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The Theory and Practice of Community Work: A Southern African Perspective

Second Edition

M.L. Weyers
The Theory and Practice of Community Work:
a Southern African Perspective

2nd Edition
2011

M.L. Weyers

With special contributions by:
L.S. Geyer & P. Rankin

KEURKOPIE
Potchefstroom (South Africa)
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*a Southern African Perspective*

2nd Edition

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C/o North-West University,
Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom, 2520
SOUTH AFRICA
E-Mail: mike.weyers@nwu.ac.za

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Cover (clockwise): Participants in a protest march against child abuse, a community pledge to prevent women and child abuse, the personal effectiveness training of a group of SAPS members and a silent roadside protest.

Language editing: Prof. Lesley Greyvenstein

Specially dedicated to:
Elmarie, Jetane, Dejon, Enrike & Djiné.

A special word of thanks to the numerous academics, students and practitioners from across South Africa and abroad who, over the years, have contributed to the development of the theoretical and practice content of this book.

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Contents

PREFACE (2ND EDITION) 1
List of special contributors ............. 2

PART 1
THE THEORY OF COMMUNITY WORK 3

CHAPTER 1 5
COMMUNITY WORK: AN OVERVIEW 5
1. Introduction 7
2. The origins of current community work thought 8

   2.1 The origins of community development thought 11
       2.1.1 Macro level 11
       2.1.2 Mezzo level 12
       2.1.3 Micro level 12
   2.2 The origins of social planning thought 13
       2.2.1 Macro level 13
       2.2.2 Mezzo/micro levels 14
   2.3 The origins of community education thought 15
       2.3.1 Macro level 15
       2.3.2 Mezzo level 15
       2.3.3 Micro level 15
   2.4 The origins of social marketing thought 16
       2.5 The origins of social action thought 17
       2.5.1 Macro level 17
       2.5.2 Mezzo level 17
3. The nature of community work 19

   3.1 Some core theories, perspectives and models 19
       3.1.1 The ecosystems perspective 20
       3.1.2 The practice models 21
       3.1.3 The strengths perspective 23
   3.2 Social work’s domain of practice 25
   3.3 Social work methods 27
   3.4 Defining community work 27

   3.5 The purpose, goals and objectives of community work 29
       3.5.1 The vision and mission of community work 30
       3.5.2 The purpose of community work 31
       3.5.3 The goals of community work 31
       3.5.4 The objectives of community work 34
4. The relationship between community work and the other social work methods 34
5. The nature of community development 36

   5.1 Community development as a natural process 37
   5.2 Community development as a form of intervention 39
   5.3 Defining the concept ‘community development’ 39
   5.4 The purpose, goals and objectives of community development 41
       5.4.1 Goals pertaining to the economic cycle 41
       5.4.2 Goals pertaining to the psychosocial cycle 42
       5.4.3 Goals pertaining to the biophysiological cycle 42
       5.4.4 Goals pertaining to the technological cycle 43
       5.4.5 Goals pertaining to the spiritual-cultural cycle 43
       5.4.6 Goals pertaining to the political cycle 44
       5.4.7 Goals pertaining to the environmental cycle 45
       5.4.8 Goals pertaining to the educational cycle 45
   5.5 Change agents in community development 46
6. The relationship between community work and community development 47

CHAPTER 2 53
THE COMPONENTS OF COMMUNITY WORK 53

   1. Introduction 53
   2. Component 1: The community

       2.1 The concept ‘community’
           2.1.1 The social dimension of a community
           2.1.2 The spatial dimension of a community
           2.1.3 The functional dimension of a community
           2.1.4 The cultural-symbolic dimension of a community
       2.2 The practical demarcation of communities
           2.2.1 The ‘contextual’ community
CHAPTER 3

THE COMMUNITY WORK PROCESS

1. Introduction

2. A general framework of the community work process

3. Step 1: Do a situation-analysis

3.1 Task 1: Analyse the context

3.2 Task 2: Analyse the expectations

3.3 Task 3: Compare findings with the practice models

4. Step 2: Identify and analyse the impediments

4.1 Task 1: Identify the impediments that should receive attention

4.2 Task 2: Define, analyse and prioritise the impediments

4.3 Task 3: Do a preliminary feasibility study

5. Step 3: Formulate a plan of action

5.1 Task 1: Verify and operationalise the practice model(s)

5.2 Task 2: Select the operational elements of action

5.3 Task 3: Formulate a programme and projects

5.3.1 Design principles for community work programmes: the programme logic model example

5.3.2 A typology of community work programmes and projects that could be undertaken

5.3.3 Types of communication opportunities or media that could be utilised

6. Step 4: Implement the plan of action

6.1 Task 1: Legitimise the plan

6.2 Task 2: Implement the plan

6.3 Task 3: Execute change inducing acts

6.3.1 Community work roles

6.3.2 Community work techniques

7. Step 5: Evaluate the process and results, and sustain change

7.1 Task 1: Evaluate the process

7.2 Task 2: Evaluate the results

7.3 Task 3: Sustain change
PART 2

THE PRACTICE OF COMMUNITY WORK

CHAPTER 4

THE NATURE AND APPLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MODEL

1. The nature of the community development model
2. When to use the community development model
3. How to use the community development model
   3.1 Step 1: Do a situation-analysis
   3.2 Step 2: Identify and analyse the impediments
      3.2.1 Make contact and negotiate entry
      3.2.2 Mobilise representation from within the community
      3.2.3 Undertake a needs and resource assessment
   3.3 Step 3: Formulate a plan of action
      3.3.1 Procedures in the planning of development projects
      3.3.2 Type of projects that could be undertaken
   3.4 Steps 4 & 5: Implement the plan of action and evaluate

CHAPTER 5

THE NATURE AND APPLICATION OF THE SOCIAL PLANNING MODEL

1. The nature of the social planning model
2. When to use the social planning model
3. How to use the social planning model
   3.1 Step 1: Do a situation-analysis
   3.2 Step 2: Identify and analyse the impediments
   3.3 Step 3: Formulate a plan of action
      3.3.1 Mobilise an action committee.
      3.3.2 Plan the programme.
      3.3.3 The characteristics of projects and project planning
      3.3.4 Plan the projects
   3.4 Steps 4 and 5: Implement the plan of action and evaluate

CHAPTER 6

THE NATURE AND APPLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION MODEL

1. The nature of the community education model
2. When to use the community education model
3. How to use the community education model
   3.1 Step 1: Do a situation-analysis
   3.2 Step 2: Identify and analyse the impediments
   3.3 Step 3: Formulate a plan of action
      3.3.1 Decide on objectives and learning material
      3.3.2 Decide on the level of intervention
      3.3.3 Decide on the programme/project's basic format
      3.3.4 Decide on educational opportunities and techniques
      3.3.5 Mobilise an action system
      3.3.6 Formulate programmes and projects
   3.4 Steps 4 and 5: Implement the plan of action and evaluate

CHAPTER 7

THE NATURE AND APPLICATION OF THE SOCIAL MARKETING MODEL

1. The nature of the social marketing model
2. When to use the social marketing model
3. How to use the social marketing model
   3.1 Step 1: Do a situation-analysis
   3.2 Step 2: Identify and analyse the impediments
      3.2.1 Task 1: Define the impediments and broad target groups
      3.2.2 Task 2: Do a market segmentation
      3.2.3 Task 3: Evaluate the market segments/target groups
      3.2.4 Task 4: Select the target markets/groups
   3.3 Step 3: Formulate a marketing plan
      3.3.1 Task 1: Formulate the marketing goals
3.3.2 Task 2: Choose a marketing strategy
3.3.3 Task 3: Choose the marketing channel and media
3.4 Step 4: Implement the marketing plan
3.4.1 Task 1: Legitimise the marketing plan
3.4.2 Tasks 2 and 3: Implement the plan and utilise media
3.5 Step 5: Evaluate the process and results
3.5.1 Task 1: Monitor the marketing campaign
3.5.2 Task 2: Evaluate the results of the marketing campaign
3.5.3 Task 3: Do a marketing audit

CHAPTER 8.

THE NATURE AND APPLICATION OF THE SOCIAL ACTION MODEL

1. The nature of the social action model
2. When to use the social action model
3. How to use the social action model

3.1 Step 1: Do a situation-analysis
3.2 Step 2: Identify the issue.
3.2.1 Task 1: Be sensitive to issues
3.2.2 Task 2: Define the issue
3.2.3 Task 3: Analyse the issue's context
3.3 Step 3: Mobilise a constituency/power base
3.3.1 Task 1: Make contact with potential role-players
3.3.2 Task 2: Establish a steering committee or working group
3.3.3 Task 3: Decide on the form of the action system
3.3.4 Task 4: Organise the action system

3.4 Step 4: Plan and go over to action
3.4.1 Task 1: Select the strategy
3.4.2 Task 2: Select the appropriate tactics and techniques
3.4.3 Task 3: Schedule the events
3.4.4 Task 4: Go over to action

3.5 Step 5: Evaluate

Annexure 1: A quick checklist for community impediments
Annexure 2: Some South African and international special calendar days
Annexure 3: Possible themes for knowledge, attitudes and skills (KAS)-focused empowerment

1. The physical domain
2. The intellectual domain
3. The emotions domain
4. The social domain
5. The occupational domain
6. The environmental domain
7. The financial and material domain
8. The spiritual and cultural domain

Glossary

Index

References
This book was originally born out of the need of South African students and practitioners for a publication that would provide both the theory of community work and community development and guidelines for its application in practice. It went through various development stages. First as a reader, later as a guide and then, in 2001, as a fully-fledged handbook.

In the intervening years and because of its numerous reprints and wide distribution, it became clear that ‘Theory and Practice’ was fulfilling a need amongst students, academics and practitioners for a text that would not only answer the ‘what?’ question re community work and development, but also how it could be applied in practice. Feedback received from various sources has indicated that, although the basic framework of the book was sound, some of its content had become outdated, that elements of the original text needed simplification and that some new content should be included in order to make it even more relevant and useful to a broader Southern African readership. This feedback was used in the substantive rewriting of the text and the development of a more comprehensive second edition of the book. The input of Stephan Geyer and Pedro Rankin was also elicited to help accomplish this task.

The approach that will be followed in this book is still twofold in nature. The first is to provide an overview of the nature and context of community work and community development (see Part 1). This will mainly cover the theory underlying practice and will focus on the nature of community work, the three core components found in practice and the basic process that could be followed in intervention. The core point of departure is that intervention within the Southern African context usually takes on a community development, social planning, community education, social marketing and/or social action form. These approaches are grouped into five practice models.

The second part of the text will consist of a more detailed look at the nature of each of the practice models, when it would be appropriate to use them and how they could be applied. This will include guidelines, ideas and examples, as well as some of the most important tools that could be utilised.

This book was especially written with social workers in mind. This does not imply that other practitioners from within the broad field of community development would not also be able to use it effectively. On the contrary, over the years it has been found that representatives from fields as diverse as development studies, community nursing, education, psychology, sociology, family ecology and marketing have gained valuable insights and skills from its contents.

It is hoped that this book will pave the way for some of you in your first journey into uncharted territory. For others I hope that it will expand your practice-related knowledge and skills in becoming more effective in your efforts to make South and Southern Africa a better place to live in. For all of you I hope that it will inspire you to be that light in the lives of others that no amount of darkness could ever extinguish.

Mike Weyers
Potchefstroom
1st July 2010
LIST OF SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. L.S. (Stephan) Geyer
Stephan Geyer is a lecturer in Social Work in the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. His contribution to the formulation of the roles of community workers (see Chapter 3) and the critique of the manuscript is gratefully acknowledged.

Prof. P. (Pedro) Rankin
Pedro Rankin is a lecturer in Social Work in the School for Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences at the North-West University: Potchefstroom Campus. His contribution to the development of the Programme Logic Model (PLM) (see Chapter 3) and review of the manuscript is appreciated.

☐ For convenience' sake, only the concept "community work" will be used where possible. This concept would mostly also include the meanings that are attached to the concept "community development".

☐ In the text, use will only be made of the male mode of address. This is done to simplify the presentation and does not imply any form of discrimination.

☐ Although the concepts ‘practitioner’ and ‘social worker’ will be used throughout, it will per implication also refer to all professionals who are involved with community work and community development practice, as well as to students.
Part 1: The theory of community work

THE THEORY OF COMMUNITY WORK
Part 1: The theory of community work

Introduction to Part 1

The first part of this book will be devoted to an analysis of the nature and context of community work and community development. Its main purpose is to provide the reader with an answer to the questions: "What is community work?" and "What is the general process that I should follow when applying community work in practice?"

Having worked through Chapter 1, you will understand where present-day community work thought and practice comes from, the theories and perspectives on which it is based, how it links to social work as a profession and what the similarities and differences between community work and community development entail. This overview will form the foundation for the rest of the book.

Chapter 2 will focus on the three core components involved in the 'community work event'. They are the community, the practitioner and the (organisational, socio-economic and political) context within which the interaction between these two takes place. Its main practical purpose is to provide the practitioner with appropriate tools to demarcate target communities effectively, to evaluate his or her own ability to bring about the required change in that community and to develop interventions that are in line with the expectations imbedded in the context within which he or she operates.

