BOOK REVIEW

H. Swanepoel and F. De Beer. 2011. *Community development. Breaking the cycle of poverty* (5ᵗʰ Ed.) Juta, Landsdown. ISBN: 978 0 70218 875 6.

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The Swanepoel-De Beer team has a host of community development classics in their stable. To cite a few, in 1996 three training manuals were published (*Training for development; Community-capacity-building* and *Communication for development*) by International Thomson Publishing. This was followed in 1989 (until 1997) with different editions of an old favourite, *Community development. Putting plans into action*.

Following ground-breaking work on community development principles and practice in what was formerly the Department of Development Administration (currently Development Studies) at UNISA, De Beer and Swanepoel published in 1998 one of the best on the topic, *Community development and beyond. Issues structures and procedures* (Van Schaik). In 2000 De Beer and Swanepoel edited, what was then a standard textbook for development studies in South Africa, *Introduction to development studies* (OUP). Some of the above publications have been edited and reproduced several times.

In the light of the above history, the two most valuable contributions in the community development saga ala the author's co-productions which followed, *Community development. Breaking the cycle of poverty* (4ᵗʰ Ed.) 2006 and the 2011 update, the title under review (5ᵗʰ Ed. with JUTA). In *community development. Breaking the cycle of poverty* (5ᵗʰ Ed.) 2011, the authors of community development in South Africa stick with a trusted recipe. The 2011 update has four sections, spanning 23 chapters; case studies; an interesting self-evaluation addendum for community development workers (CDW's); a bibliography and an index.

In following an integrated approach and a logical sequence, the book's Section A (Chapters 1-3) sets the development challenge (poverty; the multiple development environment; stakeholder analysis, etc.). Section B (Chapters 4-9) addresses the origins, features, principles,and CDW's as actors and the participatory context for community development. From the *what* to the *how to* of community development, Section C (Chapters 10-16) presents a rather daunting host of skills which CDWs need to possess (rather ideally!) to act as facilitators (inter alia, communication-, leadership-, conflict resolution-, mobilisation-, operational writing-, meeting organisation- and public speaking skills). This is followed in Section D (Chapters 17-21) with key practical implementation skills (making contact, PAR-methodology, project start, planning and implementation and project evaluation and con-

trol). The last section, Section E (Chapters 22 and 23) calls for a training regime for CDWs and suggests a framework for planning such a training workshop for CDWs.

The bibliography shows, ala Chambers, Korten and others, as the general philosophical departure of the book, that people-centred development is prioritised. These principles are covered in Chapters 4-6 under community development origins, features, outcomes and principles. This section can be confusing. It somehow does not assist the reader if community development 'features', 'principles' and 'outcomes' present the whole gamut of 'issues', such as collective action, objective orientation, awareness creation, demonstration effect, participation, ownership and others. In following Cornwall and Eades (2010) *Deconstructing development discourse. Buzzwords and fuzzwords* (Practical Action Publishing, Warwickshire), the reader feels like asking (again) "but what is community development then?" I am sure that the many overlapping constructs in these sections rather add to our (continuous?) confusion over what community development is supposed to be. Better dovetailing could have helped in this regard.

The authors place the CDW central in the debate in two chapters (Chapters 7 and 8), while linking their many roles as facilitators to the challenge of participatory planning (Chapter 9). When one reflects on community development by linking the book's view on the facilitator role of the CDW, the question begs how, in South Africa, a rather swamped with roles CDW (for instance in the Community Development Worker Programme) can play this Jack- of- all- trades role. The feeling is that the CDW will struggle to accommodate all five roles the book refers to in Chapter 8. Here one would have liked to see more on the principle of CDW-public/community planning partnerships through which 'outsider' knowledge is integrated with 'insider' social capital and indigenous knowledge systems.

Section C's 'skills for community development' stays a valuable contribution. The reader is exposed to practical tools which can capacitate not only CDWs, but a host of development 'agents'. Though the book in its entirety is of particular importance for development 'agents', this section goes a long way towards suggesting skills for all development stakeholders. One can just imagine how, empowered with these skills, development 'agents' in South Africa, if we just consider local governance, can 'consolidate' the 'developmental local government' playing field in South Africa (see Van Donk *et al.,* 2008. *Consolidating developmental local government. Lessons from the South African experience.* UCT Press, Cape Town).

For more advanced readers, one would have expected a better updated and more comprehensive bibliography. For university lecturers, it would have assisted if the book had chapter key words, aims of a chapter and relevant questions at the end of chapters. Though the approach is generic, an already quality book like this could have added particular value if the foci were specifically based on current South African debates within development management.

The 2011 update by Swanepoel and De Beer is the most comprehensive book

on community development in South Africa. What is presented as case studies (pp. 259-281) in the book confirms that the general focus of the authors is a true reflection of the (grassroots) challenge we face in South Africa. The book stays the standard prescribed reference for students of social work, development studies and related fields. Many a South African government department will excel if the message of the book becomes part of their planning lexicon. For grassroots development 'agents', specifically local government officials and NGOs/CBOs who engage in local challenges, the book acts as a standard text. It is also a rather valuable text for ordinary people interested in development. There is no better place to start with training and re-training of development 'agents', than with this book (see Section E).