The paper discusses the significance of community practice in social work, emphasizing its historical roots and its relevance in addressing contemporary challenges such as rapid technological advancements, social and economic changes, political unrest, and globalization. It highlights the importance of community practice in revitalizing democracy, fostering inclusive and supportive communities, and protecting human rights, particularly those of marginalized groups like women and girls. The paper argues that in the 21st century, community practice is increasingly crucial at local, regional, national, and international levels to promote social justice and positive societal development. It also emphasizes the interconnectedness of global social and economic systems and the need for pluralistic, multicultural approaches in addressing these issues. Additionally, the paper outlines various models of community practice, including grassroots organization, human services planning, and empowerment-based interventions, drawing from historical movements and diverse cultural traditions.

116 Contemporary Community Practice Models

Marie Overby Weil & Dorothy N. Gamble

Throughout the history of social work, community practice has been a prominent method, one which embodies the profession's empowerment tradition and social justice values (NASW, 1996; Simon, 1994). With the complexities of current societies; rapid technological, social, and economic change; political unrest in many parts of the world; and the globalization of trade and communication, community practice at local, regional, national, and international levels is an even more essential element to revitalizing democracy in the United States and encouraging democratic societies internationally to build and nurture inclusive, supportive, nonracist, and nonsexist communities and institutions (Weil & Gamble, 2013). Societies across the world are becoming more multicultural, and globally there are now more internally displaced persons than at any previous time. With these global changes and the realities of both internal and cross-national conflicts, protection of human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls, becomes increasingly critical in efforts to build and maintain socially just communities. Serious political divides in the early decades of the 21st century revolve not only around differing conceptions of national common good, but also around the different paths to and conceptions of the common good in international and global terms. Currently, in several areas of the world fledgling, as well as established, democracies now face internal political challenges and external threats to ongoing development (Weil, Reisch, & Ohmer, 2013). Community practice in its essential forms of organizing, planning, development, and progressive work for social change is increasingly needed within and across communities and nations (Weil & Gamble, 2013).

The moral, political, and economic equation for human development requires an understanding of global social and economic interdependence. Vandana Shiva describes the "Declaration of Interdependence," sponsored by the Democracy Collaborative, as growing from the recognition that "we are earth citizens and have earth identities which are both the particular identity of place, and the global planetary identity. As members of communities, we have multiple community identities. … These diverse, multiple identities shape our sense of self and who we are. And these diversities are not inconsistent with our common humanity. Without diversity, we have no humanity" (2005, p. 142). These issues of democratic development, revitalization, sustainment, and transformation are the central purview of community practice in all its forms; the skills and knowledge for building and rebuilding community are critical for those who work to achieve positive and sustainable development and pluralistic, multicultural societies in a global economy.

Community practice encompasses a broad scope, ranging from grassroots organization and development to human services planning and coordination. It employs multiple methods of empowerment-based interventions to strengthen participation in democratic processes, reform human service systems, and assist groups and communities in advancing their concerns and organizing for social justice. This chapter presents community practice models that are widely identifiable in interventions employed in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. They are rooted in traditions evolving from the settlement house movement, the charity organization

society movement, the rural development movement, and from the organizing and development histories and cultures of diverse ethnic and racial groups (Betten & Austin, 1990; Rivera & Erlich, 1998; St. Onge, 2013, 2009).

MODELS OF COMMUNITY PRACTICE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Eight basic models of community practice are described. They illustrate approaches widely used in many parts of the world and they are expected to persist. Community practice efforts focus primarily on the following general purposes.