The third chapter will provide an overview of the generic form that intervention could take. It is based on the premise that intervention usually follows the five-step scientific process of the analysis of a given situation, the identification and analysis of the impediments (i.e. problems, needs and underutilised potential) that exists within that situation, the formulation of a plan of action to address the identified impediments, the implementation of the plan, and the evaluation and sustainment of the change that it produces. It is not the purpose of Chapter 3 to provide a blueprint for action, but rather to set out the generic requirements that all interventions should meet and to highlight the core tasks that practitioners should perform. This would provide the basis for Part 2’s focus on the development of practice model based interventions that would meet the specific needs found in specific types of practice settings.
Chapter 1

Community work: an overview

“I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits” Martin Luther King

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

DEFINE
- the concepts ‘community work’ and ‘community development’.

DESCRIBE
- the origins of present day community work thought.

EXPLAIN
- some of the core constructs on which community work and community development are based.

DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN
- the purpose, goals and objectives of community work and community development.

COMPARE
- the fields of practice of community work and community development.
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

DEFINITIONS OF CORE CONCEPTS/CONSTRUCTS

Adaptive fit [also described as goodness of fit]: The matching between people's needs, capacities and goals and the capabilities of their social and physical environment.

Community development: The method, process, programme and strategy by means of which change agents, with or without the help of external systems: (a) speed up the tempo at which a community develops; (b) provide direction to the development process in order to realise objectives purposefully within the economic, psychosocial, bio-physiological, technological, spiritual-cultural, political, environmental, educational and other spheres of life; (c) makes the goal attainment process as cost-effective, streamlined and sustainable as possible so that both human and environmental resources are used optimally; and (d) contribute to human growth and the unlocking of human potential by empowering community members to take responsibility for their own, as well as the whole system's development.

Community work: The method of social work that consists of the various processes and helping acts of the social worker that are targeted at the community system, as well as its sub-systems and certain external systems, with the purpose of bringing about required social change with the help of especially community development, social planning, community education, social marketing and social action as practice models.

Community-based school of thought: A school of thought that views community work as a direct service strategy implemented in the context of the local community. Its scope of practice is narrowed down to working in and directly with community members.

Community-centred school of thought: A school of thought that views community work as a service strategy implemented in and with the community, and on behalf of and to the benefit of communities and their members.

Conceptual framework: A set of concepts, beliefs, values, propositions, assumptions, hypotheses that forms the basis of practice.

Construct: A concept employed in summarising multitudes of facts and in formulating explanatory theories.

Domain of practice: The field of knowledge and service delivery to which a profession lays claim.

Goal: A statement of the desired outcomes of a particular intervention process

Goal, operational: Intended change to a practitioner’s employer organisation in order to make it a more effective service delivery system.

Goal, process: Intended change in people, especially in their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (i.e. KAB).

Goal, task: Intended change in the circumstances or environment of a community.

Impediment: Any type of (unresolved) social problem, (unfulfilled) social need or underutilised potential that hampers or obstructs effective social functioning.

Need: The discrepancy or ‘gap’ that exists between “what is” or the present state of affairs and “what should be” or the desired state.

Practice model: A set of concepts and principles that guide intervention.

Practice variable (as used in this text): A set of characteristics that can be used as an organising principle to structure and compare different practice models.

Resilience: The process, capacity and outcome of successful adaptation to challenges and adversity, sustained competence under threatening circumstances and the ability to recover from trauma.

Social [role] functioning: Fulfilling one's roles in society in general, to those in the immediate environment and to oneself. These functions include meeting one's own basic needs and those of one's dependants and making positive contributions to society.

Social reform: Changing the bio-psycho-socio-cultural-economic-political-physical environment in such a way that it would provide the opportunities, resources and services that all people require to develop their full potential, enrich their lives, and prevent dysfunction.

Social work method: The processes and skills that are used to bring about the necessary changes in the person-in-environment domain.

Strengths: Personal abilities, resourcefulness and creativity, as well as resources in interpersonal relationships, culture, organisational networks and community connections.
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

1. INTRODUCTION

In a fast globalising world there is a real danger that countries, regions and even continents would lose the ‘human development race’. Of the 179 countries covered by the 2006 Human Development Index, only three African countries (Libya, Seychelles and Mauritius) were placed at the “high human development” level, while a disproportionate number fell in the lowest category. It included six of the 14 member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), viz. Lesotho (155th), Angola (157th), Malawi (162nd), Mozambique (175th), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (177th) and Zimbabwe. Some of the other rankings were South Africa (125th), Botswana (126th), Namibia (129th), Swaziland (141st) and Tanzania (152nd). Of these, Botswana, Namibia and especially South Africa were worse off in 2006 than in 2000.

The nature of and trends in human development levels in South and Southern Africa should be a cause of great concern. It is no longer a question of being left behind as the rest of the world develops; the very survival of the region as a functional entity could be at stake.

Although there is consensus on the need for ‘development’ in the region, its very nature and how it could be achieved is in dispute. On a macro level, some believe that a newly modernised and globally competitive local economy is all that will be required. The wealth generated by ‘big business’ would benefit all those directly involved in the economy and also ‘trickle-down’ to the rest. The latter includes the ‘redistribution’ of ‘tax dollars’ through a social security net to alleviate the plight of the ‘extremely poor’. This perception informed much of the South African government’s 1996 Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy.

On the other end of the continuum, there are those who believe more strongly in a ‘trickle-up’ process. They are confident that development can best be achieved by a process whereby ‘local people’ - with or without the help of ‘experts’ - are empowered to utilise their full potential and in this way contribute to national development.

Fact of the matter is that development is all of the above and more. The cause of underdevelopment is not simply a matter of insufficient economic growth, inadequate political participation and restrictive social structures, nor can it be attributed to failure of ‘the people’ to utilise their potential and opportunities effectively. It should rather be seen as a state in which the potential of all sectors of society is not fully unlocked.

In this book the main focus will be on one sector’s contribution to the unlocking of a society’s potential. This sector is social work. To denote its contribution, the concept ‘community work’ will be used. Because of the interrelatedness of sectors, the book’s overview of issues and processes could also empower other role-players in the broad development field to do their work more effectively. Hopefully it would boost the concerted effort that is required from all to ensure that the peoples of South and Southern Africa would in future enjoy a better quality of life and a higher standard of living.
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

In this first chapter an attempt will be made to sort out the present confusions regarding the nature of and relationship between community work and community development. This will especially be done with the help of an overview of the origins of these two forms of community intervention, as well as an exploration of their contexts and nature.

2. THE ORIGINS OF CURRENT COMMUNITY WORK THOUGHT

Since its inception in the 1920’s, South African social work has used various concepts to describe its community centred services. These include community organisation, social action, social planning and welfare planning. By the late 1970’s, most academics and practitioners opted for the then British term ‘community work’ as a descriptor for this method. Although other concepts such as community social work and neighbourhood work had since emerged, the use of community work stayed somewhat entrenched. That was until fairly recently when some proponents started to substitute it with ‘community development’ and even ‘social development’. This has created new uncertainties.

In differentiating between community work and community development, it should firstly be noted that the roots of community development fall outside that of social work (although social work did influence its conceptualisation). Originally, community development primarily entailed some or other form of mass education. Only in later years did it develop a stronger economic and broader social flavour. This culminated in the now classic, albeit vague definition from the United Nations which states that:

“Community development is the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress”.

A second difference between community work and community development lies in their very nature. Development, in essence, focuses on all spheres of community life whereas social work’s ‘core business’ is limited to social functioning. Social work could, therefore, only be seen as a sectoral (albeit important) contributor to social development in general and community development in particular. Other contributors including a wide variety of health professionals, agricultural extension officers, economists, educators, communication scientists, political scientists, politicians, administrators, youth workers, ‘ordinary’ community leaders and members, and the emerging occupational group known as ‘community development workers’. Because of this, the concept ‘community work’ will be used in this text to describe social work’s community change centred activities, whereas ‘community development’ would refer to broad-based, multi-sectoral development.

There is currently no consensus amongst local social workers as far as the delineation of the ‘borders’ of their involvement with communities is concerned. In this regard there seems to be a ‘community-based’ and a ‘community-centred’ school of thought.
In the community-based school, social work’s involvement is seen as "a direct service strategy implemented in the context of the local community". In it, the scope of practice is narrowed down to working in and with the community in order to benefit the participating community members directly and, in a lesser and more indirect way, other non-participating residents. This type of service represents the processes that have traditionally been associated with community organisation and development practice. It, for example, encompasses:

- grassroots level organising,
- empowerment-centred interventions,
- a citizen participation and a local (indigenous) leadership emphasis and
- a focus on local self-help, self-sufficiency and teamwork.

Although the community-based school represents a very important part of social work services, it has one significant deficiency. It views the broader societal contexts within which people live as somewhat inconsequential and not a direct target for change. This view flies in the face of the ecosystems perspective.

The community-centred school of thought includes direct work in and with the community, but goes a step further. It also encompasses the work that social workers do on behalf of and to the benefit of communities and their members. It aims to change society in such a way that it would be more conducive to the effective social functioning of its members and also ensure that the resources or services that communities require are made available by ‘outsiders’. These types of service represent the processes that have traditionally been associated with social planning, social reform, social education and the influencing of social and other forms of policies and practices.

In this book, the community-centred school will be used as a point of departure. It implies that there is no limit to the size of the units that could receive the social worker’s attention. They could range from an individual (usually influential) member of a community, through various types of small to large community groups up to communities or a society as a whole. If circumstances require, even international bodies (e.g. the United Nations, World Bank, International Monitory Fund and the International Federation of Social Workers) and other governments could be targeted. A second implication of this school is that different types of interventions, including community development, could be utilised. The origins of these interventions will be looked at next.

Instead of providing the usual linear description of the historical development of community work, emphasis will rather be placed on the approaches that played a role in the conceptualisation of five of its practice models (see Table 1.1). These models are community development, social planning, community education, social marketing and social action (see Ch. 2:3.1).

Although it does not fall within the scope of this publication to conduct a detailed analysis of all of the theories and ideologies on which the approaches are based, a brief description of a few would help to contextualize the nature of the practice models. It could also help to explain some of the ideas that are prevalent in current Southern African social work and community developmental thought and can be used by practitioners to clarify their own position on a number of issues.
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

Table 1.1: Approaches that played a role in the conceptualisation of community work’s practice models

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* These concepts refer to methodologies that, to a lesser or greater degree, overlap with those of the practice models.
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

It should be noted that the approaches contained in Table 1.1 differ markedly in terms of their scope. Some represent a broad-angled view of society or the required change, while others focus more narrowly on the groups and individuals involved. In order to differentiate between them, use will be made of three descriptors, viz. macro, mezzo and micro:

- the macro level will denote a world view or the society wide changes that are required
- the mezzo level will spotlight community wide issues
- the micro level will deal more directly with individuals, families and small or special interest groups.

2.1 The Origins of Community Development Thought

Planned development, with its two constituent parts of economic and social development, has over time been driven by a diversity of ideologies and theories and has taken on a variety of forms. Within this multi-layered context, only some of the major themes running through present day development thought will be discussed.

2.1.1 Macro level

To a large extent, the modernisation or growth-centred approach to development, which flourished in the 1960's and 1970's as part of the United Nations' Community Development Decade, represented the capitalist model of development. Its main thrust “...was the belief that underdeveloped countries could move from a pre-industrial state, through a number of stages, to become a mature capitalist state. This was to be achieved through elite investment in urban industry, the benefits of which would... 'trickle down' to the traditional, backward sectors". Thus, the basic idea was that modernisation and economic growth was the beginning and ending of development and that social development would be one of its positive spin-offs.

Although the modernisation approach had some impressive results in pure economic terms, it was “...destructive of resources and social institutions in the societies they were meant to develop”. This gave rise to a state described by Midgley as “distorted development”, that is “...the way economic development without concomitant social development creates a severe imbalance between economic and social prosperity”.

The negative side-effects of purely economic development gave rise to a renewed focus on social or human development in especially the early 1990's. Social development was seen as a “...comprehensive macro perspective that focuses on communities and societies, ...promotes a dynamic change-oriented approach... and above all seeks to harmonise social interventions with economic development efforts”. This boils down to the view that social development is on the one hand an essential add-on to economic development and on the other a pre-requisite for ‘total development’. This, to a large extent, is the driving force behind the developmental social welfare paradigm espoused in South Africa today.

Social development, however, does not at this stage represent an integrated body of knowledge but rather an amalgamation of widely divergent approaches.

With regard to who should take primary responsibility for social development, two macro views exist. In the statist social development approach, it is viewed as the state's primary responsibility. The core idea is that the most desirable results would be achieved within the shortest possible time if a ‘top-down’ approach is followed. The popular participation approach, to a large degree, represents the opposite ‘bottom-up’ stance. Proponents believe that governments cannot promote social
development efficiently and justly and that "...social development goals can best be attained if ordinary people are mobilised to establish projects that serve their local communities and if they are actively involved in these projects". The core idea is that ‘enough involvement by enough local people in their own development’ would eventually ‘trickle-up’ to create a socially just and developed society.

