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David Shiman, Ph.D., Advisor

Doctor of Education

Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

April 7, 2008

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Grace Coolidge Room 501  
Waterman Building

Title: Everyone's Child: Perceptions about the Relationship between a Primary  
School and a Village in Rural Kenya

## ABSTRACT

Scholars have debated the role of using education for development for decades. Most studies have looked at the large-scale picture, often providing valuable insight into the arguments for and against making education available in rural areas of developing nations. However, a dearth of studies exists regarding the reciprocal relationship between primary schools and developing communities.

This qualitative research study examines the reciprocal relationship between a primary school and a village in Kenya over a two-month period, and thereby contributes to research related to growth in developing nations, self-help projects, and community development. I chose an autoethnographic approach to explain my data, “[using my] own experiences in the culture reflexively to bend back on self and look more deeply at self-other interactions” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), p. 740). Furthermore, readers are “invited into the author’s world, evoked to a feeling level about the events being described” (p. 742). Rich description is used to capture the essence of the village and the primary school and to portray connections between the village and the school.

A close relationship between the school and the village was evident in the utilization of school buildings, the treatment of orphans, the accessibility of potable water, and the introduction of electricity and technology in the area. Other questions regarding non-concrete effects of the presence of a church-sponsored school in the village were addressed, such as the spiritual growth in the village, and the school being seen as a safe haven.