Community Practice Purposes

- *Improving quality of life*: Work to support well-being, decrease poverty and respond to basic human needs, such as food and shelter, security, opportunities for education and basic health; promote freedom from violence; build opportunities to organize and participate in community goals and decisions. Work for well-being can focus from local to global issues.
- *Extension and implementation of human rights*: Build inclusion through participatory structures; respond to needs and promote rights of marginalized groups who are discriminated against, are political or economic refugees, or are internally displaced; end slavery and human trafficking; and support enforcement of full human rights for women and girls.
- *Advocacy*: Conduct research; document policies, practices and behaviors that limit opportunities of groups and individuals; promote egalitarian political leadership, policies, and work to build human capabilities and community capacity for the most marginalized groups; form groups and coalitions to press for human rights and provide "voice" and opportunities for vulnerable groups at multiple levels; advocate for full human rights, education, and equality of opportunity from local communities to national and global venues. Examples include lobbying for improved services for children with severe emotional problems; campaigning for human rights for women; working for rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) groups; or passing legislation to fund minority group economic development projects through such structures as the Community Reinvestment Act.
- *Human social and economic development*: Create opportunities for people and groups to gain knowledge and skills thus enriching their capabilities and building community capital; establishing well-being through education and training for viable livelihoods; work with communities to preserve their natural resources and develop assets through economic cooperatives, microenterprise, or development programs. Economic development can be fostered by national governments or international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and can function regionally—most importantly it can function at grassroots levels to grow local economies and develop leadership among the poor. In combination, social and economic development should ensure social support, and economic viability and sustainability for marginalized rural and urban groups by promoting participation and leadership development—locally, regionally, and globally.
- *Service and program planning*: Work with local people to assess the strengths and needs of a whole community or specific populations and the development of plans, resources, and structures to meet those needs. Employ appropriate technology that can assist in building capacity as well as provide needed services. Services may be adapted for specific interventions, and evidence-based interventions may be adapted to fit context and local population and culture.
- *Service integration*: Establish a range of services and link them so that a continuum of care is in place for the broad needs of community members. Examples include building the continuum of family support, preservation, and child welfare services; establishing a network of well-connected services for both healthy and frail senior citizens; or providing food, protection, relocation opportunities, and services for new starts for refugees and internally displaced persons from international or national conflicts.
- *Political and social action*: Engage in the political process to change existing problematic policies, establish new

progressive legislation, or change legislative policy makers. Activity in political and social action is direct, open, and nonviolent. It requires free spaces in which people can gather, organize, and speak out, especially those who have been excluded from political involvement in the past. Political and social action seeks to foster institutional change for inclusion and equity, and increase participatory democracy and equality of opportunity in local, regional, and international institutions. Organizing for the rights, protection, and welfare of children by the Children's Defense Fund and Amnesty International's efforts to prevent torture and secure release of political prisoners worldwide are examples of political and social action that is nonpartisan.

- *Social justice*: Involves building toward human equality and opportunity across race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality. Examples are working to ensure basic education for girls in all countries, full political participation for women, making reparations to people who have endured systematic oppression in the past such as Native Americans, African Americans, and Japanese Americans, and building the fabric of civil and human rights laws both nationally and globally.

The value base of community practice not only respects the dignity of the individual but also focuses on the interdependence of families and communities and the development of legislative, political, and distributive justice. Community practitioners work with competing perspectives on issues, using multiple strategies to solve problems that inevitably arise within and among diverse groups in communities. America's reality as a pluralistic society where communities of color are still struggling for inclusion increases the need for skilled multicultural organizing and development of multicultural human service organizations (Gutierrez, Lewis, Dessel, & Spencer, 2013). The eight models depicted in Table 116.1 are analyzed in terms of outcome, change targets, constituencies, scope of concern, and primary social work roles through lenses of globalization, human rights, and multiculturalism (Gamble & Weil, 2010). Though the models are described as particular entities in the chart for analytic clarity, elements of the models are often observed in interaction—being mixed or phased as organizations and groups respond to new challenges or shifts in the environment (Rothman, Erlich, & Tropman, 2008).

Neighborhood and Community Organizing

Much of community organizing depends on the face-to-face opportunities available to people in geographic proximity, such as a neighborhood, rural community, or county, though increasingly, digital media are employed to support communication. Community organizing focuses on activities to increase the leadership, planning, and organization-building skills of ordinary people to help them develop power at the neighborhood or village level and increase community well-being. It is the bedrock of democratic institutions. When people at the grass roots of society learn how to organize their efforts, be inclusive in organization building, employ democratic decision making, set priorities, access resources, and reach their goals, they have learned basic lessons of democracy. Increasing their capacity to work on basic community problems makes it possible for citizens to change conditions to improve the quality of life for all residents. This model of community practice can be seen in a variety of forms across the globe, in the democracies that have been working at neighborhood organizing for hundreds of years yet still tend to exclude the most vulnerable groups in society, as well as in the newly emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and South America.

