# 14

# THE NATIVE HAWAIIAN CHILDREN'S CENTER

## Changing Methods from Casework to Community Practice

ELIZABETH A. MULROY and JON K. MATSUOKA

## THEORETICAL AND PRACTICE PERSPECTIVES

In this case, a nonprofit agency devoted to serving orphaned children in Hawaii has recently shifted its methods of intervention from the traditional casework approach to community building. The agency has a central administrative office and 10 free-standing units, or outreach offices, geographically located throughout the state to serve residents on all six of the state's major islands. The case raises a number of themes: (1) the utilization of community building as an agencywide method of practice; (2) the tensions that ensue among staff and managers as workers shift from the traditional service delivery orientation to a community development approach; and (3) an emphasis on cultural competence reinforced by the principles of community practice with an indigenous population.

In the first theme, management and staff redefined the way they wanted to assist their intended beneficiaries. Instead of relating to children and families on a direct one-to-one basis, the focus shifted to macro systems goals: helping people out of poverty, strengthening informal social support networks, and increasing resources and opportunities within communities. First, what does community building mean? An underlying

WAIIAN

ENTER

m Casework

ractice

N K. MATSUOKA

E PERSPECTIVES

erving orphaned children in
intervention from the tradi-
lding. The agency has a cen-
ig units, or outreach offices,
ɔ serve residents on all six of
mber of themes: (1) the uti-
:ywide method of practice;
managers as workers shift
on to a community develop-
ural competence reinforced
an indigenous population.
aff redefined the way they
. Instead of relating to chil-
:, the focus shifted to macro
strengthening informal so-
es and opportunities within
ilding mean? An underlying

assumption is that the "dynamic of community building tends to operate spontaneously in neighborhoods marked by a strong social infrastructure (that is, an extensive grass roots network of churches, schools, banks, businesses, and neighborhood centers) that nourishes and supports the life of the community" (Naparstek & Dooley, 1997a, p. 78). Therefore, community building takes a holistic approach to all the interconnecting issues that people in poverty must deal with in order to make progress toward economic independence: family and health problems, education and labor-force development, and affordable housing (Naparstek, Dooley, & Smith, 1997). Halpern (1995) recommends that it is necessary to first understand the history and public policy context of persistent poverty and community disinvestment in order to understand the possibilities of community building as an intervention.

Svirdoff (1994) suggests that community building is a weaving together of *people-based strategies*—traditional human service programs with a defined package of services to individuals—with *place-based strategies*—community development that focuses on physical development such as housing, infrastructure, commercial structures. The convergence of people-based strategies with place-based strategies generates four principles of community building: (1) it is comprehensive and integrative; (2) it takes advantage of new forms of partnerships and collaborations; (3) it targets neighborhoods to enhance resident participation; and (4) it builds on neighborhood assets (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Naparstek & Dooley, 1997a).

The second theme concerns theories of practice that guide employees in the application of their new community orientation. All agency employees are essentially initiating an innovation. According to Smale (1993), the model for managing innovations that introduce new methods of work needs to consider three major issues: (1) the nature of the innovation; (2) the people involved; and (3) the climate or culture of their organization. Questions pertaining to each of these issues need to be posed relative to the Native Hawaiian Children's Center (NHCC). Mulroy and Shay (1997) provide a conceptual piece that documents how an understanding of the theory of a community building innovation informs practice for social workers who must work across multiple systems simultaneously, perhaps for the first time.

Unlike the traditional top–down service delivery model, community building presents a new set of relationships among (1) a community worker and a resident who now interact as partners with common community improvement goals; (2) community workers from multiple agencies who serve on interagency teams; and (3) agency executives who share risks and rewards through partnerships that require a participatory management style (Adams & Nelson, 1995; Hadley, 1993; Smale, 1993; Mulroy, 1997; Mulroy

and Shay, 1997). Constraints to utilizing a community building approach have been observed in interagency and interpersonal competition for funding, and the long time frame necessary to reach community building goals (Gutierrez, GlenMaye, & DeLois, 1995; and Mulroy, 1995).

