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## BOOK REVIEW

***Interpersonal social work skills for community practice*, by Donna Hardina, New York, Springer Publishing Company, 2013, 489 pp., US\$70 (paperback), ISBN 9780826108111**

This book focuses on improving community organizing through interpersonal skills and basic social work concepts, including cultural competency, engagement, dialog, empowerment, and group process. The use of these skills could lead to better engagement with volunteers, better collaboration with diverse local organizations and groups, facilitation of task and coalition groups, and lobbying for legislation. The central thesis of the book is that these skills are essential not only to social work methods but also to community development. The book will be useful to students by referencing the Council of Social Work Education's Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics, and the International Federation of Social Workers' statement of ethical principles.

Hardina's book depicts the relationship between community practice and social work competencies. The book is organized into 15 chapters in four parts that describe the process of interpersonal social work: the pre-engagement, engagement, and post-engagement phase, as well as additional applications in community practice. Each chapter includes quotes from a community organizer on using selected skills, techniques, descriptions of skills, ethical issues, summary, exercises, and assignments. Some applications are described from empirical studies and the author's experience. Each chapter includes some critical concepts for further research. The final part and its chapters will be especially interesting for social policy, human rights, social justice, and civic society investigators.

The proposed framework is a mixture of community practice models, including social action, social planning, transformative or popular education, community development, multicultural, and feminist approaches. Hardina shows that community development researchers and practitioners can effectively use a social worker's skill set. The author describes how ethics, values, and a human rights perspective can be associated both with social work and with community organization practice.

Skills from each stage of the framework are organized into four categories: the purpose of dialog, assessment, intervention, and evaluation. This not only helps the reader study the book, but also to search and fill the gaps in programs and practice. These skills include observing the community, identifying community leaders, using participatory methods to identify community issues and problems, building and strengthening relationships, building social networks,

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modifying processes in response to what has been learned, and group reflection on organizing successes and failures.

The final chapters provide a context for using interpersonal skills in community building. These include lobbying elected officials and other decision-makers, developing strong bonds and solidarity among community members, supervisory practices, using interpersonal skills in organizing international social work and community development, as well as future directions of community organization and curriculum development, including using social media and commitment to social justice.

Hardina provides a broad overview of techniques, instruments, and methods that can be used in community development. This book can be used as a "toolbox" with an analysis of the pros and cons of these tools without simplistic reduction to be a guide or collection of hints. A variety of traditional and new, but not popular, techniques are described through examples of recruiting volunteers, participatory data collection, organizing group work, modeling partnerships, working on community action plans, implementing action campaigns, evaluation, and strengthening community connections.

The book provides a broad and cohesive perspective on community development, but it can be supplemented by analysis of the use of information and communications technologies, such as social networking services and social media. More focus on public, commercial, and social partnerships would enhance the book, as well as linking community practice with the concepts of the social and solidarity economy, social innovations, and corporate social responsibility.

This book organizes knowledge about links between social work and community development. Such work should be particularly interesting for students, scholars, and practitioners interested in inclusion, social work, social movements, social and cultural animation, supervision, legislation, and a human rights avocation.