2.1.2 Mezzo level

On the more mezzo level, various approaches are espoused.

- The communitarian approach focuses on man’s ability for self-fulfilment. It believes that "...communities have an inherent capacity to organise themselves to ensure that their basic needs are met, their problems are solved and opportunities for advancement are created".

- In the people-centred approach it is thought that, for development, residents "...must control their own resources, have access to relevant information, and have the means to hold the officials of government accountable" in order to "...foster a robust civil society to counter the excesses of government".

- The human resources approach focuses on the improvement of a population’s ‘quality.’ Proponents are of the opinion that "...growth results from improved labour productivity, personal skills, motivation to achieve, and ability to exploit opportunities, leading to locally spawned, spontaneous economic activities".

- Supporters of the collectivism approach (which is based on socialist ideology) espouses the idea that the best society is one in which collectives or co-operatives, made up of associations of people, own resources and share authority to make decisions.

- In the asset-based community development (ABCD) approach (which is strongly influenced by the strengths perspective) it is believed that local individual and collective assets should be mobilised as the primary building blocks in a community-driven development effort. It uses a participatory approach and the principles of empowerment and ownership of the development process to exploit the talents and skills of local residents, the power of local associations and the supportive functions of local institutions to enhance community economic development and strengthen civil society.

2.1.3 Micro level

Some more micro level approaches focus directly on community problems.

- The community problem-solving approach is based on the premise that various (even apparently competing) interests within a community could join forces "...to creatively resolve a particular problem that affects them all. Crime, transportation, education, or environmental concerns could be the focus of such an effort". This type of intervention, also sometimes referred to as ‘community organising’, entails a “...process by which people living in proximity to each other are brought together by an organisation to act in their common self-interest.”

- In the neighbourhood empowerment approach (which is basically a variation of the problem-solving approach) it is believed that, after the family, the neighbourhood is the first building block of the community. In the African context, the extended family, clan or village often has the same function. Helping people in a neighbourhood, village or clan band together to develop their own resources and lay claim to their rights is seen as the primary strategy for improving the ‘quality’ of a community.
In the application of the **community support systems approach**, community members that face the same problems are mobilised to offer each other "practical assistance and psychological support".\(^{38}\)

Within the context of the various overlapping approaches to development, the concept 'community development' has come to mean different things to different people. In essence, however, community development boils down to a planned partnership between external organisations (e.g. government, NGO’s and industry) and local people aimed at enabling the latter to address the material (e.g. economic and infrastructure) and the non-material (e.g. social and political) challenges that they face.\(^{39}\) It is predicated on the principle that people should, in the final analysis, take responsibility for their own development.

### 2.2 The origins of social planning thought

Social planning can be viewed as both a macro perspective and a community based form of intervention.

#### 2.2.1 Macro level

As a **macro perspective**, social planning refers to an interactional top-down process - usually involving a formal political or legal body - that is aimed at the preparation and implementation of programmes that would change the undesirable conditions that prevail in a society. The nature of these ‘undesirable conditions’ could be viewed from three perspectives, viz. the residual, institutional and developmental.

Both the residual and institutional perspectives and their accompanying approaches have a **social pathology and needs focus**. In the **residual approach**, it is assumed that social problems are caused by individual pathology, that recipients should be encouraged to change and to become more ‘adequate’, that they should prove that they need assistance and are worthy of it.\(^{40}\) Aid should stop once they can take responsibility for meeting their own needs.\(^{41}\) It views the family and the market economy as the proper sources for meeting people’s needs and social welfare as "...a safety net of supplementary services to catch those individuals who fall through the cracks".\(^{42}\)

In the case of **institutionalism**, however, the point of departure is that there is ‘nothing wrong’ with the consumer system. Services are viewed as the right of the individual, problems as a consequence of either an individual’s inability to use available services or deficiencies in the service itself, or the state as the system that should accept primary responsibility for the welfare of its citizens.\(^{43}\)

The **developmental approach** represents a somewhat different view. Whereas the other approaches basically see the expenditure of time, money and effort on social services as an unavoidable (residual) or morally justifiable (institutional) ‘loss item’ in a country’s ‘balance sheet’, this approach is predicated on the idea that appropriately designed and implemented programmes would actually enhance its economic development.\(^{44}\) The exact nature of these programmes or interventions has, however, been the subject of heated debate.\(^{45}\) Some proponents have made a strong case that expenditure on social services such as education, nutrition and health care would turn a profit by producing a more skilled and healthy workforce that, in turn, would generate a stronger economy.\(^{46}\) The form that interventions should take in order to help marginalised and “...needy people engage in productive employment and self-employment”\(^{47}\) is not always that obvious or easy to demarcate.\(^{48}\) Some guidelines in this regard are, however, provided throughout this book.
It could rightfully be argued that the developmental approach with its attempt to link social services to economic development and its focus on grassroots community involvement should rather be seen as one of the approaches on which the community development model is based. Within the South African context, however, this approach has formally become the basis of government policy. The consequence is that it is now the predetermined standard that services must meet and, therefore, the basis of all its social planning activities. (Also see Chapter 2: 4).

Social planning can also refer to *mezzo level*, community-based interventions. In this context, Woodley-Baker defines it as “...an organised process for investigating and responding to the needs and aspirations of people and communities.” It is especially this level that the social planning practice model targets.

### 2.2.2 Mezzo/micro levels

There are three *mezzo* and *micro level* social or community planning approaches of importance here. They are the personal social service, individualist empowerment and basic needs approaches.

The **personal social service approach** entails the planned provision of a range of social services that people require to either restore or enhance their capacity for social functioning. It is based on the assumption that some people would require temporary remedial services to help them cope with problems of daily living (*e.g. family dysfunction and dependency*), while others would be unable to function independently and require assistance over the longer term (*e.g. in institutions for children, the elderly and the disabled*). This approach usually manifests in the planning and development of a range of (often specialised) remedial and preventive services and welfare infrastructure (*e.g. children’s homes and service centres for the elderly*) that local communities require.

Set against the personal social services’ remedial focus, the **individualist empowerment approach** believes that community members could be provided with the opportunities to acquire the personal, interpersonal and socio-political skills or power that would enable them to improve the quality of their own lives. These opportunities are created through a social planning process that helps communities identify their strengths and weaknesses and determine the best ways to influence their circumstances.” Although this approach requires grassroots community involvement, the creation of the opportunities themselves still rests in the hands of ‘professionals’.

In the **basic needs approach** it is believed that it is necessary for the government and private sector to mobilise the resources and create the measures that would protect citizens against economic hardship. This usually takes the form of some type of social security or financial protection system. The South Africa social security system includes a range of state pensions and grants aimed at the alleviation of (abject) poverty, while some NGO’s also have other measures (*e.g. food parcels and temporary financial assistance*) in place.

In all the social planning approaches, the basic perception of communities is the same. It is that they require the services of ‘experts’ to help them prevent, treat or resolve social problems and to create the opportunities and mechanisms that would enable them to satisfy their needs. This, invariably, makes social planning a somewhat top-down approach.
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

2.3 THE ORIGINS OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION THOUGHT

The origins of current community education thought can be traced back to the mass adult education and literacy initiatives in colonial Africa of the 1930s and 1940s. It was later usurped by community development and only fairly recently re-emergence as a distinct form of intervention. On a macro level it manifests in two primary approaches, viz. civil education and social education.

2.3.1 Macro level

In the civil education approach, it is believed that people should be enabled to fulfil their role as ‘responsible citizens’. This requires, amongst others, knowledge of:

- how a county’s political and legal system ‘works’,
- their rights as individuals (e.g. the right to vote and to education),
- their responsibilities as citizens (e.g. to pay taxes and to prevent environmental degradation),
- their duty towards the household and family (e.g. the payment of maintenance) and
- their required relationship with the state (e.g. to register births and apply for identity documents).

Some of these issues are formally covered in school curricula, whilst others are often the subject of mass education initiatives by governments and other role-players.

Social education aims to empower citizens with the knowledge, attitudes and skills that they require to function effectively as individuals and as collectives. The latter includes the ability and the position (e.g. as members of councils or committees) to take enlightened decisions that would change community life and conditions. These characteristics make social education an important instrument in community empowerment.

2.3.2 Mezzo level

On a mezzo level, the community education approach is seen by Homan as “...a basic means for assisting the community by bringing matters to the community's attention and preparing it for knowledgeable action”. The approach is based on the assumption that - in order to deal with an impediment - members must

- be aware of the existence of the impediment,
- understand its nature, causes and consequences,
- have a clear picture of the community and broader context within which it exists,
- be informed of available resources (including services and fellow community members) and
- be knowledgeable about the procedures that could be followed to mobilise or utilise these resources.

The HIV and Aids education programmes that are so widespread in Southern Africa are but one example of community education in action.

2.3.3 Micro level

Community education could also be done on a micro level. It often takes the form of life skills and learning skills training.

The life skills or personal effectiveness training helps community members to master:

- relationships skills (e.g. leadership, effective communication, conflict management, self-assertiveness and dealing with family relationships and parenthood),
problem-solving skills (e.g. managing personal and family dysfunction and coping with unemployment),
work and play skills (e.g. entrepreneurship, money management and using recreational options) and/or
skills for the development of the self and others (e.g. development of a positive self-image, decision making and philanthropy).71

The learning skills approach is basically aimed at filling the void left by an inadequate or underutilised formal education system. It includes attempts to improve adult community members' functional literacy and numeracy, and in some cases research capabilities and computer literacy.72

All the social education approaches have one premise in common; viz. that the effectiveness of people's functioning will be determined by their individual and collective knowledge, attitudes and skills/behaviour (KAS). Interventions in terms of the approaches, therefore, aim to eliminate some or other form of deficiency that exists in this regard. It should be noted that not all of these 'deficiencies' fall within the domain of social work. Social workers could, however, create opportunities for other role-players to address these in practice.

2.4 THE ORIGINS OF SOCIAL MARKETING THOUGHT

Although social marketing is a relatively recent addition to social work theory,73 some of its constituent parts have been seen as functions of social work administration from the very beginning.74 Since the 1980s and because of the works of Kotler,75 Rothman76 and Weyers,77 to name but a few, it has become apparent that it could also be transformed and utilised to effect community change.78 This gave rise to the development of social marketing as a practice model.

Social marketing can be defined as the design, implementation, and control of programmes seeking to increase the acceptance of a social idea, a cause, a practice, a service, a profession or an organisation by a target group.79 It can be distinguished from other forms of marketing in terms of its non-profit nature, its focus on changing social attitudes and concomitant behaviour, and its use as an instrument to further broad societal goals.80

Resent developments have indicated that social marketing could, within a community work context, be subdivided into three main approaches. They are so-called idea marketing, service marketing and public relations.81

In idea marketing, it is believed that a social cause and socially desirable behaviour patterns could and should be marketed in the same basic way as any other 'product'. This is exemplified in campaigns to promote condom use, to protect women and children against abuse (e.g. through the 16 Days of Activism against Abuse) and to call upon community participation in various activities. It could, therefore, also be used to create the social climate in which more direct, face-to-face community education programmes can be launched.

The aim of service marketing is to convince the general public, potential clients/consumers, referral sources, other organisations, different professions, potential employees, donors, volunteers and the government to utilise or support a specific service, event or programme.82

McElreath83 defines public relations as a "...function that uses communication to facilitate relationships and understanding between an organisation and its many publics".84 Its aim is to influence public opinion by 'selling' a positive image of the organisation, its services, its ideas or its representatives to those individuals and organisations on whose support it relies.
All the approaches that constitute social marketing are based on the central idea that the effectiveness of a society’s social functioning is determined by its members’ social attitudes and concomitant behaviour. The latter also includes the extent to which they support or utilise social services.

2.5 THE ORIGINS OF SOCIAL ACTION THOUGHT

In contrast to the other macro perceptions, social action has a power instead of a problem focus, is conflictual instead of non-conflictual in nature and is mainly aimed at structural change. These are some of the reasons why Barker defines it as a “...coordinated effort to achieve institutional change to meet a need, solve a social problem, correct an injustice, or enhance the quality of human life”, Mitchell sees it as an ”...organized effort directed towards a change in social policy or the creation, modification or elimination of a social institution” and Clegg describes its main purpose as promoting social reform.

In social action the view is that ‘the people’ should have their rightful share in and access to power and resources, should function in a social dispensation where their rights are protected and promoted, and should be seen as victims instead of dysfunctional. There are various approaches that could be followed to achieve this desired result. Four are of special importance here. They are the more macro level pluralism and populism and the mezzo level conscientization (popular education) and community action approaches.

2.5.1 Macro level

The pluralist approach is non-radical in nature and espouses the idea that democratic governments should allow non-governmental bodies to influence public or social policy. In South Africa this is entrenched in official government policy. It allows participation in the legislative process by providing individuals and groups with the opportunity to comment on white papers and draft legislation and even to take legislative issues to the Constitutional Court. In terms of the pluralist approach, social change should be brought about through the use of pressure group activities, advocacy and lobbying that should result in the reallocation of resources or decision making power in favour of the disadvantaged.