A third theme in this case involves agency and worker commitment to the self-determination of an indigenous people. Ewalt and Mokuau (1995) and Dykeman, Nelson, and Appleton (1995) suggest that social workers must understand and appreciate the cultural characteristics of the population of interest and the context of their oppression. According to Gould (1997), this is not to be confused with the new multiculturalism. Gould argues for "a paradigmatic shift to a framework that informs thinking at a transcultural level rather than a model that merely provides specific strategies for ethno-centric practice" (p. 30).

## REFERENCES

Adams, P., & Nelson, K. (Eds.). (1995). *Reinventing human services: Community and family-centered practice.* New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Dykeman, C., Nelson, J. R., & Appleton, V. (1995). Building strong working alliances with American Indian families. *Social Work in Education, 17,* 148–158.

Ewalt, P., & Mokuau, N. (1995). Self-determination from a Pacific perspective. *Social Work, 40,* 168–175.

Gould, K. (1996). The misconstruing of multiculturalism: The Stanford debate and social work. In P. Ewalt, E. Freeman, S. Kirk, & D. Poole (Eds.), *Multicultural issues in social work* (pp. 29–42). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Gutierrez, L., GlenMaye, L., & DeLois, K. (1995). The organizational context of empowerment practice: Implications for social work administration. *Social Work, 40,* 249–258.

Hadley, R. (1993). Decentralization, integration, and the search for responsive human services. In E. E. Martinez-Brawley & S. A. Delevan (Eds.), *Transferring technology in the personal social services* (pp. 31–49). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Halpern, R. (1995). Neighborhood-based services in low-income neighborhoods: A brief history. In P. Adams & K. Nelson (Eds.), *Reinventing human services* (pp. 19–40). New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Kretzmann, J., & McKnight, J. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research.

ɔmmunity building approach
ersonal competition for fund-
ch community building goals
Iulroy, 1995).

y and worker commitment to
ɔle. Ewalt and Mokuau (1995)
) suggest that social workers
l characteristics of the popu-
ɔression. According to Gould
v multiculturalism. Gould ar-
rk that informs thinking at a
ıat merely provides specific

---

ıting human services: Community
Gruyter.

ɔ95). Building strong working
Vork in Education, 17, 148–158.

ation from a Pacific perspec-

:ulturalism: The Stanford de-
ı. Kirk, & D. Poole (Eds.), *Mul-*
ıgton, DC: NASW Press.

ɔ). The organizational context
cial work administration. *So-*

·n, and the search for respon-
& S. A. Delevan (Eds.), *Trans-*
ɔ. 31–49). Washington, DC:

ices in low-income neighbor-
ı (Eds.), *Reinventing human ser-*

ɔmmunities from the inside out: A
iets. Evanston, IL: Northwest-
icy Research.

Mulroy, E. (1995, November). Achieving the systemic neighborhood network: Conflict and cooperation in a nonprofit interorganizational collaboration. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action, Cleveland, OH.

Mulroy, E. (1997). Building a neighborhood network: Interorganizational collaboration to prevent child abuse and neglect. *Social Work, 42*(3), 255–265.

Mulroy, E., & Shay, S. (1997). Nonprofit organizations and innovation: A model of neighborhood-based collaboration to prevent child maltreatment. *Social Work, 42*(5), 515–526.

Naparstek, A., & Dooley, D. (1997a). Community building. In *Encyclopedia of social work*, pp. 77–90. Supplement 1997. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Naparstek, A., & Dooley, D. (1997b). Countering urban disinvestment through community building initiatives. *Social Work, 42*(5), 506–514.

Naparstek, A., Dooley, D., & Smith, R. (1997). *Community building in public housing: Ties that bind people and their communities.* Washington, DC: U.S. Housing and Urban Development, Office of Public and Indian Housing, Office of Public Housing Investments, and Office of Urban Revitalization.

Smale, G. (1993). The nature of innovation and community-based practice. In E. E. Martinez-Brawley & S. A. Delevan (Eds.), *Transferring technology in the personal social services* (pp. 14–30). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Svirdoff, M. (1994). The seeds of urban revival. *The Public Interest, 114*, 82–103.

