PART II

EIGHT MODELS OF COMMUNITY PRACTICE FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In part II we analyze each model in turn to present the scope of concern, the basic process, and the theoretical underpinnings and conceptual understandings that are important to the model. In addition, we identify the primary roles, skills and competencies, used by practitioners for each model. Our end goal is to help successful community practitioners develop the knowledge and skills needed to engage in this important work.

The eight models represent types of work that we have actually engaged in or closely observed in the United States and other parts of the world. They are intended to provide a comparative framework for critiquing community practice approaches and to determine which approach seems most appropriate for the presenting context and needs of the community group. In chapters 5 through 12, as we describe each of the models in turn, we incorporate examples from a wide range of practitioners in different parts of the world. The case material, sometimes found in smaller segments throughout the chapter, with longer case examples at the end of chapters, helps us connect with hundreds of community practice partners who are engaged in efforts to increase social justice and human rights all across the globe. Accompanying this text is a companion volume, Community Practice Skills Workbook, that presents additional case studies, experiential exercises, and issues for discussion. We hope the CPS Workbook will assist you in strengthening skills and deepening your thoughts about the people we serve.
The models as presented in the table and in our chapter discussions are discrete approaches to community practice and will help practitioners determine why a particular approach is more effective for certain outcomes than others. Paying close attention to desired outcomes, systems targeted for change, primary constituencies, and the scope of concern will help the practitioner determine which model, roles, and skills will be most successful in the community practice efforts they undertake. At the same time the practitioner needs to remain flexible and attentive to the nuances of changing contexts, power relationships, cultural and ethnic perspectives, historical overlays, ethical challenges, and opportunities for change. In the real world of practice, some mixing and sequencing of models may be the most effective choice. Because case examples are drawn from the real world, they often present lessons for more than one model.

Chapter 5, with its focus on neighborhood and community organizing, is a lengthy chapter because we provide a detailed discussion of how the worker can gain knowledge and practice skills necessary for community work. In the remaining chapters, we will not discuss skills development in as much detail, but will provide initial assessment and assignment suggestions, discuss groups of skills called for in each model, and direct the reader to additional exercises in the CPS Workbook. Most of the participatory group-assessment and self-assessment tools we will provide will be found in the CPS Workbook; however, some tools, tables, and figures that are designed to help clarify the model have been included in this volume.

Engaging with the exercises will help you to determine which approaches and skills best suit your own abilities, and to decide for which approaches you may wish to find partners and allies in order to bring a broader array of knowledge and skills to the tasks required to more effectively engage with communities.