The populist approach champions “...the cause of ordinary people against the establishment, seeks to serve their interests and represents the popular will”. In its various forms, populism believes in a working class struggle, is anti-establishment, advocate the people’s interest to secure political power, believes in working class leadership, focuses on social and other programmes to consolidate popular support, attacks ‘big business’ and government who they claim are out of touch with people’s needs and advocates a more equitable distribution of wealth and power. Some more recent South African examples of this approach can be found in the activities of the Landless People’s Movement (LPM), the Social Movements Indaba (SMI) and the Anti-Evictions Campaign.

2.5.2 Mezzo level

Although the so-called popular education, consciousness-raising or conscientization approach as espoused by Paulo Freire could be placed in the social education category, its focus on political action and structural change gives it a stronger social action character. In this approach, it is believed that participation in grassroots education,
coupled with political sensitisation, “…transforms people’s consciousness and leads to a process of self-actualization which enables oppressed people to take control of their lives, simultaneously challenging the dominating classes and their political regime”. In this approach, grassroots social change is brought about by non-formal and sometimes radical adult education that:

- sees ignorance as the main cause of oppression and exploitation,
- is characterised by
  - learner participation in training and political action,
  - the use of problem-posing as a means to identify and creatively solve problems and
  - a focus on relevancy, i.e. on dealing with issues that the local people find important or problematic,
- is mainly aimed at making people on grassroots level self-aware political subjects and
- is built on the principal of ‘conscientization’ (viz. a viz. the process in which people “…achieve a deepening awareness both of the social-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality”).

The fourth dominant approach - described as either community action (the concept preferred here), radicalised community participation, radical populism or structured conflict - has many of the same traits as the other social action approaches. The difference is, however, that it represents a more radical view of the required societal change by seeking some form of “…restructuring of the economic, political and social systems”.

All the social action approaches are based on the central idea that social problems are often the result of the abuses that stem from the inequitable distribution of power and authority within a social system, be it: an organisation, a community, a country or globally. From the point of view of social work, practitioners should, therefore, “…play a more direct role in confronting injustice and advocating the interests of oppressed and vulnerable groups.”

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**Points to Ponder 1.1**

**What are your views?**

It is believed that all practitioners have a personal practice model (PPM). It, basically, entails their conviction of ‘what works and does not work in practice’ and is based more on their own personal work experiences than on theory. Utilise the following questions to clarify some of your own convictions as far as community change is concerned.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Answer the following seven questions by choosing only one of each option. Then reflect on the reasons for your choice (note: there are no correct or incorrect answers).

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Option a)</th>
<th>Option b)</th>
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<td>1) a) Economic development (e.g. more jobs and a higher per capita income) should come first and social development will naturally follow, vs. b) social development is a prerequisite for economic development</td>
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<td>2) The social development of a country a) is primarily the responsibility of government [i.e. the statist social development view] vs. b) is primarily the responsibility of ordinary people [i.e. popular participation view]</td>
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<td>3) Social problems are primarily caused: a) by individual inadequacies/malfunction [i.e. residual view] vs. b) by a negative environment and the individual’s inability to use services effectively [i.e. institutional view]</td>
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<td>4) For community support: a) social work services and ideas should be marketed in the same way as any other commodity vs. b) the good deeds and good intentions of social work are enough reasons for the community to support it</td>
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<td>5) Social justice in a society can best be achieved: a) through the development of appropriate government policies and structures [i.e. the pluralist view] vs. b) it is primarily the responsibility of each citizen to stand up for his/her rights [i.e. the populist view]</td>
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<td>6) In achieving a just society: a) the ends justify the means (even if it requires radical action) vs. b) my professional ethics prevent me from becoming involved in radical action</td>
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Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

3. THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY WORK

In order to understand the nature of and terminology used in community work, it is first necessary to know some of the constructs on which it and social work are built. These include selected core theories, perspectives and models, as well as social work’s domain and methods of practice. Each of these elements will first be covered before the basic nature of community work is explored.

3.1 SOME CORE THEORIES, PERSPECTIVES AND MODELS

The numerous theories, models and perspectives contained in social work literature are all considered by Sheafor et al. as being part of the profession’s conceptual framework, viz. a viz. as the “...set of concepts, beliefs, values, propositions, assumptions, hypotheses” that forms the basis of practice. The relationships between these different frameworks are illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Types of conceptual frameworks

In this section, emphasis will be placed on the theories for social work and especially the practice frameworks. (Developmental social work as a theory of social work will be dealt with in Chapter 2). Of all the available frameworks, three are particularly useful in community work. They are the ecosystems and strengths perspectives and the community change models.

It should be noted that volumes have been written about each of these constructs and that it would be practically impossible to do justice to them within a few
3.1.1 The ecosystems perspective

The ecosystems perspective is one of the most commonly used practice perspectives in social work today. The reason lies in its ability to provide a clear 'conceptual lens' through which human behaviour and social structures could be viewed and analysed. This perspective draws on selected concepts from both the sciences of ecology and general systems theory. The latter enables some 'ordering' of the complex and multiple variables found within human ecological systems. These systems are defined as a "...combination of elements with mutual reciprocity and identifiable boundaries that form a complex or unitary whole". Using this concept, Pincus and Minahan, for example, developed a simple four-part social systems model. It consists of:

- a change agent system (i.e. the social worker and his employer),
- a target system (i.e. the system that must change),
- a client or consumer system (i.e. the system that directly benefits from the change) and
- an action system (i.e. the system - usually including the change agent system - that brings about the necessary change). This demarcation provided a practical and simple way to map the different people that social workers work with and for.

The science of human ecology emphasises the relationship and reciprocal and adaptive transactions among 'organisms' (e.g. individuals, couples, families, groups, organisations and communities) and between these 'organisms' and their bio-psycho-socio-cultural-economic-political-physical environment. The resultant person-in-environment (PIE) construct is especially valuable for social work because of its focus on individuals, their environment and the transactions/relationships between the two. It also explains the nature of social problems as a lack of adaptive fit between them. This, basically, refers to the inability of some people to adapt to or cope with the demands of their social and physical environment or the existence of an environment that cannot sufficiently accommodate people's needs, capacities and goals.

The interrelatedness of people and their environment is illustrated in the simplified eco-map contained in Figure 1.2. In this map, the environment is divided into two spheres, viz. the nurturing and the sustaining environment. The nurturing environment consists of the systems with whom a person interacts frequently, that have a profound effect on his sense of identity and functioning, and that contributes to or detracts from his social well-being. The sustaining environment comprises the wide range of institutionalised and other less intimate services, resources and opportunities that can sustain, enhance, aid or damage a person's well-being. This environment is often typified as 'the community'.
A characteristic of the community as a social system is that its sub-systems have linkages with each other and with other systems outside its borders. Any change within a particular sub-system or the broader society would, therefore, have an impact on all the other systems, including each individual. The opposite is also true. Think, for example, of the negative effect that a serial killer or rapist has on a community as a whole. The community workers also want to create a ‘ripple effect’ throughout the system, but in this case, a positive one.

Apart from conceptualisation purposes, the differentiation between the nurturing and sustaining environment is also a useful tool to distinguish between the focus points of social work interventions. Individuals and their nurturing environment is mostly the focus of micro practice (including clinical/case work services) and the sustaining environment that of macro services (including community work).

3.1.2 The practice models

Although the ecosystems perspective is a useful tool to differentiate between the elements and dynamics involved in practice, it is not that helpful when it comes to the conceptualisation of intervention. This purpose is better served through the use of practice models.

The construct ‘practice model’ basically refers to “a set of concepts and principles that guide intervention.” They represent ‘ideal types’ that are intended to give direction to practitioners’ service delivery by bringing order and clarity to the complex realities that they face. The idea is not that a practitioner should become the ‘captive’ of one practice model and the ideology that it represents. They should rather use their professional objectivity and judgement to creatively mix and phase models in the process of addressing each unique practice situation they may face.
Of all the practice models identified by Sheafor et al. (see Fig. 1.1), the community change models are especially useful to differentiate between the forms that community work intervention could take. They are based on the central idea that:

**how you define the target community and their impediments would determine how you would wish to change them.**

Practice models differ from purely theoretical models in one important way. A theoretician has the freedom to use any set of abstract or concrete criteria to structure a theoretical model. In the case of practice models, however, the selected criterion must cover those 'things' that all social workers would encounter in all practice settings. These 'things' are known as 'variables' (i.e. perceptions, ideas, behaviour, events, objects, etc. that varies from situation to situation). The variables could, on the basis of their most prominent attributes, be grouped into categories to form the 'practice variables'.

The research undertaken by Rothman, Weyers and others were used to identify 12 core practice variables that all social workers would encounter in Southern African community work practice. They are different:

- **perceptions** of the nature of target communities,
- suppositions (hypotheses) about the causes or etiologies of communities' impediments,
- **goals** (or outcomes) that could be pursued in order to eliminate impediments and bring about a substantive change in communities' circumstances,
- **objectives** that could be linked to the goals,
- demarcations of the consumer or client systems that would directly benefit from the intervention,
- **levels** on which intervention should take place in order to benefit the consumer/client systems directly,
- **strategies** that could be followed to achieve the intended goals and objectives,
- **media or instruments** that could be used to affect the required change,
- social work **roles that partitioners** could have to perform during the implementation of the strategies,
- **techniques** that they could use,
- **roles that communities** could play in the course of events and
- **attitudes** towards the power structure.

The 12 core practice variables were used as an organising principle to analyse Southern African community work practice and associated literature. It showed that local practice usually took the form of community development, social planning, community education, social marketing and/or social action. These results were then used to demarcate the five practice models that are described in some detail in Part 2 of this book.

Although the community change models are helpful to describe and compare the different ways in which community work could be done, they do not prescribe how people and other systems ought to be perceived. This ‘angle’ is provided by the strengths perspective (cf. Figure 1.1).
3.1.3 The strengths perspective

The strengths perspective represents a traditional viewpoint of social work, but one that was somewhat lost during the upsurge of the deficit/problem-based/medical paradigm of the Freudian era.\textsuperscript{122} It has recently been reclaimed and updated to meet modern demands.\textsuperscript{123} It is also starting to inform community work thought.

This perception or approach\textsuperscript{124} represents more of a mindset that the practitioner should adopt in all his dealings with and on behalf of the community, than a roadmap for intervention. In terms of it, everything that the social worker does should be based on the principal of helping the client system discover, embellish, explore and exploit their strengths and resources. It should assist them to achieve their goals, realize their dreams and shed the shackles of their own misgivings and self-perceived weaknesses. This approach requires that all forms (e.g. preventative, therapeutic or developmental) and all levels of professional intervention (e.g. personal, interpersonal and socio-political) should focus on strengths.

Miley \textit{et al.}\textsuperscript{125} define such strengths as “...personal abilities, resourcefulness and creativity, as well as resources in interpersonal relationships, culture, organizational networks and community connections”. All the various human strengths can be grouped into the following six categories:\textsuperscript{126}

- **Experience.** This refers to everything that people have learned about themselves, others and their world as they struggle, cope with and battle abuse, trauma, illness, confusion, oppression and even their own fallibility. People do not just learn from their successes but also from their failures and disappointments, including the self-imposed ones.

- **Personal qualities, character traits and virtues.** These are sometimes forged in situations of trauma and catastrophe. They might be anything from a sense of humour, creativity, patience, loyalty, insight and independence to spirituality and moral imagination. These qualities and characteristics can be sources of energy and motivation when working with community members.

- **Knowledge of the world.** This category covers all the intellectual knowledge that a person has gained during his or her lifetime through both formal and informal education and training. Individuals and groups often have a vast reservoir of such knowledge that goes untapped.

- **Talents.** Many people have undiscovered or underdeveloped talents. Playing a musical instrument, telling stories, cooking, home repair, a craft, gardening, writing, carpentry, etc. may provide tools and resources to assist individuals or groups in reaching their goals. It is this underutilised pool of talent that is often targeted in the income generation projects of community work.

- **Culture.** Folklore and personal and community ‘stories’ can be profound sources of strength, guidance, stability, comfort or transformation. Their importance is often ignored when mobilising communities for change.

- **The community.** The community in all its variations - for example a clan, the neighbourhood, the workplace and the geographical community - are frequently overlooked as a physical, interpersonal and institutional environment full of resources that can be tapped into. This environment is a rich milieu filled with people and organisations, who, when asked, would provide their time, talents and resources to help others.
There are five practice principles\textsuperscript{127} that should form the cornerstones of all strengths-based interventions.