---

## THE CASE

# THE NATIVE HAWAIIAN CHILDREN'S CENTER

## INTRODUCTION

As a unit manager at the Native Hawaiian Children's Center (NHCC), Malia Sunn was usually clear and confident about her role in the organization, but as she rose to speak at the agency's first spring training conference, she felt her mouth go dry. She had been asked to participate in a panel called "Growing a Healthy Community: Organizational Change and the Shift to Community Practice." Calvin Kalakawa, NHCC's executive director, had

asked her to present because he expected her to inspire other managers and front line workers with her unit's successes in moving from a traditional casework approach to community building. But as she stood at the podium today, she knew that her unit's shift to community building, while accomplishing many successful projects, had been anything but smooth. The new strategic direction was commendable, but serious issues had emerged that were roadblocks to implementation. How honest and forthright could she really be?

She looked out at the 215 people in front of her and several thoughts intruded into her prepared remarks. She was struck by the visible increase in staff multiculturalism and diversity within this native Hawaiian agency. Malia also noticed the new faces of some university faculty members. NHCC's central management had recently initiated an interorganizational partnership with the University of Hawaii to bring together faculty from urban and regional planning, community extension/economic development, public administration, and social work as a multidisciplinary team to provide technical support to NHCC in its transition to community building. Collaborations were all the vogue, but she wondered if, and how, they were really going to help.

Then, Malia spotted unit-level social workers David Kaniole and Lee Winsome sitting near community workers Marcia Cook and Sam Watanabe. Their faces were lined with strain and tension from a relatively new issue—an agencywide schism between professionalism and paraprofessionalism; traditional casework and indigenous community work—an issue smoldering beneath the surface of the gracious *aloha* spirit in the room.

## The Strategic Plan and Organizational Shift

Malia remembered it was 3 years ago that the organization completed a strategic planning process that redirected agency efforts from individual care to the development of thriving, healthy communities (see Appendix A). All employees were involved in an agencywide environmental scan to examine the economic, political, and social factors posing threats as well as opportunities to clients and to the NHCC. Results of the scan showed that the impact of Hawaii's economic downturn had profoundly affected low-income Hawaiian families who were increasingly unable to meet their basic needs for housing, clothing, food, and child care. Job loss through closure of sugar plantations and related industries left communities with few job opportunities and families with fractured relationships. Simultaneously, a reduction in federal and state government spending on health and human services forced areawide agency down-

inspire other managers and
moving from a traditional
as she stood at the podium
nity building, while accom-
ything but smooth. The new
us issues had emerged that
est and forthright could she

of her and several thoughts
truck by the visible increase
his native Hawaiian agency.
niversity faculty members.
ated an interorganizational
bring together faculty from
tension/economic develop-
as a multidisciplinary team
transition to community
t she wondered if, and how,

ers David Kaniole and Lee
rcia Cook and Sam Watan-
sion from a relatively new
sionalism and paraprofes-
ous community work—an
e gracious *aloha* spirit in

:

organization completed a
ncy efforts from individual
ommunities (see Appendix
ide environmental scan to
tors posing threats as well
Results of the scan showed
rn had profoundly affected
creasingly unable to meet
l, and child care. Job loss
ted industries left commu-
s with fractured relation-
al and state government
d areawide agency down-

sizing, mergers, and even agency closures that left local communities with fewer support networks to buffer families in these times of increased economic need and family stress.

Staff went directly into the community to find out the needs of native Hawaiians. Residents responded that they wanted the NHCC to do more community development work and provide visible educational programs.

