PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our journey to completing this book is filled with both unique and familiar paths. Both of us came of age in professional social work in the 1960s. Dorothy “Dee” Gamble had just returned from two years in the Peace Corps, doing urban community development in Bucaramanga, Colombia, and enrolled in the Columbia University School of Social Work to focus on community organization. Marie Weil had worked with tribal members on the Tule River Indian Reservation in California, with the civil rights movement in North Carolina, done needs assessment work in very low-income communities in Philadelphia, and enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work with a major in community organization. We both had work experience in settlement houses during our graduate education, Gamble at Hartley House in New York City, Weil at University Settlement and Lutheran Settlement in Philadelphia.

As we engaged with our social work graduate studies and the communities surrounding Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania, we both became involved in civil, social, and economic rights movements. The continuing struggle for dignity among African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos/as, Asian Americans, women, the urban and rural poor, and those struggling with developmental delays had a profound effect on both of us as we saw people ignored, insulted, beaten, and even murdered for pursuing their human rights in one of the most respected democracies in the world.

These were the years before curb-cuts made it possible for people in wheelchairs to move about in cities and towns. These were also the years when many African Americans could not vote or apply to many universities; when mixed-race marriages were illegal in sixteen of the United States; when President John F. Kennedy, his brother Robert Kennedy, and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. were all assassinated. Informing and stimulating our passion for social work was
the opportunity to participate in newly funded War on Poverty organizations such as Mobilization for Youth and citizens’ groups focused on creating educational opportunity for African Americans. We were privileged to work beside courageous people struggling for human rights for their children and themselves, and to connect with historical as well as current theories, concepts, and models for community organization in the literature.

Gamble completed her master’s degree at Columbia University and, after working with Head Start on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, took a position in North Carolina to do rural community development and later worked with the Welfare Rights Organization. During the mid-1970s she spent two years in Venezuela working with International Social Service, after which she returned to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to teach community organization at the School of Social Work and volunteer with the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), among other organizations.

Weil completed her master’s degree in social work and worked first at University Settlement and then as deputy director of the Delaware Office of Economic Opportunity and the Wilmington Delaware Housing Authority, before studying for her doctorate at Hunter College/CUNY School of Social Work in New York City. After completing her degree, she joined the faculty at the School of Social Work of the University of Southern California where she engaged in consultation, research, and collaborative work with multiple Asian American communities, the Vietnamese refugee community, Latino groups, and pregnant and parenting adolescents. She also worked to develop services for women who were victims of domestic violence or rape/sexual assault.

During these years both of us worked in multicultural settings, sometimes finding ourselves the only Caucasian and the only woman in various programs and new projects. We both gained strong respect for grassroots community leaders and paraprofessionals and received profound lessons from the tenacity and courage of these wise street-level social advocates. We both married, raised our sons, and learned to juggle the double joys and demands of family and professional obligations.

In 1988 we met for the first time as faculty members at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work, when Weil accepted the associate dean position. We connected on several levels. Both of us had grown up in humble surroundings, Weil in a working-class family in Raleigh, North Carolina, Gamble on a small farm in northeastern Colorado. We shared a passion for social justice and community work stimulated in part by past experiences. We also both understood that as women, taking a strong social justice approach in social work could be perceived as aggressive and would present some challenges. Our similar backgrounds naturally led to our discussion of current social problems and practice concepts. We both taught courses relating to com-
munity, planning, policy, and social administration in the School of Social Work and collaborated on many projects. Seven years later we proposed the first version of the eight models of community practice that is the focus of this book.

By the time we developed the conceptual framework of eight models for the Nineteenth Edition of the *Encyclopedia of Social Work 1995*, we each had more than a decade of practice experience and eighteen years of teaching experience. Weil’s basic framework for teaching community practice, community development, and social planning was drawn from the work of Murray Ross, from sociological theory, earlier studies in philosophy, civil rights work, and practice experience. Gamble’s model for teaching community organization, development, and practice came from Peace Corps training and experience as well as Jack Rothman’s original elaboration of three approaches to community practice. Ross’s and Rothman’s approaches were taught in schools of social work across North America and in many countries across the world.

As we engaged with colleagues across the country, especially through the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA), and as we traveled abroad with summer study groups and to international meetings, we began to see a need for a more effective comparative way to help students understand the work we had both found so rewarding. Grassroots community groups and individuals had greatly enriched our understanding of community practice by sharing with us the realities, barriers, and resiliencies of their own lives. In addition, our students became our stimulus to dig more deeply as they asked questions and raised dilemmas, leading us to learn together. From these experiences as co-learners with colleagues, grassroots leaders, and students, we were persuaded to develop a set of models that could provide a more specific framework for practice. Hopefully, we could articulate a view that was more congruent with modern challenges to community practice and that was more easily understood by those who wanted to learn what community practice was all about, both here and abroad.

Our revised and updated framework places the models in a local to global context, recognizing that globalization with all its positive and negative effects will color the way we are able to practice in the twenty-first century. This revised framework also recognizes the issues facing internally displaced persons, immigrants, and refugees and affirms that community practitioners must increasingly engage in social justice work. We hope our models provide a clear and engaging perspective for those who wish to make community practice their life work. We especially hope that community practice workers across the globe will find the commonalities that draw us together as we work to build structures, relationships, and opportunities, especially for vulnerable populations, and for all people, everywhere, to develop to their highest potential in more socially just communities.
Many people provided helpful and encouraging comments as we engaged with this task. We have already mentioned our colleagues in ACOSA, too numerous to name, and our faculty colleagues and deans who sometimes raised their eyebrows at our “in-your-face” advocacy efforts, but gave us many nods of appreciation. Our students (now most of them colleagues) and grassroots leader/partners have been exceedingly helpful in raising questions that made us both humble and persistent. From the past to the present, we think of people in the Bucaramanga, Colombia, barrio who did not have sufficient funds to feed their own families but were always available to help build a health center, guide young boys in a 4-H club, and sit on community councils. We think of Native American families and nations and African American communities where rights and opportunities have so often been denied by the majority society; yet members still rise and carry forward the vision for social justice—in building housing and economic opportunities, preventing hunger, supporting youth, and investing in the future. We think of urban residents in New York and Philadelphia who braved cold winters to help those less fortunate gain their civil right to an apartment with adequate heat, free of rats, and a working cook stove. We think of rural community leaders in North Carolina who built multicultural organizations to help identify and reach goals for all people who lived in low-wealth communities. Our experience with these communities, learning from the people we worked with, has shaped our practice and practice models. We honor and deeply appreciate their work.

Among those who have read and commented on our work and our ideas are Paul Castelloe and Craig White from the Center for Participatory Change, Sasha Vrtunski in the Asheville, North Carolina, Planning Department, John Hatch, founder of FINCA International, and Mat Despard from Durham CAN and the UNC–Chapel Hill social work faculty. For their encouragement and insight, we thank former students Karen Smith Rotabi, Emily MacGuire, Tezita Negussi, Claire Robbins, Denise Gammonly, Melissa Johnson, Josh Hinson, Andrea Bazan, Erik Simanis, Thomas Watson, and many others too numerous to name. Special thanks to Mary Rogge who would have been a fellow traveler with us on this journey but for unseen barriers. We thank all those who gave us encouragement and insight; the flaws in this book, of course, remain our own.

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