are not train, but however, they manage to provide in their own way what is necessary for the OVC at the moment.

### *Shelter for the OVC*

The CMF has very limited number of rooms for the accommodation of the OVC, a room of 12m<sup>2</sup> that can contains about 6 OVC, has now become too congested for these children to live in. However, the CMF has applied for Grants from the general public, international humanitarian organization as well as from the kumba municipality to help solved the demanding problems of accommodation of the OVC.

## 7.2 Conclusion

As I earlier mentioned in my thesis, the issues of OVC has become a call for concern in the world at large and in Kumba Municipality in particular. The total number of OVC in Kumba now stands at 105, and the CMF is accommodating 65 out of the 105 while the rest are from other NGOs and orphanages operating in the Kumba municipality. It is also noted that the CMF has provided scholarship to orphans to study in some of it schools and establishments. These will of course provides the OVC with the basic knowledge and skills in order to find a job to help eradicate poverty.

In a Knut shell, the CMF is also encouraging the local population of Kumba to create CIGs so that local community members will be trained on farming techniques, poultry farming as well as cattle rearing. At the end of this training, financial support is given to a group of 10 persons to start farming under the strict supervisions of the CMF board members to ensured that this project is succeeding for the good of them self as well as the CMF who are rendering diaconal work to the poor. It is very certain that, these projects are going to help the beneficiary to provide basic needs to his/her foster family in order to eradicate the scandal challenging human dignity.

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The role of the Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF), in caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).

Tick the corresponding and forward it back by E-mail.

Closed questions.

1) Does your organization self specifically on Christian children?

- Strongly disagreed.
- Somewhat disagreed
- Do not agree or disagreed.
- Somewhat agreed.
- Strongly agreed.
- Do not know.

2) Do you coordinate with Non-Governmental Organization (NGO's)

- Strongly disagreed.
- Somewhat disagreed.
- Do not agree or disagreed.
- Somewhat agreed.
- Strongly agreed.
- Do not know.

3) Do you respect gender equality in our organizations?

- Strongly disagreed.
- Somewhat disagreed.
- Do not agree or disagreed.
- Somewhat agreed.
- Strongly agreed.
- Do not know.

4) Do you work alongside with other FBO's?

- Strongly disagreed.
- Somewhat disagreed.
- Do not agree or disagreed.
- Somewhat agreed.
- Strongly agreed.
- Do not know.

5) Do you provide clothes for the orphans and vulnerable children?

- Strongly disagreed.
- Somewhat disagreed.
- Do not agree or disagreed.
- Somewhat agreed.
- Strongly agreed.
- Do not know.

6) Do you provide food for the orphans and the vulnerable children?

- Strongly disagreed.
- Somewhat disagreed.

- Do not agree or disagreed.
  - Somewhat agreed.
  - Strongly agreed.
  - Do not know.
- 7) Do you provide shelter/housing to the orphans and vulnerable children?
- Strongly disagreed.
  - Somewhat disagreed.
  - Do not agree or disagreed.
  - Somewhat agreed.
  - Strongly agreed.
  - Do not know.
- 8) Do you provide education to the orphans and vulnerable children?
- Strongly disagreed.
  - Somewhat disagreed.
  - Do not agree or disagreed.
  - Somewhat agreed.
  - Strongly agreed.
  - Do not know.
- 9) Do you provide vocational training to the orphans and vulnerable children?
- Strongly disagreed.
  - Somewhat disagreed.
  - Do not agree or disagreed.
  - Somewhat agreed.
  - Strongly agreed.
  - Do not know.
- 10) Do you provide health care to the orphans and vulnerable children?
- Strongly disagreed.
  - Somewhat disagreed.
  - Do not agree or disagreed.
  - Somewhat agreed.
  - Strongly agreed.
  - Do not know.
- 11) Are the orphans and vulnerable children allowed to worship in other faith?
- Strongly disagreed.
  - Somewhat disagreed.
  - Do not agree or disagreed.
  - Strongly agreed.
  - Somewhat agreed.
  - Do not know.

Open questions

1) How do you identify OVC?

- ① when we go out for evangelization
- ② through our church elders, quarter heads, block leaders and any other group in the community.