

# Putting It All Together

HAVING REVIEWED THE PRIMARY TOOLS of community economic development (CED) for implementing a community development strategy, this text now turns to other critical aspects of the CED field. The first of these key components is social capital, the “people” component of initiatives to revitalize distressed communities. Social capital has become the centerpiece of many CED strategies; indeed, the “people” component of the CED equation needs just as much attention as the “place” component. To illustrate the successful building of social capital and its utility for CED, a case study of the groundbreaking Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative follows chapter 13. The last case study included in this text, this case also illustrates a number of the tools that this text has previously addressed and provides an excellent model of a highly functional CED organization.

Following this, the text addresses two specific issues confronting the CED field: racism and regionalism. Clearly, in CED, race matters profoundly. One cannot escape the reality that race and poverty are closely connected in the United States. This reality fundamentally affects and shapes the practice of CED and presents both opportunities and challenges to CED practitioners. The challenges of regionalism, a growing focus on regions as opposed to cities, as metropolises expand through urban sprawl and globalization, also clearly influence the work of community developers.

Those cities that have or are developing “smart growth” plans and engaging global partners in their economic development strategies are a step ahead of those cities and regions that are not taking such steps.

Finally, we “put it all together” by first elucidating how the practice of CED is being redefined as community building and then sharing predictions for the future of the CED field. This text closes by providing social work students and budding CED practitioners with a clear picture of the field today and what might be in store for practitioners in the years to come.