Organizing in communities almost always carries aspects of both consensus building and contest or conflict (Mondros & Staples, 2013). Within neighborhood groups conflict will occur over what strategies to adopt and even in external contest focused organizing–such as seeking a change in state policy, organizers look for allies in powerful positions. As Gutierrez and Lewis (1994) have discussed, organizers most often will strive to help groups achieve internal consensus to plan for work within their community and plan for more social action oriented strategies when external forces are oppositional. Indeed, community groups work to solve internal conflicts and develop a cohesive and coordinated strategy for external work. Where possible, community organizations will first work externally, using educational and collaborative approaches, adopt persuasion and campaign tactics where needed with the public and officials, and when

TABLE 116.1 Models of Community Practice in 21st Century Contexts

Comparative Characteristics	Neighborhood & Community Organizing	Organizing Functional & Communities of Interest	Social, Economic & Sustainable Development	Inclusive Program Development	Social Planning	Coalitions	Political & Social Action & Policy Practice	Movements for Progressive Change
Desired Outcome	Develop capacity of members to organize; Direct and/or moderate the impact of regional planning and external development	Action for social justice focused on advocacy and on changing behaviors and attitudes; may also provide service	Promote grassroots plans; Prepare citizens to use social and economic resources without harming environments; Expand livelihood opportunities	Expansion, redirection and new development of programs to improve service effectiveness using participatory engagement methods	Neighborhood, citywide or regional proposals for action by (a) neighborhood groups (b) elected body; armor (c) planning councils	Build a multi-organizational power base to advocate for standards and programs, to influence program direction and draw down resources	Action for social justice focused or changing policies or policy makers	Action for social, economic & environmental justice that provides new paradigms for the healthy development of people and the planet
Systems targeted for change	Municipal/regional government; external developers; local leadership	General public; government institutions	Banks; foundations; external developers; laws that govern wealth creation	Financial donors & volunteers to programs; beneficiaries of agency services	Perspectives of (a) neighborhood planning groups (b) elected leaders (c) human services leaders	Elected officials; foundations; government policy and service organizations	Voting public; Elected officials; Inactive/potential participants in public debates and elections	General public; Political, social and economic systems that are oppressive and destructive
Primary constituency	Residents of neighborhood, parish, rural community, village	Like-minded people in a community, region, nation, or across the globe	Low-wealth marginalized, or oppressed population groups in a city or region	Agency board & administrators; community representatives	(a) neighborhood groups (b) elected leaders (c) social agencies and interagency organizations	Organizations and citizens that have a stake in the particular issue	Citizens in a particular political jurisdiction	Leaders, citizens, and organizations able to create new visions and social structures
Scope of Concern	Quality of life in geographic area; Increased ability of grassroots leaders & organizations to improve social, economic & environmental conditions	Advocacy for particular issue or population (examples: environmental protection; women's participation in decision making)	Improve social, economic and environmental wellbeing; Employ equality, opportunity and responsibility to guide human behavior	Service development for a specific population (examples: children's access to health care; security against domestic violence)	(a) neighborhood level planning (b) integration of social, economic & environmental needs into public planning arena; (c) human services coordination	Organizational partners joining in a collaborative relationship to improve social. economic & environmental conditions and human rights	Building the level of participation in political activity; Ensuring that elections are fair and not controlled by wealth	Social, economic and environmental justice within society (examples: basic human needs; basic human rights)
Social work/ Community Practice roles	Organizer Facilitator Educator Coach Trainer Bridge Builder	Organizer Advocate Writer/Speaker Facilitator	Negotiator Bridge Builder Promoter Planner, Educator Manager Researcher Evaluator	Spokesperson Planner/Evaluator Manager/Director Proposal Writer Trainer Bridge Builder Visionary	Researcher Proposal writer Communicator Planner Manager Evaluator	Mediator Negotiator Spokesperson Organizer Bridge Builder Leader	Advocate Organize Researcher Candidate Leader	Advocate Facilitator Leader

Adapted from Gamble, D. N., & Weil. M. (2010).

necessary move to social action approaches of contest and conflict (Brager, Specht, & Torczyner, 1987; Mondros & Staples, 2013).

Neighborhood and community organizing has the dual focus of building the capacity of individuals to lead and organize while accomplishing a task that will enhance the quality of life for the geographic area. Elements of this model are found in settings in which people can come together to create needed change. One example is the Center for Participatory Change (2013), which works to help people in small rural communities in Western North Carolina "recognize their own power, work together, and transform their communities" (http://www.cpcwnc.org/). Community organizing that has expanded from work in Los Angeles into a national network, PICO (*www.piconetwork.org*) works on building social capital, developing local leaders in many communities, and in organizing campaigns for needed social change. Current efforts include work by "Dreamers," citizenship-seeking Latino youth who were brought to the United States as young children by undocumented parents; health reform; and an overarching focus on economic health and well-being for families and communities.