1. **Principle 1: Every individual, group and community has strengths.** First and foremost, the strengths approach is about identifying assets, resources, wisdom and knowledge, respecting these qualities and believing in their potential power. All humans do thus have the inherent capacity to learn, grow and change.\textsuperscript{128}

2. **Principle 2: Trauma, abuse, illness and struggle may be injurious but could also be converted into a source of power.** The ‘damaged goods paradigm’ has become dominant in the thinking of both the helping professions and the people they serve. This often leads to discouragement, pessimism and a victim mindset\textsuperscript{129} that obscure any strengths or possibilities for recovery. This mindset can be changed by reframing the struggles of the past as victories. Simply having survived its ordeals and beaten its seemingly insurmountable odds could be enough proof of this.\textsuperscript{130}

3. **Principle 3: Do not underestimate an individual, group or community’s capacity for growth and change.** Too often professionals assume that a diagnosis or assessment is the only parameter within which their client systems can deal with their particular issues. Thus, the diagnosis or assessment becomes a verdict and a sentence. Practitioners must, instead, have high expectations of their client systems and align their professional opinions with the client’s hopes, visions and values.

4. **Principle 4: We best serve the client system by collaborating with them.** Professionals could get so locked into the role of ‘expert’ that they forget the equally important roles of collaborator and consultant. The strengths approach is, however, predicated on the idea that change can only come about when the social worker collaborates with the client, and takes account of the client’s aspirations, perceptions and strengths.

5. **Principle 5: Every environment is full of resources.** The entire community should, according to Kisthardt,\textsuperscript{131} be viewed as an oasis of potential resources that can be enlisted on behalf of consumers. The most important of all these resources, are its individual members. All that is sometimes required is to enable these members to play a more direct and active role in enhancing each other’s capacities. This can be achieved by involving them in the groups and organisations that shape community life. This pool of resources, however, also goes beyond the borders of a community. There are often a large number of individuals and organisations within the broader society, region or even on the international stage whose inputs could be tapped. Recent research has, for example, shown that the mobilisation and utilisation of such a ‘support community’ is a critical success factor in most community work services.\textsuperscript{132}

Although the majority of strengths-focused researchers tend to delineate their field of study to the micro and mezzo levels, the same principles that apply to these systems are also found in broader societal and regional settings. All countries, therefore, do have strengths, can covert their struggles into a source of power, do have the capacity for growth and change, can collaborate with internal and external role-players to achieve their goals, and are full of untapped human and physical resources.

A question that flows from the five practice principles is what, exactly, do strengths-focused practitioners wish to achieve with their interventions? Their goal,
basically, is to improve the resilience of individuals, groups and communities. In this context, ‘resilience’ can be defined as:

the process, capacity and outcome of successful adaptation to challenges and adversity, sustained competence under threatening circumstances and the ability to recover from trauma.

The goal of improved resilience should be seen against the backdrop of the fact that social workers cannot erase the traumatic events and experiences that individuals and communities have suffered in the past, nor can they fully prevent them from occurring again in the future. They can, however, change the way in which people would react to such events in future by empowering them with the ability to deal with such challenges more effectively. This is achieved by developing a range of services that would, amongst others, enhance their social competencies, problem-solving skills, autonomy, sense of purpose and future, and sense of pride.

Points to Ponder 1.2

The ribbon of power

The idea is sometimes created that empowerment means ‘to give someone power’. This is not the case. It simply means to put that ‘someone’ in a position where they can discover their own power. This principle can be illustrated by the following story.

In the well-known children's book, The Wizard of Oz, there is a character called the cowardly lion. One day this lion approached a wizard and asked him for courage. The wizard went into the next room, returned with a ribbon and gave it to him. When the lion looked at the ribbon he felt as if he had power, and when he felt that way he also acted that way. The wizard then remarked to himself: "I don’t know why people always ask me for what they already have." 

The place where the conceptual frameworks of community work are positioned within the ‘bigger picture’ of social work will be looked at next.

3.2 Social work’s domain of practice

The concept ‘domain’, literally, refers to the territory over which rule or control is exercised or claimed. If applied to social work, it would indicate the area of the ‘human condition’ to which the profession would lay primary claim. The difficulty of defining social work’s domain lies in the fact that, as apposed to most other professions, it does not have one primary domain, but three. These could be summarised with the concepts ‘social functioning’, ‘social reform’ and ‘adaptive fit’.

The three main functions of social work can, consequently, be described as:

- strengthening peoples’ role performance, problem-solving skills, competence, coping abilities and developmental capacities (social functioning),
- promoting social change in order to improve the societal conditions in which people live (social reform) and
- changing the interactions between people and their milieu in such a way that it would enable them to perform their life tasks, realise their aspirations and values, fulfil their needs, and alleviate their distress (adaptive fit).

Although various definitions and descriptions of social functioning have been put forward, that of Baker probably describes it best. He sees it as "Fulfilling one's roles
in society in general to those in the immediate environment and to oneself. These functions include meeting one’s own basic needs and those of one’s dependants and making positive contributions to society”. In this context, it is social work’s first basic function to help individuals, groups or communities enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning.¹³⁹

Social functioning is, however, only part of the equation. Social work also addresses the societal contexts within which people live. In this regards, it is the profession’s second basic function or mission to change and reform societies in such a way that they would provide the opportunities, resources and services that would “…enable all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives, and prevent dysfunction.”¹⁴⁰

The third and primary focus of social work is on the transactions or relationships between individuals and society. It, therefore, targets ”...the interface between or meeting place of person and environment - at the point where there is or is not matching with all its good and bad consequences for the person and environment”.¹⁴¹

The third function is, therefore, to improve the matching between people’s needs, capacities and goals and the capabilities of their social and physical environment. Stated differently, it implies to enhance the adaptive fit (also known as ‘goodness of fit’) between these systems.¹⁴²

The tri-focal domain of social work practice could perhaps be best summarised with the following figure.

Figure 1.3: The tri-focal domain of social work practice

Although community work contributes to all three functions of social work, its primary domain is social reform. It thus aims to change the sustaining environment in such a way that it would better ‘fit’ the needs of people.
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

3.3 Social Work Methods

Whereas the ‘domain of practice’ construct provides a way of thinking about the demarcation and purpose of social work, the ‘method’ concept helps to conceptualise the processes and skills that could be required to bring about the necessary changes in the person-in-environment domain. The concept ‘method’, however, encompasses a broad repertoire of interventions that could be delineated in terms of:

- the level on which it takes place (i.e. micro, mezzo and macro practice),
- the form that practice would take (i.e. direct practice in terms of clinical services to individuals, families and groups and indirect practice in terms of working with communities and political institutions),
- the size of the unit that receives attention (e.g. an individual, couple, family, small group, organisation, neighbourhood, community or a society as a whole),
- the type of intervention that is involved (e.g. adoption services, marital therapy, assertiveness training, sex education, supportive counselling, the establishment of self-help groups and community-based social action),
- the type of problem or need that is addressed (e.g. crime, child neglect, alcohol abuse, unemployment, victimisation and a lack of services and facilities),
- the type of benefits that would be derived from it (e.g. the rehabilitation of those whose social functioning has been impaired, self-help, empowerment, a more caring society and a better quality of life) and
- the now classic five distinctive practice specialisations, viz. social casework/clinical social work, social group work, community work/organisation, administration/management and research. 143

In this book, the practice specialisations way of delineating methods will be used. The benefits that could spring from intervention will, sometimes, augment this primary criterion.

3.4 Defining Community Work

Lombard 144 has rightly come to the conclusion that there are as many definitions of community work as there are authors on the subject. This case will not be any different because of the necessity to delineate the nature of the concepts that would be used in this text.

In defining any concept, it is important to state your point of departure and the criteria that will be used to break the entity up into its constituent parts. In this case, the point of departure is that community work refers to the processes and skills that could be used by a social worker to bring about the necessary changes in especially the environmental facet of the person-in-environment domain of social work. It would, therefore, be used as a collective noun for some of the meanings that are normally attributed to concepts such as ‘community social work’, ‘community practice’, ‘community organisation’, ‘community development’, ‘community and social action’, and ‘social and welfare planning’. 145

The criteria that would be used to demarcate the constituent parts of community work, are the six so-called science questions of “what?”, “who?”, “where?”, “why?”,...
"when?" and "how?" Based on these six criteria, the following definition was arrived at:

**Community work** is the method of social work

*that consists of*

the various processes and helping acts of the social worker

*that is targeted at*

the community system, as well as its sub-systems and certain external systems,

*with the purpose of*

bringing about required social change

*with the help of*

especially community development, social planning, community education, social marketing and social action as practice models.

An analysis of the nature and implications of the definition is contained in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2: The implications of the definition of community work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCIENCE QUESTIONS</th>
<th>DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY WORK</th>
<th>SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **WHAT?**         | Community work is the method of social work that consists of the various processes and helping acts... | ■ It is one of the intervention processes or methods that are used by social workers.  
■ It is a form of service delivery.  
■ It consists of certain professional social work (helping) acts that mainly take on the form of techniques. |
| **WHO?** and **WHERE?** | of the social worker that is targeted at the community system, as well as its sub-systems and certain external systems,... | ■ There are two main types of systems involved in community work, namely the social worker and the community.  
■ Intervention is not only targeted at the community as a whole, but could also take place on:  
○ the micro level (e.g. with individuals in community),  
○ the mezzo level (e.g. with community groups and organisations) and  
○ the macro level (e.g. on a society wide/ international basis). |
| **WHY?** and **WHEN?** | with the purpose of bringing about required social change | ■ The basic aim of community work is to bring about some form of social change that would, especially, develop human potential, provide the resources and services that are required to prevent and eliminate social dysfunctioning, promote social justice, enhancement people's problem-solving, coping and interactional capabilities, and to link potential consumers with resources and services  
■ The intended change thus has a developmental, preventative, remedial, reformist, educational and linking character.  
■ Because of these characteristics, its application is not only limited to persons or situations where social dysfunctioning has occurred. |
| **HOW?** | with the help of especially community development, social planning, community education, social marketing and social action as practice models. | ■ It uses five practice models as a point of departure in service delivery  
■ These models form the basis on which strategies are built |
3.5 THE PURPOSE, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITY WORK

The type of results that community work wishes to achieve can be described in a variety of ways and with the aid of various concepts. Only five will, however, be used here. They are 'vision', 'mission', 'purpose', 'goals' and 'objectives'. The relationship between these concepts is illustrated in Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5: The relationship between a vision, mission, purpose, goal and objective

As indicated in Figure 1.5, the vision and mission represents the most abstract view of the intended end results of community work, whereas 'objectives' refers to the most specific or measurable form that it could take.146 The vision and mission refers to the long range and overall intent of the practitioner's efforts and have a more general focus or subject matter. At the other end of the continuum, the objective is more immediate in nature and covers a specific subject matter.147

A way to illustrate the differences between the five concepts, is through the athletics metaphor contained in Figure 1.6.148 It implies that, as in the case of an athlete competing in a hurdles race at an Olympic Games, the practitioner:

- will have to take various, practical steps in order to reach his objectives (i.e. to clear each hurdle),
- once all the objectives have been reached successfully, he could have accomplished his goal (i.e. to win the race),
- if all social workers accomplish their goals successfully, the purpose of community work would have been served (i.e. to win the most medals), and
- if the purpose of community work has been served, it would have contributed to the achievement of social work's mission and vision (i.e. to enhance the prestige of the country).
3.5.1 The vision and mission of community work

Every profession has a vision of what the end results of its efforts should be. It usually entails some or other situation in which their services would no longer be necessary (i.e. "the ultimate goal of professionals are to work themselves out of a job"). In the case of social work, Bernstein and Gray depict this vision as the "good society", while others depict it as a "just society". Such a society would, inter alia, provide for everyone:

- warm and safe housing,
- an adequate supply of water and nutritious food,
- challenging jobs,
- loving and caring friends and family,
- access to the services and resources they need,
- the will and skills to deal effectively with life's daily challenges,
- minimal stress, crime and suffering,
- the opportunity to participate in the plans and policies that effect their lives,
- the opportunity to live satisfying and fulfilling lives, and
- a balance between individual and collective rights and responsibilities.  

In order to work towards its vision, a profession should be clear about its mission. In other words, it should define its central purpose and essentially seek to answer the question: What business are we in? As eluded to earlier (see 3.2), social work is basically in the trifocal 'business' of enhancing individual's social functioning, reforming society and increasing the adapted fit between these two types of systems.

Community work's vision and mission is exactly the same as that of social work. It, in other words, represents only one of the ways in which this profession could produce the results it strives for.
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

Points to Ponder 1.3

The 15 blunders

Mahatma Gandhi once formulated the seven blunders from which grow the violence that plagues the world. These thoughts were added onto by his son, Arun, and finally by Donella Meadows. The result was the following 15 blunders which, to a large extent, can also be seen as the facets of human life that needs to be altered in order to arrive at a just society.

