Introduction

> Despite the formidable achievements of modern, Western, industrialised society, it has become clear that the current social, economic and political order has been unable to meet two of the most basic prerequisites for human civilisation: the need for people to be able to live in harmony with their environment, and the need for them to be able to live in harmony with each other. If these two needs cannot be met, in the long term, the achievements and benefits of modern society will be transitory.
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> The inability of the dominant order to meet these needs can be seen in the crises currently facing not only Western industrialised societies but all societies. The world is characterised by increasing instability – whether ecological, economic, political, social or cultural – and existing institutions seem only able to provide solutions which in the long term, and even in the short term, only make things worse.

Those were the words that introduced the first edition of this book, published in 1995. Twenty-one years on, they are as true today as they were then, if not more so, and the justification for this book remains the same. Many things have changed in those years, but the above paragraphs also remind us that many things – the most important things – have not. The world is still on a course that is headed for major crises – environmental, economic, social and political – and despite the fact that many more people are now aware of, and concerned about, the parlous state of the world and its very uncertain future, governments are still showing themselves largely unwilling or unable (or both) to do anything significant about it. There have been great disappointments in those 21 years: the failure of the Copenhagen Summit on climate change in 2009; the inability to respond to the Global Financial Crisis in any way except by bailing out the banks and propping up global capital; the resulting austerity measures; the draconian response to the threat of terrorism since '9/11', which has served only to heighten global tensions and make a terrorist response more likely; ongoing tension and conflict in the Middle East; wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria as well as continuing conflicts in parts of Africa; the widening gap between the increasingly wealthy global elite and the rest of the world; the inability to meet the modest Millennium Development Goals; the hardening of attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers; and the emergence of right-wing and racist political groups in many

countries. These suggest that the current structures of national and global government are utterly unable to meet the pressing global problems that threaten the future of human civilisation. The words that immediately followed the above 1995 passage – 'In this context, the need for alternative ways of doing things becomes critical' – now seem almost an understatement.

There are, however, signs of hope. The continuing demonstrations against globalisation, culminating in the Occupy movement of 2011, suggest that there are many people who are seeking an alternative. The widespread disillusionment with mainstream political parties, caused by the perceived irrelevance of mainstream politics and meaningless elections that fail to address many of the major issues facing the world, can also lead to people seeking a new form of politics, although it is yet unclear how this will evolve. Social media and the internet have made possible the documentation of human rights abuses and the mobilisation of opposition in the so-called Arab Spring and in other protest movements. Campaigning groups such as GetUp! and Avaaz have successfully mobilised large numbers of concerned people to oppose oppressive legislation or to struggle for environmental and social justice. Indigenous voices around the world are now heard more strongly, and are both demanding change and also showing that there really are alternatives to Western and neo-liberal madness. Latin American social movements and progressive governments have been developing inspiring community-based alternatives: the Zapatistas in Mexico, the community response to the oil crisis in Cuba, the popular governments of Chavez in Venezuela and Morales in Bolivia, the education demonstrations in Chile and the 'horizontalidad' movement in Argentina. Despite their inevitable problems, facing the hostility of global capital and conservative media interests, these represent bold initiatives towards an alternative future that are an inspiration to the world.

It is in this context, both of impending crisis and of new signs of hope, that community development can play a crucial role. There has been increasing interest in development at the community level as potentially providing a more viable and sustainable basis for the meeting of human need and for interaction with the environment, and it is not surprising that the above Latin American examples all include a strong component of alternative community development. Among activists concerned with both environmental and social justice issues, the establishment of viable community-based structures has become a key component of strategies for change. Community development represents a vision of how things might be organised differently, so that genuine ecological sustainability and social justice, which seem unachievable at global or national levels, can be realised in the experience of human community. This book represents an attempt to articulate that vision, and to provide a theoretical framework for community development that will relate analysis, context and action.

In the years since the first edition, the organisational context of practice, dominated by managerialism, has become less conducive to good community development (as discussed in chapter 15), but nevertheless the need for, and the continuing interest in, community development remains strong. This is particularly so among those concerned for social justice and ecological sustainability, as community development is seen as a potential alternative way to organise human society. If indeed there are to be economic, political and ecological crises, as now seems inevitable, it will be our ability to work at community level that will determine the capacity of human civilisation to survive. However, the interest in community development is also driven by a belief that human community is important, and that strong communities will enrich our lives and provide a positive context for human interaction and for the meeting of human need, especially given the continuing erosion of the welfare state.