Organizing Functional Communities—Communities of Interest and Identity

The essence of this model is its focus on communities of interest—functional communities—rather than geographic. The focus in organizing communities of interest or identity is advocacy for social justice and policy change to promote acceptance and inclusion of the chosen issue or group. In their efforts toward social justice, functional communities also seek to change general attitudes and behaviors and may develop services for their specific population that have not been adequately addressed in the mainstream service system. Examples are development of alternative service systems for women, evolving from feminist organizing, consisting of rape crisis centers and domestic violence programs, and more recently expanding to deal with women's employment and economic development issues. Functional communities typically engage in community education, as is illustrated in the LGBT community's earlier work to educate others about HIV/AIDS—and to press for appropriate health care and supportive health policy. More recently this community of identity and allies has advocated for nondiscrimination in employment, and the same social, economic, and civil rights that others take for granted.

As communities of interest/functional communities organize, build internal capacity, and conduct research about their issues, members may move from mutual support to become strong advocates and leaders, as have parents of children with severe emotional disturbances through the Alliance for Mentally Ill Children and Adolescents. Leaders have also emerged among the groups that have organized in many parts of the nation to work against toxic waste sites.

Examples of communities of interest include the ARC, which functions in many localities and as a national group to improve services and advocate for the rights of children and adults with developmental disabilities; environmental groups such as Resourceful Communities/Conservation Fund, which is a "grassroots network that implements the triple bottom line low-wealth communities by building capacity and a statewide movement that advocates for sustainable economic development, social justice, and environmental stewardship" (www.resourcefulcommunities.org); and groups such as Amnesty International, which documents human rights violations and seeks protection and justice for political prisoners worldwide through local advocacy groups.

Social, Economic, and Sustainable Development

Providing opportunities for people to increase their social and economic security has been a central focus of social work. To be effective, social and economic development projects must work together within a context of sustainable development (Gamble & Hoff, 2013). Development efforts are currently framed under four rubrics:

- *Human development*, the focus of the United Nations Human Development Index, which measures progress using a composite focused on life expectancy at birth, knowledge (based on literacy rate and school enrollment), and adjusted per capita income in purchasing power parity (UNDP, 2011)
- *Social development*, focused on basic life skills and livelihood education (especially for

the poor), promotion of gender equality, and most critically, short-term amelioration and long-term eradication of poverty through policy investments in marginalized groups and communities, expanding their capacities, building social capital, and providing programs that can improve well-being and create economic opportunity (Midgley & Conley, 2010)
- *Economic development* that invests in meeting human needs and building adequate incomes and assets by employing empowerment strategies to move families and communities out of absolute poverty (Rubin & Sherraden, 2005; Friedmann, 1992)
- *Sustainable development*, described initially in *Our Common Future*, the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (*www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm; p.43*. Sustainable development encompasses social and economic development that restores and protects the natural environment (Estes, 1993; Gamble, 2013; Hart, 1999).

Historically, many community development programs emphasized either economic development or social capacity building. In recent years, there has been a growing focus on integrated development strategies combining human capacity building, popular education, and locally controlled economic development (Freire, 1970; Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999). Some current programs are designed to build personal assets. Individual development accounts (IDAs) and individual training accounts (ITAs) are local, statewide, and national programs that match the savings of a low-wealth person who is saving for a training or educational program, the startup of a small business, or the purchase of a home (Sherraden, 2013). IDAs and ITAs are seen as individual ladders to help people climb out of poverty (Schreiner et al., 2001). Coupled with other workforce strategies, they may be especially helpful to those people who have been on the poverty borderline for many years. Though individuals need these kinds of programs to develop creative entrepreneurial skills, individual strategies are insufficient without companion programs that focus on broader human investments in health and education, and policies that improve minimum wages and fairness in taxes.

Community development corporations (CDCs), of which there are thousands across the United States, often combine efforts to change the community by decreasing barriers to economic and social resources (e.g., Bethel New Life; Murphy & Cunningham, 2003). These corporations often combine increasing the availability of resources to broad groups of people in the community (e.g., community reinvestment funds and community development block grants) with individual training to help people take advantage of such resources (e.g., home buyers' clubs and microenterprise loan circles) and with increased social and economic infrastructure (e.g., increasing affordable housing stocks, and developing health clinics, day care, and after-school programs). In this strategy, it is not just the individual who is changing; it is the whole landscape of the community that is changing with visible infrastructure and options for social support and economic advancement.

Inclusive Program Development

In community-practice focused approaches to program development, there is growing recognition that it is important to have active participation of potential consumers and community members (Dominelli, 2007; Patti, 2009). Planning that is fully inclusive will engage agency staff with potential participants and community representatives in all aspects of the process from creation of the vision through the evaluation and adaptation needed to refine the program. Such efforts are intensive but can help to embed the program in the community and promote support. Inclusive planning requires ongoing intentional processes of engagement with diverse aspects of the community. Perspectives on inclusive engagement are provided by Chambers (1997), and Netting, O'Connor, and Fauri (2008). The approach is grounded in participatory and empowerment perspectives and strategies.