Leadership for the new strategic direction was set at the top. Calvin Kalakawa, a native Hawaiian and long-time executive director of the NHCC, was seen as a visionary with a leadership style that engendered respect and loyalty among employees and community leaders. With Board of Trustee support, Calvin carried the banner for community building. He believed that in times of decreasing resources, the agency would have a greater impact by focusing on communities instead of individuals as its target of change. In his opening remarks to attendees at the spring training conference moments earlier, Calvin said,

> *Our agency is using this opportunity to develop partnerships in supporting the Hawaiian community's investment for having healthy and happy Hawaiian children. It may take the form of economic development so that parents can work; it may take advocacy for housing the homeless; it may take collaborating with others to feed needy families; it will take counseling for some families; and the list continues to grow in the opportunities that communities offer us in supporting their development for a thriving, healthy community.*

## Role of Mission

This direction was consistent with NHCC's fundamental theory of intervention that had always acknowledged the vital interconnections between child and family, and family and community. NHCC is the primary beneficiary of a trust established by the last reigning monarch of Hawaii for the children of Hawaii 8 years before her death in 1917. The mission is "to help orphan and destitute Hawaiian children by providing a safe, nurturing family and a permanent home." Although it considered orphaned Hawaiian children its primary beneficiaries, in 1996, this group constituted 27.9 percent of beneficiaries served. Center resources were also extended to Hawaiian children who were not orphans, to non-Hawaiian children, to adults, families, and groups. During its more than 50-year existence, NHCC, with 200 employees (including 150 social workers) has served over 220,000 children, primarily through the provision of traditional child welfare services such as counseling, financial aid, adoptions, and foster care.

# IMPACTS OF COMMUNITY BUILDING

## Organizational Culture

Community building was viewed as compatible with the organizational culture of NHCC. The concept of *o'hana* (extended family) prevailed over the staff/agency culture (see Appendix A). First, the organizational culture worked to value all personnel so that janitor, clerical staff, receptionist, social worker, and manager felt like stakeholders in the provision of effective services to meet the needs of the Hawaiian community. All 10 unit facilities across the state were strategically located in or in close proximity to Hawaiian communities. Facilities were frequently used as meeting places for a host of other Hawaiian organizations and events.

Second, at the core of organizational culture was the essential role of spirituality, also essential in Hawaiian culture (see Appendix A). Its expression was encouraged in cultural learning and in organizational practices. For example, most meetings, even small staff meetings, began and ended with a prayer, and larger meetings also began or ended with singing traditional songs in the Hawaiian language.

Social worker Lee Winsome welcomed the shift to community building. Lee had worked in the Sand Mountain unit with Malia Sunn for 10 years. Lee believed that she had successfully meshed with the community and the organizational culture. Lee and other unit workers had already assisted local residents, particularly unemployed parents on public assistance, in establishing their own home businesses through community-based economic development initiatives. These successes increased family income, strengthened family relationships, and added needed resources to the local economy. She received favorable performance appraisals from her supervisor at her annual reviews. Lee Winsome had lived in Hawaii for 25 years. She was born and raised in Wisconsin of Norwegian/Danish heritage and received her MSW from a large university in the Midwest.

## Organizational Structure

Malia Sunn anticipated that community building would set the strategic direction for the Sand Mountain unit to be a catalyst for local community development. However, she was frustrated by a lack of autonomy to make critical management decisions in a timely way. The NHCC was a large, hierarchical organization with 10 community-based units spread out on all six major islands in the state. The decision-making structure was centralized. Each month, all 10 unit managers met with central administration managers to make unit-based decisions by consensus. Concerns and needs

## Y BUILDING

ible with the organizational
 nded family) prevailed over
 t, the organizational culture
lerical staff, receptionist, so-
 s in the provision of effective
 ommunity. All 10 unit facili-
 I in or in close proximity to
 ntly used as meeting places
 id events.
ure was the essential role of
re (see Appendix A). Its ex-
 and in organizational prac-
ll staff meetings, began and
began or ended with singing

e shift to community build-
init with Malia Sunn for 10
 neshed with the community
r unit workers had already
oyed parents on public as-
 nesses through community-
 These successes increased
hips, and added needed re-
favorable performance ap-
 eviews. Lee Winsome had
ind raised in Wisconsin of
 MSW from a large univer-

ling would set the strategic
italyst for local community
 a lack of autonomy to make
 The NHCC was a large, hi-
ised units spread out on all
king structure was central-
 vith central administration
 iensus. Concerns and needs

of each unit were measured and weighed by all managers using criteria that considered the impacts on the whole of the organization. This management practice was consistent with *lokahi,* meaning unity, a value in Hawaiian culture that reflects an emphasis on group relationships and consideration of working together for a common purpose.