1. Wealth without work
2. Pleasure without conscience
3. Knowledge without character
4. Commerce without morality
5. Science and technology without humanity
6. Worship without sacrifice
7. Politics without principles
8. Rights without responsibilities
9. Justice without mercy
10. Order without freedom
11. Talking without listening
12. Stability without change
13. Private interests without public interests
14. Liberty without equality
15. Or, in every case, vice versa

3.5.2 The purpose of community work

The specific contribution community work make to achieving the profession's envisaged end result (i.e. a 'good/just society') entails social change on three levels. They are:

- to enhance people's problem-solving, coping and developmental capacities (in order to enable them to prevent and eliminate social problems and needs, and to utilise their full potential),
- to create and maintain the opportunities, resources and services that people need (to enrich their lives, prevent or deal with dysfunction, and develop their full potential) and
- to link people with the systems that provides them with the required resources, services and opportunities.

The essential difference between community work and the other social work methods does not lie in the size of the intended target group (it could also be a single person or group), nor the level at which intervention takes place (it could also include micro practice). It is who the primary beneficiaries of the intended social change would be. In casework it is primarily the individual client and in group work the constituent members of the specially formed group. In community work the benefits go beyond this narrow ambit and directly contribute to the effective social functioning and improved living conditions of larger groups, the community and society as a whole.

3.5.3 The goals of community work

As in the case of the other concepts that have been used thus far, various meanings could also be ascribed to the concept 'goal'. For instance, Robbins sees it as the desired future ends one seeks and Homan typifies it as the action-orientated target that needs to be reached. Based on these and other views, a goal could be defined as a statement of the intended outcome of a particular intervention process. Such an outcome should make a contribution to the achievement of community work's purpose.
A distinction is often drawn between three types of community work goals. They are the so-called task goals, process goals and operational goals. Some of the characteristics of these goals are illustrated in Figure 1.7 and will be explained further.

Figure 1.7: The focal points of intervention objectives

### 3.5.3.1 Task goals

Task goals essentially denote some type of intended change in the circumstances or environment of a community. They cover, amongst others, the creation of circumstances in which community systems are empowered to perform their problem-solving, needs fulfilment, resource/service utilisation and environmental modification tasks in a more effective way.

There is a myriad of goals that could be categorised as ‘situation-changing’ in nature. These include those aimed at the:
- establishment of new or improved social work and other services,
- development of facilities, infrastructure and resources (e.g. homes for the aged, day care centres and emergency relief funds),
- improvement of co-ordination between existing services and resources and
- influencing of social and other types of policies, as well as the practices of institutions and organisations.

### 3.5.3.2 Process goals

Process goals essentially denote a ‘people-changing’ type of outcome. They especially cover the bringing about of some or other form of change in people's ‘KAB’. This acronym stands for knowledge (which also covers insight), attitudes (which also cover emotions) and behaviour (which also covers practices and skills).
As in the case of task goal, process goals can also take on various forms. These include those aimed at:

- enhancing people's problem-solving, coping, self-help, leadership, negotiation, conflict management, entrepreneurial and a wide variety of other skills,
- changing people's feelings of apathy, powerlessness, insecurity, fear and irresolution,
- conscientizing people about their circumstances and empowering them with the knowledge and skills they need to change these circumstances,
- preventing social dysfunctioning by identifying and strengthening individuals, groups and communities inherent potential,
- improving peoples support for and participation and involvement in groups, organisations and community life in general,
- creating and improving intra-organisational, inter-organisational, intergroups and interpersonal relationship and co-operation,
- sensitising organisations and government institutions to the needs and circumstances of communities,
- educating people with regard to their rights, responsibilities, the nature of their communities, their community's latent and active problems and needs and the ways in which problems could be prevented and solved, and needs met,
- marketing services, facilities and ideas and
- improving the image of social workers, the organisations that employ them and the client system that they serve.162

2.5.3.3 Operational goals

The operational goals essentially denote the type of change that a practitioner needs to bring about in his employer organisation in order to make it a more effective service delivery system. These organisation changing goals are more administrative and technical in nature163 and include those aimed at:

- improving the financing of the organisation and its services,
- ensuring that the organisation and its services meet legal requirements and are managed effectively,
- changing its services in order to respond more effectively to community needs or policy dictates,
- acquiring appropriate staff and improving their capabilities, and
- ensuring that services are of an acceptable standard, adheres to scientific principles and is supported by appropriate infrastructure.164

Although the operational goals are highly administrative in nature and should strictly speaking be seen as part of social work management, they form such an integral part of the practitioner's intra-organisation function that they should receive special attention in all service delivery. It is often impossible to achieve output orientated task and process goals before first achieving specific operational or input goals.
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

2.5.3.4 Factors that influence the choice of goals

Operational goals would inevitably form part of all community work services, even if they only deal with the way in which such a service would be financed. In the case of task and process goals, however, there are certain factors that could influence the practitioner’s choice. Lombard identified four such factors. They are:

- the urgency of the matter (it usually takes a shorter time-span to reach task goals),
- the practitioner’s skills, experience and available time (to reach process goals usually require a substantial amount of time and skills),
- the stumbling blocks and opportunities linked to the worker’s and his organisation’s mandate, role and status (e.g. the organisation or community could expect the worker to render a task-centred service) and
- the practice model that the worker would chose as his point of departure (e.g. the community development model is mostly process-centred in nature, whereas task goals form a substantive part of the social planning model).

3.5.4 The objectives of community work

An objective could be defined as the specific change that the practitioner wants to bring about in a person, in a group and/or in their environment by means of a series of interdependent, time-limited steps or activities. Because objectives are directly linked to goals, it is possible to simply break each goal up into specific task, process or operational objectives.

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY WORK AND THE OTHER SOCIAL WORK METHODS

Although the roots of all the social work methods could be traced back to the beginnings of the profession itself, their history has been characterised by periods of consolidation followed by periods of fragmentation. At the present stage, which is dominated by the ecological approach and the strengths perspective, the methods are liken to the points of a five-pointed star. Each point (method) represents a distinguishable part of an integrated whole. Without their contribution, the whole would not be the same. Homan’s analogy of the five-pointed “methods star” has been translated into South African terminology and is depicted in Figure 1.8.

Figure 1.8: Configuration of social work methods
The five methods depicted in Figure 1.8 basically entail the following.

- "Clinical social work" (also sometimes referred to as 'social casework') represents the face-to-face contact between the social worker and individuals, as well as their ‘significant others’ (especially within the individual’s nurturing environment) that is aimed at the treatment and prevention of psychosocial dysfunction, disability or impairment.

- "Social group work" represents the social worker’s use of small group dynamics and resources in order to assist members to achieve individual and shared goals.

- "Community work" represents the social worker’s act of bringing social systems together to utilise their collective potential in order to improve their own or other people’s (e.g. community’s) circumstances.

- "Social work research" represents the systematic procedures that social workers use in order to seek facts or principles, develop and test theories and communicate the results to people who could put them to use.

- "Social work management" (that includes administration) represents the tasks required to operate a social work service or agency.

- "Impediments" represents any type of social problem, social need or un-/underutilised potential that hampers effective social functioning.

The word ‘impediment’ is derived from the Latin ‘imped’ meaning an ‘obstruction or hindrance’ and ‘mentum’ implying movement. Its use in social work can be traced back to the development of the force field analysis technique by Kurt Lewin in the 1950’s. This technique provides a framework for looking at the factors (forces) that influence a situation by either driving movement toward a goal (‘helping or driving forces’) or blocking such a movement (‘hindering/restraining forces’ or ‘impediments’).

The concept ‘impediments’ is increasingly being used as a collective noun to cover all of the different obstacles that could hamper a movement towards effective social functioning. These obstacles can be seated in individuals, in their environment, in the transactions between the two or in the service delivery system itself. In this text it would especially be used to refer to the unresolved social problem, unfulfilled needs or underutilised potential that exists in communities and that obstructs their ability to develop to a higher level of functioning.

An issue that has created some confusion in local practice is which methods could ‘lay claim’ to each of the various types of groups that are utilised in social work. Fact of the matter is that it all depends on the repertoire of skills that are required to work with each group and especially the purposes for which they are employed. However, to provide some indicators in this regard, the views of Toseland and Rivas and others were used to develop a typology of groups and their methodological ‘homes’. This typology is contained in Table 1.3. It does not cover all groups or represent watertight compartments and is simply a mechanism to indicate general locality.
Table 1.3: A typology of groups that are used in community work, social group work and social work management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>METHODS PRIMARILY INVOLVED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS</td>
<td>THERAPY</td>
<td>To change individual behaviour</td>
<td>▪ Group work skills used for group processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUTUAL SUPPORT/ &quot;SELF-HELP GROUPS&quot;</td>
<td>To help members cope with stressful life events or situations</td>
<td>▪ Community work skills used to create ‘self-help organisations’ (e.g. for foster parents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Group work skills used for group processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPACITY BUILDING</td>
<td>GROWTH</td>
<td>To develop member’s insight and change attitudes and behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOCIALISATION</td>
<td>To increase communication and social skills</td>
<td>▪ Community work skills used to create groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>To educate through presentations, discussions and experiential learning</td>
<td>▪ Group work skills used for group processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE CENTRED</td>
<td>TEAMS (INTERNAL)</td>
<td>To engage in collaborative work</td>
<td>▪ Primarily social work management skills used to create and utilise groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MULTIPROFESSIONAL TEAMS</td>
<td>To develop, co-ordinate and monitor services to specific client systems</td>
<td>▪ Community work also uses these groups during service delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STAFF DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>To educate members for better practice with clients</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATION CENTRED</td>
<td>COMMITTEES</td>
<td>To discuss issues and accomplish tasks</td>
<td>▪ Primarily social work management skills used to create and utilise groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>To enable management to govern an organisation or programme</td>
<td>▪ Community work also uses these groups to manage its services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT</td>
<td>SOCIAL ACTION GROUPS</td>
<td>To devise and implement social change strategies</td>
<td>▪ Community work skills used to create and utilise these groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COALITIONS</td>
<td>To exert greater influence by sharing resources, expertise and power basis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COUNCILS/ FORUMS</td>
<td>To represent different organisations and other units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that all the social worker’s so-called casework and group work skills are also utilised in community work and that the latter would not be possible without social work research and management inputs (cf. Figure 1.8).

5. THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

As in the case of community work, there is no consensus amongst role-players regarding the nature of community development and who should do it. Some see it as the responsibility of every community member, others as the ‘job’ of some or other functionary (e.g. community development workers or social workers) and still others as
a multi-professional team approach to community betterment. In this text, the term 'community development' will be used as an umbrella concept to refer to the conscious efforts of change agents to bring about change within the broad economic, psychosocial, bio-physiological, technological, spiritual-cultural, political, environmental, educational and/or other spheres of community life. This is opposed to 'community work' which will specifically refer to the method used by social workers to bring about change in especially the social sphere of community life.

In order to arrive at a more substantive explanation of the relationship between community work and community development as it will be used in this text, a more detailed look into the nature of the latter is a prerequisite. In this regard, community development will, on the one hand, be seen as a natural process and on the other as a method of working or a form of intervention.

5.1 Community Development as a Natural Process

It is generally accepted that there are various forces present in a community that could either enhance its progress or lead to disintegration.

The most important positive force is man's inherent drive to improve his own and his community's standard of living and quality of life through individual and collective actions. It is to a larger or lesser degree present in all communities and gives the system the innate ability and inclination to develop. This force is often countered by a variety of natural phenomena and psycho-social, educational, economic and political obstacles that hamper development and tend to push the community in the opposite direction.

A basic question that should be answered is: what 'makes' one community develop naturally and another to stagnate or disintegrate? Seen from an ecosystems perspective, the answer especially lies in the extent to which each of its subsystems (e.g. each individual, household, family, circle of friends, profession, association, organisation, business undertaking, industry, local authority and government institution) contribute to the improvement of the community's standard of living and quality of life. A 'competent' and therefore self-developing community would be one in which its various component parts "...are able to collaborate effectively in identifying the problems and needs of the community; can achieve a working consensus on goals and priorities; can agree on ways and means to implement the agreed-upon goals; can collaborate effectively in the required actions".

Simply attributing underdevelopment to some or other form of 'incompetence' would, however, ignore the complexities involved in community functioning and the factors that play a role in keeping it in a state of underdevelopment. It would, secondly, not provide a sound enough foundation on which to base intervention. To overcome these conceptual difficulties, use will be made of the 'vicious cycles of underdevelopment' construct.

It is extremely difficult to distinguish clearly between the causes and symptoms of underdevelopment. If it is viewed as solely the result of the legacy of past political systems, then, for example, constitutional reforms and democracy would be the panacea for all of a country's and community's ills. If it were viewed as the result of a lack of resources and economic growth, then increases in productivity, jobs and GDP would, amongst others, be the solution. When a lack of individual empowerment is
seen as the main cause, development could be achieved entirely through education, training, guidance and human resource development. The fact of the matter is that underdevelopment is caused by a myriad of interlinking factors. These causes could be conceptualised as vicious cycles which, when occurring in combination, would impede a country’s and a community’s development.

There are especially eight vicious circles that contribute to underdevelopment. They are the economic, psychosocial, bio-physiological, spiritual-cultural, technological, environmental, educational and political cycles. Some elements of these cycles were combined to form the model depicted in Figure 1.9.