Involvement in the planning process gives community members a stake in the program and its success. Inclusive planning can be carried forward in nonprofit or public settings. A well-known example of major systems change was the engagement over time of the Maori community of New Zealand with the Child Welfare System. From the intensive work to make services fit appropriately with Maori culture—of extended families and extended family responsibility for children—the entire structure of the

New Zealand Child Welfare Services was refocused to employ family group conferencing with all clients.

In the United States, a somewhat similar process was used to build a network of family preservation services in Contra Costa County. The innovative service approach was developed focused on family-centered, neighborhood-based services through inclusive planning with community members and the multiple agencies that were members of the County Youth Services Board. These organizations worked to expand an interagency family preservation program that had proven successful into a county-wide model. This effort involved major system change. The planning process utilized five agency–community interactive processes: (1) Developing a strategic plan; (2) learning about targeted neighborhoods and involving residents in planning; (3) including staff and community members in family-centered service integration teams; (4) negotiating waivers with the state to support the new model; and (5) negotiating with potential clients and other community members throughout the planning process (Armstrong, 2001). Commitment and hard work was required of all participants—but they made the project work and developed services that were truly community-based and family-centered.

Agencies considering a new community-based program should emphasize participatory processes to strengthen planning and build staying power for the effort (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008). Using intensive outreach, planners can identify community members' concerns and interests and build on these ideas in the needs assessment process. Although secondary data and official community data will be used in a needs assessment, it can be strengthened by surveying potential program participants and community residents about their interests, concerns, and hopes for the community. Focus groups of citizens, as well as the surveys, can be used to enlighten and expand staff understanding and strengthen the plan through information received directly from potential participants and community members.

Evidence-based practice strategies build the "science" of intervention; however, programs that are adapted appropriately to community culture, contexts, and interests are likely to have long-term staying power and to be perceived as community assets. Participants should be involved in program evaluation through more than surveys of satisfaction. For programs to be responsive and relevant to the communities they serve it is important to have program participants involved in the evaluation and to collect qualitative outcome data and program improvement recommendations. This full-circle process of engagement with community members, clients, and potential clients will enable staff to make the program more responsive to changing issues and community needs (Noponen, 2002).

Social Planning

Social planning operates at a range of levels and focal issues. Two major approaches are primary in current practice: planning *with* communities at local levels and larger scale planning, which can take place at four levels: (1) as planning for services in specific sectors such as mental health, or child welfare; (2) as community-wide social planning as carried out by social planning councils; (3) within city and regional planning departments or other government agencies; and (4) in agencies engaged in international, multinational, and global service and planning efforts (Sager & Weil, 2013). In all these venues for social planning, community social workers will strive to see that the planning process is inclusive and that people "living with the problems" or "living in the neighborhood or region" are seriously engaged in multiple aspects of the planning and implementation process (Weil, 2013).

The scope of planning encompasses community renewal, combining social and economic development, and/or coordinating social services and community programs. Such work often involves community revitalization and seeks to redress problems in rural communities or urban neighborhoods; it also can involve work to rebuild communities after natural disasters. The Dudley Street Initiative in Boston is one example of community-based comprehensive neighborhood planning (Medoff & Sklar, 1994; www.dsni.org).

In service or service sector planning, practitioners are involved with designing new services, or refining older services and approaches to render them more responsive to current and emerging populations. For example, in a federally funded initiative to improve preventive services to families, North Carolina initiated a Family Support and Family Preservation program that engaged communities in 33 counties in local-level service planning. Work was accomplished through new

planning groups composed of citizens and local service providers. Counties were successful in developing model programs that could provide primary prevention support and intensive intervention to preserve families experiencing crises (Gamble & Weil, 2010).

City-wide nonprofit sector planning councils such as those affiliated with the National Association of Planning Councils typically conduct needs assessments and target one to three major issues over several years. These councils and service sector planning efforts strengthen services for particularly vulnerable populations, such as children with disabilities or the elderly. The long-established Jacksonville, Florida Community Council, for example, has carried forward major research and service initiatives in several areas. A recent project developed a multisite program plan designed to reduce teen pregnancy. The research reported in the *Jacksonville Quality of Life Progress Report 2006* indicates very positive results with lowering pregnancy rates and keeping young women in school (see Gamble & Weil, 2010, pp. 298–303).