This ongoing interest in community development is shown by reaction to the earlier editions of this book, which have had a wider appeal than I first imagined. This wider appeal has been evident in two directions. One is the embracing of community development by a wide range of occupational groups, not merely the human service professionals and community activists that one might expect, and who were implicitly the readership for which the 1995 edition was intended. I have discovered a much broader range of occupational and interest groups who feel that community development is important in their work, and this has underscored the power of the community development perspective. The other is the way the book has been found useful in different cultural contexts. Although the book is written from the perspective of a white Australian male, earlier editions have resonated with workers in different cultures and it has been translated into several different languages. This inevitably raises questions about colonialism, a topic that is covered in chapter 9, but it also emphasises that the concerns of community development are universal, and many of the broad principles discussed in this book (such as wisdom from below, the importance of process, interdependence, participation, empowerment and so on) apply across cultural boundaries, although the ways they are constructed and applied will differ significantly in different contexts.

For readers familiar with earlier editions, it is important to outline some history of this publication to avoid any confusion as to authorship. This is the sixth edition of this book, although it is only the second to be published with the current title by Cambridge University Press. I was the sole author of the first two editions (1995 and 2002), but the third and fourth editions were prepared by Dr Frank Tesoriero. Our names appeared as joint authors for the third edition (2006) and he was the sole named author of the fourth edition (2010), although much of the content was continued from the earlier versions. Sadly, Frank is no longer associated with the project, and the 2013 edition and this subsequent edition contain none of the material he

added for the third and fourth editions. It does contain material written for the first two editions, together with a good deal of new material. There are 16 chapters, compared with 11 in the 1995 edition. However, the overall trajectory of the book remains the same.

For those readers familiar with the 2013 edition, the substantive changes to this edition are largely in chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 12. Other chapters have received minimal editing to bring them up to date.

The first five chapters lay the foundation for a vision of community development. Chapter 1 examines the multiple global crises facing the world, which see us on a road to potential disaster unless we change direction significantly and soon. It also deals with the crisis of the welfare state, and argues the need for community development. Chapter 2 considers the various approaches that have been taken to these multiple crises and identifies the centrality of community in any transition to a more just and sustainable future. Chapter 3 is a combination of chapters 2 and 3 in the previous edition, identifying an ecological perspective and a social justice perspective as key foundations for community development and identifying key principles of each perspective. Chapter 4 is similar to its equivalent in the 2013 edition, except that more emphasis is given to Indigenous world views, which are placed alongside post-Enlightenment perspectives as an additional, and important, foundational area. Thus the approach to community development in this edition rests on four foundations – ecology, social justice, post-Enlightenment and Indigenous – as opposed to three in the 2013 edition and two in earlier editions. It thus represents an expanded vision. Chapter 5 then seeks to integrate the perspectives of the previous chapters in a vision for community development and for community-based human services.

The next two chapters explore two significant principles of community development. Chapter 6 is concerned with change from below, valuing the wisdom, expertise and skills of the community, and the importance of decentralisation and community control. Chapter 7 discusses the processes of community development, including the primacy of process over outcomes, and the issues of participation, democracy, consciousness-raising, peace and non-violence.

Chapters 8 and 9 outline a more global, or international, perspective. Chapter 8 is concerned with globalisation and understanding community development in a globalising world, while chapter 9 explores the important issue of colonialism, which can affect all community development practice, and considers issues around working internationally.

Chapters 10 and 11 outline eight dimensions of community development: social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, spiritual, personal and survival. Practice in each of these eight areas is discussed, with various issues identified in relation to

each. The approach taken is one that emphasises the importance of all eight, in a holistic and integrated understanding of what community development means.

Chapter 12 seeks to summarise the ideas of previous chapters in a series of practice principles. There has been some rearrangement of these from the previous edition, and they now number 32. Although there is little in this chapter that has not been covered in previous chapters, readers have found such a summary at this point to be particularly useful as a way of encapsulating the principles of community development.

The remaining chapters are concerned with issues of practice. Chapters 13 and 14 discuss the various roles taken by community workers, and identify the skills needed to fill those roles. In doing so they discuss issues of practice/theory, the problems with prescriptive 'cookbooks', and the ways in which community workers can develop their skills. Chapter 15 is concerned with the managerial environment in which many community workers have to practise, and which is hostile to community development principles. It outlines some approaches community workers can use either to adapt to, or to directly challenge, managerialism. Chapter 16 discusses a number of other issues relating to practice, such as professionalism, value conflicts, ethics, support for workers and so on.

The book moves, in a general way, from more theoretical to more practical considerations, but it is far from a simple linear development. Indeed, part of the discussion in the earlier chapters emphasises the need to reject linear thinking, so the reader is encouraged to 'jump around' and not necessarily read the book in the order in which it is written. The book does attempt to follow a logical sequence, but there are other equally valid logical sequences that could have resulted in a very different order of the material.

Although I have attempted to make the ideas accessible to a wide readership, it has been necessary to make some assumptions about the background of those for whom the book is written. I have assumed that the reader has some familiarity with basic social and political ideas, such as social class, power, Marxism, feminism, socialism and so on. This is not to say that detailed or expert knowledge of such topics is necessary; completion of first-year university study in sociology, anthropology, politics or some other social science discipline, or alternatively a comparable understanding gained from general reading, should provide the reader with a more than adequate background.

