



Kari Kragh Blume Dahl

*Cover*

# WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS

Becoming Somebody  
in Kenyan Teacher Education

Roskilde  
University  
Press

For my children,  
Viktor Virgil Dahl Aimelet  
Fanny Vanilla Dahl Aimelet

KARI KRAGH BLUME DAHL

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## CHAPTER 1

# Fields of teacher education: Deconstructed

### Constructions of a field in friction

This book is about teacher education in the South, a thoroughly neglected field, but one which plays a major role in the lives of the large majority of children and young people in a part of the world where education is not a matter of course. Most children and young people in this part of the world live and grow up in school systems where western, and thus foreign, curricula have been implanted. Frictions ensue between people, persons, institutions, and educational tasks that cannot be understood without digging below the uneven surface.

Nineteen years ago, when I first visited Kenyan schools, I was mostly concerned with criticising the seemingly hierarchical, authoritarian, and non-democratic practices that could be witnessed with hundreds of barefoot children in bookless classrooms, using rote learning and behaviour modification as apparently primary pedagogical strategies. Yet writing this book was a way of opening up for thinking about the possibilities that schooling presents without prescribing which kind of schooling should be realised. *With the Best of Intentions* seeks to expand the thinking about what is possible in a schooled life by exploring power, violence, and habitual practices in educational institutions. This book explores how subjects, specifically student teachers, engage in dialogical positioning and processes of becoming as they grow into being someone and somebody in the context of these institutions. The idea is that contextual surroundings 'do' something to us, but people also change the world in return, though in a less deterministic way than classical poststructuralism implies and in a more restrained way than new modes of positive psychology and liberalism suggest. Paraphrasing Butler (2002), it seems to me that pedagogy ought to be careful not to idealise certain ways of 'doing schooling' that produce new forms of hierarchy, exclusion, elimination, and abuse. For instance, I dispute those regimes of truth which tell us that certain kinds of pedagogy are beneficial and ideal, while others are false