Community development corporations engage in constant planning and program refinement as they seek to respond effectively to changing community needs in low-wealth communities. Two exemplary CDCs with multiple economic, housing, business development, and service and support programs are Bethel New Life in Chicago (www.bethelnewlife.org/) and Chicanos por la Causa in Arizona (*www.cplc.org*).

In a government-funded San Francisco program, Margaret Brodkin worked with an advocacy organization and citizens' and agency groups to establish a model children's service system that resulted in multiple positive outcomes for children and families. In this public/nonprofit partnership, the ingenuity and energy of the advocacy organization and planning groups made the change happen (Brodkin, 2013). At city-wide planning levels, both Seattle, Washington and Austin, Texas have been engaged in multiyear neighborhood-based planning with citizens' groups and provide models that would be beneficial in many cities (Weil, 2013).

Because planners engage with a variety of individuals and groups, they need excellent communication, facilitation, and management skills, as well as technical skills in research, needs assessments, participatory planning, evaluation, and proposal development. Planners increasingly organize community meetings to gather ideas and educate the public about directions for services and development. They engage community leaders in effective development strategies for fundraising, evaluation, and modification of programs.

Several useful resources are available to assist planners working with citizens and organizations for local planning. The Vancouver, British Columbia Social Planning and Research Council provides an excellent *Citizen's Guide to Community Social Planning* (1993). *A Community Planning Handbook*, compiled by Nick Wates for communities in the UK provides generalizable strategies for local planning within neighborhoods; and the Aspen Institute provides a planning workbook that incorporates environmental, economic, and social planning.

Coalitions

Coalitions have been defined as "complex inter-organizational entities that require partners to commit to collaborative efforts toward a specific goal" (Alter, 2008, p. 528). The interdependence of coalitions makes it possible for separate groups to work together for collective social change.

To be effective, whether voluntary or mandated, members of coalitions need to commit to agreed-upon methods and processes for work (Ivery, 2008). Mizrahi, Rosenthal, and Ivery (2013) emphasize that coalitions come together for the pragmatic reason of achieving their shared goal. Social movement theory indicates that the choice to "coalesce" is based on shared values and commitment to a cause or social issue (Mizrahi, Rosenthal, & Ivery, 2013). The dynamics of interorganizational relationships are explained through exchange theory, which emphasizes mutual benefit and reciprocity (Roberts-DeGennaro, 1987). Increasingly, some coalitions establish themselves as long-term organizations, such as the Coalition for the Homeless in Los Angeles and the Domestic Violence Coalitions, located in many states, dedicated to assisting women and ending family violence.

Coalitions may focus on the needs of a specific population, on service development or integration, or on social change advocacy. The desired outcome for social-change coalitions is to build multiorganizational power bases large enough to influence social program direction, with the potential to garner resources to respond to the

common interests of the coalition. Problematic public policies or elected officials are often the systems targeted for change as citizens press for more favorable policies. Government institutions that may have the authority to respond to a particular social concern, but not the readiness to do so, are also the targets of coalitions' advocacy, education, and action strategies.

Coalition building typically requires a major time commitment; for this reason, only organizations that have a stake in the particular issues will engage in longer term involvement. Examples of coalitions found in many communities are those organized for affordable housing, against the increase in teen pregnancy and teen violence, for service programs for the elderly, and for environmentally safe economic development. A coalition of major human service, child advocacy, and professional groups has successfully lobbied for federal support for family-centered, community-based services over the past two decades. This coalition with leadership from the Children's Defense Fund, Child Welfare League, Family Impact Seminar, and National Association of Social Workers (NASW), among others, successfully lobbied for implementation of the 1993 Family Support Act (P.L. 103-66). Coalitions for the homeless have been successful in many urban areas in establishing shelters and services, and some are also concerned with development of low-income housing. To stay together, coalitions develop complex exchange relations and find ways to balance their commitment to the issues that hold them together with the individual agendas and perspectives of member organizations (Roberts-DeGennaro & Mizrahi, 2005). Mattessich, Murray-Close, Monsey, and Wilder Research Center (2001) have analyzed 40 studies of collaboration and identified six major domains and related factors that contribute to establishing and maintaining successful collaborations: positive environment, cooperative membership, flexible processes and structures, effective communication, shared purpose, and sufficient resources.

Social workers are likely to be leaders and spokespersons in human service coalitions, using mediation and negotiation skills to balance internal tensions and maintain the coalition's focus. In coalitions of advocacy groups focused on alternative services, such as coalitions against domestic violence, social workers may also have roles that emphasize group and interorganizational facilitation, teaching and coaching, leadership development, conflict negotiation, and skills in organizational relations and planning.