I have updated the references to incorporate contemporary sources; a lot has been written since 1995. However, I have also included a number of older sources for the earlier editions where I believe they have something important to say. In this age when the 'here and now' is so valued, and where history is often marginalised, it is important that we challenge this by listening to the voices of the past as well as the present, and there is much of value to community development in earlier literature.

This book makes frequent use of a number of terms that have been grossly overused and misused in recent years, such as *community, empowerment, development, sustainable, ecological, Green, social justice, community-based, holistic, participation, consciousness-raising, non-violence and participatory democracy*. Although these terms have been overused, they still represent powerful ideas; indeed, their very popularity is a testament to their power and their perceived relevance. They have an important contribution to make to the vision and the practice principles of this book: the aim of the book is to clarify rather than obscure these ideas, and to reinvest them with some substantive meaning for community workers.

Throughout the book, the terms *community development* and *community work* have slightly different meanings. I have used the former to refer to the processes of developing community, while the latter refers to the actual practice of a person (whether paid or unpaid) who is consciously working to facilitate or achieve such development.

I have opted for the most part to use the terms *the South* and *the North* rather than *developing nations, Third World* or other similar terms and their opposites. None is wholly satisfactory, and living in Australia *the South* offends one's geographical consciousness but, as in other ways it is the least offensive term, it is the one I have chosen. The term *Western* (or *the West*) similarly takes liberties with geographical principles, particularly for an Australian. The term is nonetheless a useful one, and in the context of this book it refers primarily to Western culture, whereas the terms *North* and *South* are used more in an economic context; of course the distinction is not always clear-cut, as economics and culture are themselves inextricably entwined. It should, however, be noted that there is no necessary single antithesis of *Western* in cultural terms, whereas the economic constructs of *the North* and *the South* are not only opposites but also in such a structural relationship that neither could exist without the other, and each serves to define the other. I have used the term *Aotearoa*, rather than *New Zealand*, as a deliberate political and cultural statement; I only wish that Australia had a similarly accepted Indigenous name.

Throughout the book there are a number of tables and diagrams that illustrate in summary form the ideas discussed in the text, culminating in figure 16.1 (see page 349), which ambitiously attempts to summarise the entire framework. They are included with mixed feelings: several readers have commented that such tables and diagrams are helpful in obtaining an overview and in seeing how the material fits together, but this needs to be balanced against the dangers of categorisation and oversimplification. Tables and diagrams can have the effect of imposing a false sense of order on a complex and chaotic reality and, hence, of inviting simplistic solutions to complex problems. To represent complex concepts by a few words in a cell of a table is to change the very nature of the content itself, and invites a dangerous reductionism. A too-rigid interpretation of such tables is antithetical to the holistic approach

advocated in the early chapters, and the reader is cautioned to remember that the boundaries of the tables do not represent rigid distinctions or impermeable barriers. If the tables and diagrams are regarded as an aid to comprehension but not as rigid categorisations or definitions, they will have served their purpose.

While this book has a practical application, and attempts to incorporate both theory and practice, it does not provide simple prescriptions of how to 'do' community work. The reasons for rejecting such an approach are given in chapter 13. A number of principles of practice are outlined, but the way in which they are translated into practice reality will vary from community to community, and from worker to worker. Community work is, at heart, a creative exercise, and it is impossible to prescribe creativity. Rather, one can establish theoretical understandings, a sense of vision and an examination of the nature of practice in the hope that this will stimulate a positive, informed, creative, critical and reflective approach to community work. That is the aim of this book.

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Crisis, transition and community

THERE IS NO clear agreement on the nature of the activity described as *community work*. Some see it as a profession; some see it as one aspect of some other profession or occupation such as social work or youth work; some see it as anti-professional; some see it as people coming together to improve their neighbourhood; some see it in more ambitious terms, of righting social injustice and trying to make the world a better place; some see it in terms of social action and conflict; some see it in terms of solidarity, cohesion and consensus; some see it as inherently radical; some see it as inherently conservative; and so on (Butcher et al. 2007, Chile 2007b, Kenny 2010, Ledwith 2005, Craig, Popple & Shaw 2008). Not only do people's understandings of community work differ but also the terminology is similarly confused. The terms *community work, community development, community organisation, community action, community capacity-building, community enterprise, community practice* and *community change* are all commonly used, often interchangeably. Although many would claim that there are important differences between some or all of these terms, there is no agreement as to what these differences are, and no clear consensus as to the different shades of meaning that each implies.