Figure 1.9: Model of the vicious cycles of underdevelopment

The concept of ‘vicious cycles’ is a useful tool to illustrate the categories and content of factors that are involved in underdevelopment. When using this model, six aspects should, however, be kept in mind. They are:

- that the eight cycles represent the most important categories of factors that are involved and do not necessarily imply that other factors could not also be categorised into cycles,
- that each cycle do not contain all the relevant factors,
- that the cycles are not mutually exclusive and that they overlap,
- that the process that is shown is not necessarily of such a linear nature,
- that the cycles do not only occur within the boundaries of the community, but that communities could also be negatively effected by external forces, and
- most important of all, that the cycles do not imply iron rules from which it is impossible to escape.
5.2 Community development as a form of intervention

During the 1940s it became clear that community development as a natural process had serious shortcomings. These included:
- that it was a slow process and, therefore, too time consuming,
- that it often became directionless and landed up in dead ends,
- that it tended to be a cost-ineffective process because of the same mistakes being made over and over again,
- that some communities or societies simply did not have the ability to ‘develop from within’ and, therefore, remained in the various cycles of underdevelopment and
- that, even when development occurred, it tended to have distorted results in which only certain segments of the community developed while others stagnated.180

The shortcomings in the natural process of development contributed to the establishment of community development as a form of intervention. Its aim was, basically, to speed up the natural process and make it more cost-effective. From the outset, however, this idea ran into various empirical and philosophical difficulties, mainly due to its complex nature. It especially did not fit the ‘single-solution paradigm’ that many economists, politicians and even social scientists had espoused. There is currently, however, some basic agreement that it entails a conscious effort by a ‘development agent’ in which partnerships among local people and between local people and external systems (e.g. government, non-governmental agencies and industry) are established in order to improve the material (e.g. economic and infrastructure) as well as the non-material (e.g. social and political) facets of community life (see Chap. 1: 3.1.1). How this intervention could be defined, will be looked at next.

5.3 Defining the concept 'Community development'

Any definition of community development ought to reflect its multidisciplinary and multileveled nature. Simply seeing it as the strengthening and building of “...satisfying communal structures, using available resources to create and energize human potentialities”182 or as ”...the conscious process wherein small, geographically contiguous communities are assisted by the more developed community to achieve improved standard of social and economic life”183 could thus not fit the bill. Use will, therefore, be made of the shortcomings of the natural development process as a criterion to demarcate the constituent parts of community development. With the help of this criterion, the following definition was arrived at.

Community development (CD) is the method, process, programme and strategy by means of which change agents, with or without the help of external systems:
- speed up the tempo at which a community develops,
- provide direction to the development process in order to realise objectives purposefully within the economic, psychosocial, bio-physiological, technological, spiritual-cultural, political, environmental, educational and other spheres of life,
- make the goal attainment process as cost-effective, streamlined and sustainable as possible so that both human and environmental resources are used optimally and
- contribute to human growth and the unlocking of human potential by empowering community members to take responsibility for their own, as well as the whole system’s development.184
It does not fall within the scope of this publication to discuss all of the elements of this definition in detail. Some of its most salient implications are, however, summarised in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: The implications of the definition of community development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of community development (CD)</th>
<th>Some implications of the definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| □ Community development is the method, process, programme, strategy and movement by means of which... | • CD is a form of intervention in which a change agent follows a set procedure to realise specified objectives (method)  
• CD represents a movement from one state to another in which the tempo of change varies from slow to fast (process)  
• CD takes the form of planned change in which the specified activities of various role-players are combined in a plan of action (programme)  
• CD is a predetermined course of action (strategy) |
| □ Development agents, with or without the help of external systems: | • Persons or groups from within or outside of the community become agents of development or change agents when they deliberately start to change the existing situation  
• The development process could be completely 'contained' within community boundaries (the so-called 'boot-strapping'). More often than not, however, some form of external inputs or resources is needed. |
| • Speed up the tempo at which a community develops, | • CD is intended to accelerate the pace at which a community develops, but without affecting traditional community structures in such a way that they disintegrate or that the community rebels against the change process. |
| • Provide direction to the development process in order to realise objectives purposefully within the economic, psychosocial, biophysiological, technological, spiritual-cultural, environmental, educational, institutional, political and other spheres of life, | • CD represents an attempt to consciously bring about predetermined, planned change in one or more spheres of community life. |
| • Makes the goal attainment process as cost-effective, streamlined and sustainable as possible so that both human and environmental resources are used optimally and | • CD represents an attempt to bring about the optimal efficiency and balance between input and output, local initiative and external influence, temporary and long-term gains, etc. in goal attainment.  
• CD also motivates, co-ordinates and develops ways of securing co-operation with external systems in areas of common interests. |
| • Contribute to human growth and the unlocking of human potential by empowering community members to take responsibility for their own, as well as the whole system’s development. | • CD, inter alia, entails the development or stimulation of:  
• leadership,  
• a strong sense of individual and collective responsibility, community loyalty and identity,  
• social participation in decision-making and implementation,  
• co-operation, involvement and self-help. |
One of the many conclusions that could be drawn from the definition, is that community development is not a social work method. The abundance of literature on the same subject that is produced by various disciplines (e.g. economics, nursing, sociology, psychology and development studies) bears witness to this fact. What is, however, also clear is that social work has an important contribution to make to community development as a field of practice and especially to the attainment of social development objectives. The contexts of these objectives will be looked at next.

5.4 THE PURPOSE, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of community development could be summarised as the bringing about of substantive and sustainable change in all spheres of community life in order to improve its members’ standard of living and quality of life. Within this very broad conceptualisation, it is possible to formulate an almost endless list of goals and objectives. These could range from providing one square meal a day to everyone to promoting human solidarity and from increasing job opportunities to ensuring that social justice will prevail.

In the light of the model of the cycles of underdevelopment that is used as the point of departure in this text (see Fig. 1.9), it is, however, possible to formulate eight categories of goals and objectives. They are those that are aimed at breaking the economic, psychosocial, bio-physiological, technological, spiritual-cultural, political, environmental and educational cycles of underdevelopment.

It would not be possible to expand on the contents of the eight categories in detail. Therefore, only some general remarks regarding each will have to suffice. These remarks will focus on the macro or society and the mezzo or community levels of development in especially South Africa.

5.4.1 Goals pertaining to the economic cycle

In the Southern African sub-region, about 40% of the population lived on less than US $1 a day in 2008. According to the Southern African Regional Poverty Network, inequality in the sub-region is manifested through rising levels of impoverishment, the paradox of ‘jobless growth’, entrenched patriarchal systems, rising unemployment and the inability of the majority of people to access sources of livelihood or basic services.

There is some consensus that, in order to break an economic cycle of underdevelopment on a macro level, a socio-economic plan based on the values of democracy, morality, economic justness, innovativeness, and competitiveness must be in place. The focus of such a plan should be to add value to existing exports, to exploit new business opportunities and to create job opportunities. In South Africa, where the current poverty rate is estimated at 24%, an economic growth rate of above 10% per annum has to be maintained in order to reduce unemployment significantly. In order to achieve this goal, inflation will have to be kept at a minimum, productivity and self-sufficiency will have to increase and the country will have to become a player in the world market.
On the mezzo level, a dualistic approach will have to be followed. On the one hand, local communities will have to be put in a position to contribute economically to the larger society and on the other, become more self-sustaining economic entities. Goals that could be formulated in this regard include to:

- multiply small entrepreneurs and co-operatives,
- ensure that local needs are met first before excess products are ‘exported’,
- develop appropriately scaled home and other industries (e.g. community bakeries, locally grown produce and brick-making),
- increase earnings within the community and decreasing expenditure outside of it,
- ensure that communities invest in themselves, develop a consumer loyalty to local products, decrease dependency on external energy and food sources (e.g. by developing a local food economy) and focus on renewable local resources and tourism, and
- develop internal capital resources (e.g. through savings, ‘stokvels’ and mutual help).

5.4.2 Goals pertaining to the psychosocial cycle

In order to break the psychosocial cycle of underdevelopment, South Africa will have to become a more ‘active society’. The ideal state is one of high control, consensus and activation and low alienation. In order to achieve this ideal, the society should:

- become highly motivated, hard working, productive, self-sufficient, vibrant and future orientated,
- believe in (a) God, civilised humanity, human solidarity and social equity, unity of a political nation, consensus democracy, reconciliation and justice, excellence, successfulness, morality, caring, innovativeness, competitiveness and the ‘Golden Rule’ (i.e. ‘Do unto others as you would have others do unto you’) and
- develop a highly organised civil society (i.e. institutions, organisations and individuals outside of government and including trade unions, consumer organisations, the formal and informal welfare sectors, non-governmental organisations [NGO’s], community based organisations [CBO’s] and faith based organisations [FBO’s]) that cater for the needs of divergent groups and adheres to the dictum that a well-organised community is a successful community.

On the micro and mezzo levels, these values boil down to enabling and motivating each member of the community to take responsibility for achieving their personal purpose in life. They should also take responsibility for the wellbeing of neighbours and move away from any dependency on external systems such as government (e.g. the so-called ‘Pretoria-must-provide-syndrome’). Within the ambit of these values lays the essence of the goals of individual and communal self-help.

5.4.3 Goals pertaining to the bio-physiological cycle

The bio-physiological cycle of underdevelopment in South Africa is characterised by the proliferation of disease, a high infant mortality rate, a high HIV invention rate, limited preventative and curative medical services and diminished individual capacity due to malnutrition.
Malnutrition and some of the diseases in South Africa should be partly blamed on poverty and partly on a lack of knowledge. This makes goals that are aimed at the provision of food, the establishment of primary (e.g. clinics) and secondary (e.g. hospitals) health services and general health education of great importance.\(^{194}\)

5.4.4 Goals pertaining to the technological cycle

If the country wishes to become a role-player in the global marketplace, South Africans will have to gain more access to new technology and be trained in its use. On the mezzo level, the goal should be the establishment and use of appropriate technology. In this regard, the thin line between mass production vs. production by the masses, consumption vs. environmental sustainability, technology vs. humanity, profit vs. job opportunities, and traditional processes vs. new innovations should be treated with care.\(^{195}\)

In order to break the technological cycle of underdevelopment at the local/mezzo level, more use should have to be made of extension services. This entails the transference of new ideas by trained scientists to local groups and linking these ideas to the local group's needs and circumstances.\(^{196}\)

Although extension services have traditionally only been linked to agriculture, the need for this type of intervention also exists in other fields (e.g. manufacturing, medicine and computing). In all circumstances, the basic goals remain the same, viz. to:

- help people to identify and prioritise their technological needs,
- instil in them the confidence to start using new technology (including new procedures),
- show them how to obtain and to use it appropriately and
- support them in its use.

5.4.5 Goals pertaining to the spiritual-cultural cycle

Of all spheres, the breaking of the spiritual-cultural cycle of underdevelopment is the most difficult to achieve. The reason being that it is aimed at changing the fundamental world view and value system of people. If South Africa, however, wishes to become a developed country, it would necessitate at least the adaptation of existing values, attitudes and behaviour. What is especially required is a move away from an animistic religious orientation, external locus of control, fatalism and the lack of initiative toward a value set characterised by a future-orientated ethos (a belief in a positive future) and a belief in man's ability to control his own destiny.\(^{197}\)

On the micro and mezzo levels, the goal of changing the mindset of people would have to focus on the establishment of a state of self-management. This would, basically, entail instilling in them the belief that they have the capacity to control their own lives.
5.4.6 Goals pertaining to the political cycle

The political cycle of underdevelopment is initially characterised by a lack of vision and political will and usually ends with the breakdown of law and order and political instability. Therefore, in order to break this cycle on the macro level, the government should have a vision and the will to achieve this vision.

In South Africa, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was an attempt to provide a socio-economic vision for all. This vision, inter alia, entailed the mobilisation of all people and resources toward the achievement of freedom, and an improved standard of living and quality of life within a peaceful and stable society characterised by equitable economic growth.198 As such, this vision was a laudable ideal to strive for and possessed the innate power to galvanise the country into development-centred action.

The RDP and its successors produced mixed results. Most successes were of a ‘handout’ nature such as:

- the child support grant,
- school feeding schemes,
- the mass electrification of homes by the state utility ESCOM,
- numerous programmes to upgrade municipal infrastructures,
- attempts to promote the small business sector,
- increased access to water and
- access to telecommunications for the masses.199

Attempts to empower people to help themselves were not that overtly successful. The situation has been further complicated by an increase in crime, corruption, inefficiency, violence, political conflict and the abuse of power.200 What is, therefore, urgently needed at the macro level, is the revitalisation of the ideals of the RDP and the political will to implement these in practice.

At the mezzo level, the key to breaking the political cycle of underdevelopment lies in especially two goal areas. They are improving citizen participation in local government and the establishment of a community vision.

The concept of local citizen participation is based "...on the assumption that the best ideas usually come from the people, not the policy-makers".201 Everything possible should be done to involve citizens in the planning, implementing and monitoring of policies, programmes and projects in a truly democratic way (i.e. ‘politics are too important to be left in the hands of politicians’). Therefore, to accomplish participative or community owned development, leaders must create and maintain a political environment that is based on community members’ respect for and trust in one another, the tolerance of differences and the acceptance of each individual’s right and responsibility to participate in the processes that affects him or her.