Political and Social Action and Policy Practice

This model embodies action for social, political, or economic justice with a focus on changing the agenda of policy makers, changing policies, or changing policy makers. When public agendas and policy directions become so skewed as to cause harm and decrease opportunities for human development, political and social action becomes the means to redress wrongs and put forward a progressive agenda. Social and political action campaigns conduct research and document a problem, select a target and change strategy, generate the power to effect a solution, and use effective communication and direct action to implement promised changes.

Social action seeks progressive change through building powerful local community organizations that can counter the status quo with a visible agenda and a critical mass of people advocating openly for change. Groups use social action and organizing strategies to "change conditions that are injurious to their members or on behalf of others who cannot organize for themselves" (Mondros, 2013, p. 347). Political action can be as simple as handing out leaflets or as complex as running for office. It focuses on enlarging democracy and especially assisting and promoting voting among those who are disadvantaged or oppressed by current policies. Social and political action efforts can change the power relations in a larger community, make people aware of their own power through consciousness raising and group solidarity, and engender personal changes so that people recognize and use their own power more effectively. Collective action can stimulate a sense of community and activate community power.

Mondros (2013, p. 350) makes the case that there is much in common among social, political, and legislative approaches to action: all three seek to "transfer power and resources"; persistence is required in each approach along with disciplined action; and community practitioners may be working at different or multiple levels from neighborhood to state or national. Social and political action can be seen in areas as varied as Appalachia, where citizens trained by the Highlander Center conducted research, documented toxic waste, and were successful in

closing a waste dump (You Got to Move, 2008); to Wisconsin where citizens have been demonstrating a number of years in opposition to the Governor's unfair new policies toward public employees.

Social action organizations may join with other local groups or form coalitions that can apply pressure at national levels. In the South, black farmers have been involved in long legislative struggles to rectify discrimination in federal loan procedures, and across the nation many organizations have been involved in "living wage," "school reform," voter registration, and civic participation efforts. The goal of progressive social and political action is to shift the balance of power so that those who have been excluded in earlier decision-making processes become players in future decisions. This goal is grounded in processes for strengthening participatory democracy and building social justice. For work in both social action and policy practice Brager, Specht, and Torczyner (1987) recommend three types of tactics that escalate in intensity: (1) Collaborative Tactics (Education, Persuasion, and Pooling Resources); (2) Campaign Tactics (Bargaining, Negotiation); and (3) Contest Tactics (Direct Action, Disruption).

Policy practice has been defined by Jansson (2008) as "efforts to change policies in legislative, agency, and community settings" through development of new policies or defeating the policies of others. In policy advocacy, social workers support the rights and concerns of less powerful people and work to help them improve their "resources and opportunities" (p. 14). This work can focus on "case advocacy" or "cause advocacy." Schneider and Lester (2001) define social work advocacy as "the exclusive and mutual representation of a client(s) or a cause in a forum, attempting to systematically influence decision-making in an unjust or unresponsive system(s)" (p. 64). Advocacy is a primary responsibility of social workers and serves as the foundation for political, social, and legislative action.

Movements for Progressive Change

Progressive social movements, focused on economic and social justice and more recently human rights, have occurred when large groups seek to change harmful social and environmental conditions. Wood and Jackson (1982) define social movements as groups "that attempt to produce or prevent radical or reformist types of change" (p. 3). Social movements promote action for social change that provides a new paradigm for the way we respond to a particular population group or social issue. For example, the growing number of states in the United States that have legalized gay marriage, along with new federal and military policies that provide protections and benefits for married same-sex couples, are significant social change markers. While the struggle of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community has been long and arduous—and is not over—these changes have engineered a tipping point through which education and advocacy by the LGBT community and allies, coupled with generational shifts in attitudes and beliefs, and some political shifts, provided momentum for continued change toward extension of civil and legal rights for this New Social Movement (NSM). Other NSMs focus on human rights, identity, and critical consciousness (Reisch, 2013). The major systems targeted for change are the general public and especially political systems. The abolitionist movement in the United Kingdom is credited with being the earliest mass movement for human rights. To be progressive, movements must support both human rights and social justice. In the United States, the civil rights movement is perhaps the best known and most far-reaching example of a social movement; it created conditions and expectations that fostered civil and social rights work in other groups, including La Raza, the women's movement, and the disabilities rights movement (Parish et al., 2006; MacNair, Fowler, & Harris, 2000). New paradigms related to these groups emerged with the success of the movements. Both legislation and attitudes have begun to focus more on abilities than disabilities; women increasingly exercise equal rights and move into leadership positions. Members of the LGBT community are pressing to achieve full equality. Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans have legal civil rights but must continue to fight discrimination and prejudice as they work toward social and economic equality (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAAC] [www.naacp.org/]; American Indian Movement [AIM] [www.aimovement.org/]). In the United States and many parts of the world, immigrants' rights are contested or denied. In social movements, social work roles are typically those of advocate and facilitator. Social workers, in keeping with the values of the profession, are allied with social movements that support democracy, individual