**Shift to Entrepreneurial Management.** In Malia's experience, the shift to community building required "entrepreneurial management," that is, the capability of being flexible, making timely decisions, and having an adaptable organizational structure—characteristics thwarted by the hierarchical organizational form inherent at NHCC. For example, 2 weeks before the spring conference, Sand Mountain community worker Marcia Cook proposed that the unit join an emerging partnership of three respected agencies interested in increasing community-based economic development opportunities for local, low-income, Native Hawaiian homesteaders. The partnership would be called *Laulima;* in Hawaiian culture, this means the cooperation of many hands. Bank financing was being packaged to leverage Community Reinvestment Act money with short-term loans. Each agency was asked to donate a staff position to the program. NHCC was asked to fund and staff an outreach and home visiting position. Job requirements included building relationships with families on public assistance who were expected to achieve economic self-sufficiency under the new welfare reform laws (TANF). Technical support would be provided so that heads of households could identify their skills and abilities, and then get help to qualify for *Laulima*-provided financial resources in order to develop and sustain either home-based or community-based micro-enterprise activities. Professional relationships would need to be built with local financial institutions, agencies, and suppliers. Timing was crucial. The next unit managers' meeting at which she could present her proposal and receive permission for this budget allocation was 3 weeks away. Malia needed control of her own budget now—irrespective of what other units within the NHCC needed or wanted—in order to move with this opportunity.

**Unit Managers Seek Decentralization.** Nearly all unit managers believed that their units were unique and sought movement toward a decentralized structure. Malia wanted decentralization in order to serve her own area more effectively. She was frustrated by the present lack of autonomy.

The Sand Mountain unit served a large geographic area that had five residential communities within it. The needs of its mostly Hawaiian families and the economic and social conditions in this depressed rural economy posed their own problems, resources, and potential solutions that were different from those units in other locations around the state,

particularly those in urbanized areas in and near Honolulu, which had widely diverse populations. Recent immigration from Asia and the Pacific Islands infused Samoans, Tongans, and Filipinos into urban areas to mix with long-term resident populations from Japan, China, the Philippines, Polynesia, and Portugal as well as with native Hawaiians and transplanted mainland whites.

## On the Frontlines: Community Building versus Services

NHCC assumed that traditional child welfare services would still be offered across the state, but the emphasis had clearly shifted to a new core focus on community projects and initiatives, cultural and enrichment activities, and family life education (see Appendix B). Even though counseling and other direct services were not going to be eliminated, their importance was clearly diminished with NHCC's new strategic direction. Therefore, since direct services were an increasingly smaller agencywide function, and MSWs performed these functions, the agency decided it no longer needed to hire persons with social work degrees. If professional degrees were necessary at all the agency considered hiring those with community planning and community-based economic development training, a direction that was consistent with its strategic plan and new core focus (see Appendix B). The personnel category of community worker was then established, and hiring began at the unit level. Recruitment and hiring policies and procedures favored community residents who had firsthand knowledge of local community issues and existing networks of groups and resources. Academic training was not a job requirement.

Unit-level responses to the new strategic direction appeared to depend on the degree to which social workers had to alter their existing practices. Malia observed that the level of readiness for change from casework to community practice corresponded to the roles that social workers were already playing in the community. Some personnel were involved in a variety of community-level activities. She knew that in rural areas like Sand Mountain, some social workers were forced to develop a broader base of skills in order to address the needs of residents and promote prevention strategies. Those who had been performing multiple roles had a tendency to exert greater leadership in community-building activities. Those who had less experience, by virtue of their previous roles, received on-the-job-training as they were inclined to observe, offer support and input, and engage in a process of mutual learning and confidence building as the process developed.