The second goal area pertains to the establishment of a positive vision of the future that is shared by all community members. This vision should be challenging enough to motivate people to become involved in the improvement of their communities, but not so unrealistic or idealistic that it would demoralise them.202 The vision can be the rallying point around which community leaders could mobilise community members.
At a *micro level* it should be remembered that all organisations are also political entities. It is often at this level that policies and practices are most injurious to community members.

### 5.4.7 Goals pertaining to the environmental cycle

According to Möller, two factors lay at the root of the environmental cycle of underdevelopment. They are population and economic pressures.

It is inevitable that the current size and profile of South Africa’s population, coupled with a projected population growth rate of more than 2% per annum, would put a greater burden on the environment. Even at present, valuable arable land is increasingly been used for housing purposes. This situation, coupled with the overpopulation and over utilisation of the deep rural areas, the use of unsustainable farming practices (*e.g.* overgrazing), and mining and manufacturing practices where profit is placed before environmental concerns, could spell environmental disaster for the country. On the *macro level*, therefore, the answer lays in an effective and credible national family planning programme, a national environmental education programme and the political will to enforce environmental protection measures.

On the *community level*, it is important that people should understand, accept responsibility for and be held accountable for the maintenance and improvement of their environment. The basic goal should be to leave to future generations a sustained and sustainable environment.

### 5.4.8 Goals pertaining to the educational cycle

In order to break the educational cycle of underdevelopment, South Africa must invest in its people. People ought to be central in development, because it is ultimately concerned with the individual, the quality of his life and his relationships with others.

On the *macro level*, there is a need for a new paradigm and approach in which the slogan “first education then development” would be widely adopted. Without it, the present education system cannot win the race against illiteracy in all its forms.

On the *mezzo level*, the educational goals boil down to empower community members with necessary knowledge, willpower (attitude) and skills to manage their own lives more effectively and to improve the circumstances of the people around them. This perception is, perhaps, best summarised by the following statement: “if man must clearly be the objective and the beneficiary of development, he is in the first place its agent.”

Some of the goals of community development, as seen within an Afro-centric context, are reflected in the following ‘Points to Ponder’.
Points to Ponder 1.4

The 7 principles of healthy community living: an Afro-centric perspective

The goal of community development is basically to bring about a change in the perceptions of people. Such perceptions should, however, fit local circumstances. The following Afro-centric perspective of healthy community living is a case in point.

1. **UNITY:** To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, and nation.
2. **SELF-DETERMINATION:** To define ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.
3. **COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY:** To build and maintain our community together, to believe in the value of neighbourliness (ubuntu) and to make our brothers’ and sisters’ problems our problems, and to solve them together.
4. **CO-OPERATIVE ECONOMICS:** To strive to produce as much of its own energy as possible, to supply local needs first, to strive to increase earnings (in whatever form) within the community (and decrease expenditures outside the community) and to circulate the money paid into the local economy within the community for as long as possible before it is paid out.
5. **CREATIVITY:** To do always as much as we can, in the way that we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful than we inherited it.
6. **PURPOSE:** To make as our collective vocation the building and developing of our community and to be in harmony with our spiritual purpose.
7. **FAITH:** To believe with all our hearts in our parents, our teachers, and our people.

5.5 CHANGE AGENTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In order to explain the relationship between community work and community development, it is also necessary to analyse the roles that different functionaries play in their execution. Within the community development context, it is possible to draw a distinction between three types of change agents. They are so-called generalist community development workers, specialist or sectoral developers, and experts and consultants.213

The concept ‘generalist community development worker’ broadly refers to those persons who are employed by government departments (but also some non-government organisations and businesses) for the sole purpose of rendering a developmental service to communities. Swanepoel and De Beer214 describe them as:

“...workers who usually have a co-ordinating task and who concern themselves mostly with the mobilisation of people for development and the running of development projects. These so-called generalists [sometimes] comprise... people not trained for a specific task who have been appointed to the bottom of the departmental hierarchy by government departments and provincial and local governments.”

The second type of change agents are the so-called **specialist or sectoral developers**. This group encompasses persons who - on the basis of the nature of their professions, the type of employers in whose service they are and especially the type of services that they render - directly contribute to the development of a specific sector
or sphere of community life. It could include professionals such as social workers, agricultural extension officers, engineers, teachers and nurses. These professionals will not be called community development workers, but will operate under their ordinary occupational titles in the execution of their specialised development centred services. They can work separately or combine and coordinate their services in various ways.

The views of Swanepoel and De Beer imply that social workers would be specialist or sectoral developers when they only focus their efforts on the so-called social welfare field. It is only when practitioners move outside this demarcated field and start to mobilise people to address other spheres of community life (e.g. the economic, biophysiological, educational and broad psychosocial spheres), that he or she could be called a ‘community development worker’.

The third type of change agent is the so-called experts and consultants. They are persons who do not enter into direct interaction with the members of the community, but provide expert advice or technical and research assistance to community leaders, community development workers and sectoral developers. Such experts and consultants are employed by various bodies such as national boards, some trade unions, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC), some state departments and a variety of social work institutions. Social workers could, therefore, also function as experts and consultants as far as development issues are concerned.

6. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY WORK AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

When the ecosystems perspective is used as a basis to compare community work with community development, it becomes apparent that the difference between the two is a question of focus and scope.

The domain of social work practice (see Fig. 1.3) implies that it is this profession’s primary purpose to improve people’s social functioning. In order to achieve this result, it has to enable people to fulfil their roles more effectively, reform the environment in which they live and change the transactions between the two. Community work has exactly the same field of practice. It, therefore, focuses on the psychosocial sphere of community life.

Community development does not have such a narrow psychosocial focus. Its field of practice rather encompasses all eight spheres of community life. Its primary purpose is to change the conditions within which people live in order to, basically, improve their overall standard of living and quality of life.

The differences in focus between community development and community work are illustrated in Figure 1.10.
As indicated by Figure 1.10, there is a ‘grey area’ between some of the purposes of community work and community development. This area will be illustrated with the aid of the following fictitious example.

A social worker starts to deliver services to a brick making company, the largest employer in a small community. His initial services consist of the presentation of a life skills course to employees and targeting them in an AIDS awareness campaign. He, however, discovers that the remuneration levels of the employees are far below par and decide to mobilise the workers and their trade union to rectify the situation. During deliberations with the trade unions he discovers that current legal provisions do not protect workers’ rights sufficiently and decides to mobilise a power base to address this issue.

Because the educational services and awareness campaign is solely aimed at enhancing the employees’ social functioning, it could be typified as community work. However, once the practitioner shifts his focus to the labour relations and broader economic field, these services would be typified as community development. The empowering of employees and others to work together and to stand up collectively for their rights falls somewhere in the ‘grey area’ between the two or, if viewed differently, would be part community work (social action) and part community development (change in the political sphere).
The example has two important implications.

- The first is that, in order to determine if an intervention is community work or community development, the focus and objectives of such a venture will have to be used as a criterion.
- The second is that social workers could still be doing community work if they utilise community development as one of their modes of intervention. The precondition, however, would be that this type of involvement must primarily be aimed at improving community members' social functioning and that their involvement in other spheres should only serve as a mechanism to achieve this goal.

1 United Nations Development Program. 2008: 230-7
2 United Nations Development Program. 2008: 230-7; Wikipedia. 2008. List of countries by Human Development Index. Because of insufficient data, the exact position of Zimbabwe could not be pinpointed.
3 United Nations Development Program. 2008: 276
4 Wikipedia. 2009. Southern African Development Community
5 Frank, 2007
6 Vale, 2003:79.
7 Coetzee,1996:140
8 Cf. Lombard,1991:110
9 Midgley,1997:184-5
10 In Lombard,1991:116
11 Lombard, 2008:159-160
12 Johnson,1998:41
15 Cf. Hardina, 2000:6;
16 Roodt,1996:313,318
17 Roodt,1996:314
18 Midgley,1995:2
19 Lund,1987:4
20 Midgley, 1995:4,73
21 Midgley,1995:8
22 Cf. Lombard, 2008: 158-162
23 Cf. Midgley,1995:8
24 The statist social development approach basically entail a combination of the unified socio-economic, redistribution of growth and basic needs approaches
25 Midgley,1995:92
26 Midgley,1995:60
27 Cf. Galin, 2003
28 Midgley, 1995:114
29 Korten in Roodt,1996:318
30 Coetzee & Graaf,1996:14
31 Brown,1991:15
32 Midgley,1995:91,114
33 Nel & Pretorius, 2009; Northwestern University, School of Education and Social Policy, 2009; Synergos, 2002.
34 Homan,1994:25
36 Cf. Silaywe,1995:79-83
37 Homan,1994:25
38 Homan,1994:26
41 Kirst-Ashman, 2007:9
42 Homan,1994:37; Bernstein,1995:54
44 Kirst-Ashman, 2007:9
45 Cf. Lombard, 2008: 155-162
46 Kirst-Ashman, 2007:10
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

48 Stepney & Popple, 2008:130
49 Cf. Lombard, 2008:159
52 Woodley-Baker, 2007
53 Estes, 1998:7
55 Estes, 1998:8-10; Barker, 2003:324
56 The individualist empowerment approach is also known as the individualist welfare or social welfare approach.
57 Estes, 1998:8-10; Midgley, 1995:117
58 Community Development Halton. 2006
60 Cf. Lombard, 2008:161; Patel, 2005:122-140
61 Homan, 1994:36-7
62 Lund, 1987:2
63 Midgley, 1995:54-5
64 Cf. Hamelton, 1992:37
65 Weyers, 1997:41-2
67 Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:29-30
69 Homan, 1994:26
71 Weyers, 1997:40-1, 106
72 Weyers, 1997:106
73 Cf. Rothman et al., 1983:31-2
74 Skidmore, 1983:195
76 Rothman, 1983
77 Weyers, 1987
80 Marx & Van der Walt, 1993:650; McDaniel, 1979:10-1
83 McElreath, 1993:4
84 Baker, 2006:401
85 Mitchell, 1987:123
86 Clegg, 1977:114
88 Atkinson, 1996:308
89 Foster, 1992:86
90 Midgley, 1995:90
93 Popple, 1995:64
94 Roodt, 1996:315
97 Foster, 1992:87
98 DuBois & Miley, 2005:22
99 Moore & Hill, 2000; Carpenter, 2008:4-5
100 Sheafor et al., 1997:49
101 Sheafor et al., 1997:49,85
102 The content of the Figure is based on Sheafor et al., 1997:49-51,90-121
103 Cf. Gray, 1998:17
104 Greif & Lynch, 1983:41
105 Baker, 1995:375
106 Pincus & Minahan, 1973
108 Morales & Sheafor, 1986:299
109 Bernstein & Gray, 1996:12
110 Sheafor et al., 1997:327-8, Ramsay, 1994:186
111 Ramsay, 1994:186
112 Meyer, 1983:31
Chapter 1: Community work: an overview

182 Scherer, 1972:3-4.
183 ICSW in Rooit, 1996:313.
185 Weyers, 1997:52.
188 Seekings, 2007:1; Smit, 1996:15.
189 RDP, 1994:5.
190 Tyson et al., 1996:38.
192 Möller, 1996:11-12.
192 cf. Tyson et al., 1996:145.
192 Möller, 1996:11.
“Change is a door that can only be opened from the inside”
(Old French saying).

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

*After completing this chapter, you should be able to:*

**DEFINE**
- the concepts ‘community’, ‘developmental social welfare’ and ‘developmental social work’.

**DESCRIBE**
- the factors that creates change in a community and its members’ likely reaction to such change,
- the knowledge that the social (community) worker should possess and the principles that should guide intervention and
- the socio-economic and political context of Southern African community work.

**EXPLAIN**
- the ways in which communities could be demarcated.
DEFINITIONS OF CORE CONCEPTS/CONSTRUCTS

Community: A social system which originates when a population of individuals (social dimension), localised in a specific geographic area (spatial dimension), establishes and utilises structures and relationships to deal with impediments (functional dimension) and at the same time develops a sense of communal thinking, identity and activities (cultural-symbolic dimension).

Contextual community: The setting in which the practitioner operates and that would have a direct or indirect effect on his/her endeavours.

Developmental social work: A distinctive approach to social work service delivery that goes beyond micro level rehabilitation, counselling, protection and continuing care services but also includes it; that utilises strengths, assets-based and non-discriminatory approaches to enhance social functioning, prevent social problems, and develop human potential and social capital; and - in so doing - help people to realise the fullness of the social, political and economic potentials that already exist within them.

Employer organisation: The agency, organisation, institution or group that directly employs the community worker and, basically, pays his or her salary or fee.

Habit: An entrenched way of behaving/behaviour pattern.

KAB or KAS: An acronym for knowledge (which also cover insight), attitudes (which also cover emotions and willpower) and behaviour or skills (which also cover practices).

SADC: An acronym for the Southern African Development Community.