There is similar confusion about the idea of human services being *community-based*. This term is used in a variety of contexts, and often has little substantive meaning beyond a vague indication that the service concerned is somewhat removed from the conventional bureaucratic mode. There is, however, considerable interest in the development of a community-based approach to the delivery of human services such as health, education, housing, justice, childcare, income security and personal welfare, and a belief that this represents an important improvement over the current mix of welfare state and private market (De Young & Princen 2012, Clark & Teachout 2012).

This book is an attempt to make sense of community work and community-based services. It is based on the premise that the main reason for much of the confusion, and the seeming inadequacy of what passes for community work 'theory', is that community work has often not been adequately located in its social, political and ecological context, or linked to a clearly articulated social vision, in such a way that the analysis relates to action and 'real-life' practice. Many of the stated principles of practice are fragmentary and context-free, and often the goals of community work

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remain vague, uncharted and contradictory. Similarly, the literature on community-based services is often rhetorical rather than substantive, and often does not relate specifically to relevant social and political theory.

This book attempts to remedy that deficiency. It seeks to locate community work and community-based services within a broader context of an approach to community *development*. This latter term is seen as the process of establishing, or re-establishing, structures of human community within which new, or sometimes old but forgotten, ways of relating, organising social life and meeting human need become possible. In this context, community work is seen as the activity, or practice, of a person who seeks to facilitate that process of community development, whether or not that person is actually paid for filling that role. Community-based services are seen as structures and processes for meeting human need, drawing on the resources, expertise and wisdom of the community itself.

The starting point for this exploration will be the multiple crises that currently face the world, and of which there has been growing public awareness in recent years. These crises, and the sense of instability and uncertainty that they create, are the context within which community development must now be understood. If there is to be a just and sustainable future for something called 'human civilisation' it is clear that strong communities, in whatever form they take, will be part of that future, and so community development represents part of the way forward for humanity.

■ A world in crisis

The current experience of humanity, both in the affluent and 'developed' West and in nations of the Global South, is one of increasing crisis and uncertainty. Most future predictions suggest that the crises we currently face will increase, both in number and severity (Hamilton, Bonneuil & Gemenne 2015). The multiplicity of crises simply magnifies their impact; while it may be possible, within the existing social, economic and political order, to deal effectively with one or even two of these crises, the fact that a number of crises seem to be about to arrive at once, and that they will reinforce each other, suggests the need for much more fundamental change than the existing order seems capable of delivering. Without going into great detail, these crises will be briefly summarised to give an overall picture of the mess we humans have created, and the threats that we now face as a consequence.

1 Ecological/environmental crises

Ecological/environmental crises need to be considered first, given that, if they are not adequately addressed, all the other crises facing humanity become irrelevant; if we destroy the environment, then economic, cultural, social and political crises hardly matter. We need a habitable planet if we are to have any chance of resolving the other

challenges facing the human and non-human world. There is a range of ecological and environmental issues that can be described as critical. The one that receives most attention is climate change. The evidence for global warming, caused by the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases such as methane, is overwhelming, despite the efforts of climate change sceptics or deniers who are arguing against overwhelming evidence provided by climate scientists (Christoff 2014, Kolbert 2006). The need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, significantly and immediately, is urgent, yet the response of the governments of the world is too little and too late. Projections of likely global warming within the coming decades, and its influence on human and non-human populations, are frightening; so much so that many people, faced with the cognitive dissonance caused by this challenge to their world (Hamilton 2010), find ways to deny the severity of the issue, or allow themselves to be distracted by other more 'immediate' concerns.

Climate change, however, is only one of the ecological challenges facing the world at this time. The state of the world's oceans is a cause for major concern in terms of acidification and the accumulation of toxic waste, especially plastic microfibres, now entering the food chain. The oceans can no longer be considered as an inexhaustible food supply and unlimited dumping ground, and action to change practices of both fishing and pollution is both painfully slow and woefully inadequate.

To this we can add the serious impacts of air and water pollution on the health both of humans and of other species, increasing the toxicity of the food we eat and the air we breathe.

Another important ecological crisis is the extinction of species as a consequence of human activity. Species extinction has reached alarming and critical rates, rivalling the rates of the mass extinctions of the past caused by events such as asteroid impact and sudden climate change. The implications of this for the ecological health of the planet, and for human wellbeing, are only now beginning to be understood.

Rates of deforestation, desertification and topsoil erosion, directly or indirectly the result of human activity, are also reaching alarming levels in many places. It seems as if we are determined to destroy the very Earth systems that support not just our 'civilisation', but also our very survival. This has led many writers to refer to the current period as a new geological era, the 'anthropocene' (Hamilton, Bonneuil & Gemenne 2015), implying that human action has changed the Earth in profound and probably irreversible ways.

2 Resource crisis

It is over 40 years since the publication by the Club of Rome of *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al. 1972), a groundbreaking study that made the very obvious point that growth cannot continue indefinitely in a finite world. Using computer simulations,