**Attitude Change: Perceiving "Client" as Partner.**   The most intractable issue appeared to be resistance among some social workers to shift their

l near Honolulu, which had
.on from Asia and the Pacific
inos into urban areas to mix
.pan, China, the Philippines,
Hawaiians and transplanted

*rsus Services*

services would still be offered
/ shifted to a new core focus
al and enrichment activities,
Even though counseling and
inated, their importance was
c direction. Therefore, since
· agencywide function, and
decided it no longer needed
ofessional degrees were nec-
;e with community planning
nt training, a direction that
core focus (see Appendix B).
·r was then established, and
id hiring policies and proce-
firsthand knowledge of local
·oups and resources. Acade-

irection appeared to depend
ilter their existing practices.
r change from casework to
; that social workers were al-
inel were involved in a vari-
hat in rural areas like Sand
o develop a broader base of
its and promote prevention
ultiple roles had a tendency
lding activities. Those who
s roles, received on-the-job-
· support and input, and en-
confidence building as the

tner. The most intractable
social workers to shift their

perception of a beneficiary from that of "client" to "partner," a core assumption in community building. Malia observed that the social workers like David Kaniole who had clients that came to him for office appointments were less inclined to possess a broad repertoire of community-practice skills, and somewhat reticent about venturing out of their units. Working in communities and dealing with groups were a novel and sometimes threatening experience for David.

At a recent unit staff meeting, David Kaniole, a 13-year employee, expressed it this way: "I was trained to be a clinician. Social work means having 'clients' and working on cases. My role is to assess a client's needs and presenting problems, then to help that person change by engaging in therapy or providing other services. This is what I know how to do."

He added, "Community work is too unstructured, too loose for me. Besides, how can I be a partner with a client? I'm the one with the data. I'm the one with the training and expertise." But the nature of practice had changed. All social workers and community workers within NHCC were now required to work *in* the community in partnership with residents and local community-based organizations. Yet there remained a lack of clarity over roles, responsibilities, job titles, and salaries. At the last unit staff meeting, David had asked, "Without the requirement of either academic or professional training, how can community work be considered real social work?"

Even Lee Winsome, who had happily made the transition to community building, could appreciate how David saw his professional identity eroding and their profession marginalized. Were social workers and community workers now of equal status in the organization? Would they receive the same salaries? If so, why bother to spend the time and money to attend college and graduate school? Frontline tension increased and social worker anxiety deepened.

## Geography and Cultural Embeddedness

The NHCC considered the shift to community building to be culturally responsive to Hawaii's turbulent history. Hawaii's history of overthrow and oppression by Western capitalist interests and the process of economic development focusing on land acquisition and development by foreigners had created a unique sociopolitical environment. The systematic conversion of a subsistence economy to one steeped in agribusiness and then tourism placed immense strains on Hawaiian culture and marginalized many communities. Hawaiian communities in particular were not inclined to participate in the political and economic process that they found oppressive and inferior to their own systems.

An ideology related to self-determination was in part generated by a mistrust toward outside institutions that took advantage of and misinterpreted

situations, leading to victimization of native Hawaiians. Therefore, gaining entry into Hawaiian communities was dubious, especially for outsiders without character references from respected community members, who might not understand cultural protocol. Although the NHCC had very positive relationships with native Hawaiian communities, the agency was mindful of these compelling issues and committed to hire staff who understood and appreciated this context. Establishing the job category of community worker and hiring from the Hawaiian community were regarded as major steps in achieving this critical, strategic goal.

## Professional Identity

When Malia spotted the lines of tension on the faces of her staff in the audience, it brought back visions of the most recent staff meeting and a tense encounter between social workers and community workers. The issue was this: Assuming Sand Mountain unit joined the new *Laulima* partnership, what should the NHCC personnel position be called, and what should the job requirements be? Community workers Marcia Cook and Sam Watanabe favored calling it a Family Advocate position, a generic title that clearly conveyed the intended function. However, David Kaniole insisted that it be called Social Worker III to attract experienced professionals. Besides, he hoped the pendulum would eventually shift back to direct practice.

David was worried. If the agency shifted to community building on a permanent basis would he have to live with this level of uncertainty forever? At first, Sam Watanabe tried to assuage David, saying: "If the position is called a family advocate, then either a community worker or a social worker can fill the position. But under your requirements, David, it will be limited to only people with social work degrees."