dignity, the rights of minorities, the needs of the poor, sustainable development, and the broad goals of human development and liberation.

Social movements often occur when protest erupts as a result of intensifying oppression or when great and inequitable changes in the political or social system occur. Localized protests may call attention to widespread oppression; when those protests engender widespread support and mass empathy, a social movement emerges. Piven and Cloward (1979) analyzed four different American social movements and conclude that "both the limitations and opportunities for mass protest are shaped by social conditions" (p. 36). There may be only a small window of opportunity for change provided by the temporary relaxation of the social order brought about by widespread social protest. They suggest that the best strategy to achieve sought-for change through social movements is to extend that window of opportunity through organizing and action.

Social movements that maintain momentum can achieve significant change. The election of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa was the outcome of a social movement and long-term struggle to end the system of apartheid and to establish civil and social rights for Black South Africans. The efforts toward human rights in Latin America, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and other parts of the world continue. As a social movement succeeds, the ideals that it has advanced are accepted as legitimated political and social norms.

CONCLUSION

The descriptions of these eight models, coupled with the historical and value discussion that places community practice in its social work context, provide some guidance for those working in a wide range of community efforts. One value of examining these models is to realize the multiple roles social workers have to play in facilitating individual, group, organizational, and community development toward democratic institution building. Social workers are called on to be organizers, teachers, coaches, advocates, facilitators, negotiators, mediators, planners, researchers, managers, proposal writers, spokespersons, promoters, and political candidates (Weil & Gamble, 2013).

Community practice at all levels is influenced by local, national, and global changes. Citizens the world over are no longer leaving initiatives for social change just to governments and business. Social workers who are knowledgeable and have skills to contribute to this process will coach community members to become change agents in their communities. There will always be a role for social workers in the area of neighborhood and community organizing. The technology exists to communicate across the globe in seconds, but we still do most of our community building in face-to-face groups and organizations. The new communication technologies are particularly helpful for organizing functional communities, and these communities can benefit from social work's knowledge of social action, need and asset assessment, service and program development, and leadership.

There will be a tremendous need for social workers skilled in community social and economic development in the next several decades. As societies recognize the need to incorporate the lessons of sustainable and human development into the equations for economic progress, social workers can facilitate the dialogue to help local and regional groups create new paradigms for sustainable development. The work of social planning will focus on developing more humane and inclusive social and economic systems for communities. Communities no longer will accept development that squanders the environment, tramples the vulnerable, and unjustly divides the profits. Application of social work's value and knowledge base, to new theoretical concepts for inclusive, comprehensive, and participatory work can make a significant contribution to social planning. Program development, community liaison, and service coordination will be the primary foci of organizations' administrators and managers as they seek to involve the consumers of human services as partners in planning and providing human services in all their variety. Political and social action will always be in the purview of social work as long as one of the strong values of the profession is social justice. The NASW *Code of Ethics* makes it very clear that "social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully" (1996, p. 27).

Because social workers are skilled in the facilitation of groups and organizations, they will be key actors in building the coalitions needed in the coming decades. Though social workers are not typically major leaders of social movements, their

skills as advocates and facilitators are critical for preparing groups and organizations to participate in progressive social movements. In all these models there is a need for high levels of interpersonal, process, task, and technical skills. A particular skill needed by those working in community practice will be for facilitation methods using popular education and participatory planning (Chambers, 1997; Freire, 1970). Community practice workers will need to understand that the work they do is often long and arduous; however, the rewards in contributing to development of a more just and democratic society are enormous.

RELEVANT WEBSITES

Community Tool Box, University of Kansas. *ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents*

Institute of Development Studies. *ids*.ac.uk & Eldis Gateway www.eldis.org/

National Association of Planning Councils (NAPC). www.communityplanning.org/

PICO National Network—Unlocking the Power of People™. www.piconetwork.org

United Nations Development Program, UNDP. http://www.undp.org.

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