Marcia Cook was offended by David's argument, which she felt patronized her and Sam. She shot back, "The most important thing we need is a person with the right attitude; someone who really cares about our people. That doesn't necessarily come with a degree."

David retorted, "If community building skills can be learned on the job, then community workers are *not* professionals."

Sam felt that David missed the main point. He said, "The real problems our people face are poverty and oppression. The most important job requirements should be for the person to be a native Hawaiian, committed to our local community. This position also requires political skills, access to the 'movers and shakers' who can get us the economic resources we need to strengthen the community as a whole."

Hawaiians. Therefore, gain-
dubious, especially for out-
)ected community members,
Although the NHCC had very
ommunities, the agency was
mitted to hire staff who un-
blishing the job category of
waiian community were re-
al, strategic goal.


e faces of her staff in the au-
recent staff meeting and a
d community workers. The
nit joined the new *Laulima*
ınel position be called, and
ıunity workers Marcia Cook
ımily Advocate position, a
:d function. However, David
er III to attract experienced
lum would eventually shift

:o community building on a
his level of uncertainty for-
: David, saying: "If the posi-
a community worker or a
/our requirements, David, it
‹ degrees."
gument, which she felt pa-
)st important thing we need
who really cares about our
legree."
kills can be learned on the
onals."
ıt. He said, "The real prob-
ɔn. The most important job
: native Hawaiian, commit-
requires political skills, ac-
us the economic resources
ole."

Lee Winsome was furious. If Sam got his way, Lee, not being native Hawaiian, would be disqualified from applying for a family advocate position, an opportunity she was excited about and felt competent to fill. At first, she found herself in the uncomfortable middle. Her experience with community building to date helped her appreciate Marcia's point that it required a caring attitude and a local commitment. But she had a sense of what David wanted, too. Some of the families she had worked with started down the road to self-employment but were short-circuited by episodes of substance abuse, illness of a child or other family member, and domestic violence—including child maltreatment. She believed that these cases require competent assessment skills and knowledge of health and human service resources and state reporting laws—expertise usually learned in a social work curriculum.

Now, feeling rebuffed yet not wanting to further offend Marcia or Sam either, Lee withdrew and said nothing at all. She sank down into her chair in silence. She couldn't imagine how staff could extricate themselves from this one. Lee wondered silently if David Watanabe should resign and look for another job as a clinician. The NHCC didn't require that any worker leave because of the transition to community building. Everyone had been promised continued employment if he or she wanted it. But Lee wasn't sure that David and others were interested in assimilating on-the-job training like she had done to get community-building skills. On the other hand, should community building be professionalized at all, and if so, what would that mean?

Lee valued community building and was proud of the work she was doing. However, she wondered if NHCC management had any idea what the impact of the organizationwide shift to community building was having on frontline staff relationships and morale.

Marcia Cook decided that David and Lee just didn't get it. She feared that this schism between professionalism and indigenous community work would sabotage the unit's participation in the *Laulima* partnership, a valuable opportunity that she, a community worker, had brought into the agency. If the NHCC and the unit failed to mobilize itself within the needed time frame, the native Hawaiian residents would be the real losers—again.

Malia, who was facilitating the meeting, came up with what she considered to be not only an ingenious idea, but a fair compromise: Why not change all job titles in the unit to Family Advocates? For equity purposes, categories of Family Advocate could designate levels I, II, III, and IV to give credit and incentives for education completed or employment experience. The staff sat there in silence. Then they all seemed to talk at once about identity: either needing to retain the word "community" in a job

title or needing to retain the words "social worker." The meeting ended in a standoff.

## CONCLUSION

From her view at the podium, Malia was aware of the centrality of Hawaiian culture in this organizational change effort, and its elevated role in community building. She questioned again how the university faculty team could be utilized. Maybe an outside perspective was finally needed. However, Marcia and Sam were already wary of the faculty because none of them was Hawaiian. Sam suspected that faculty—all PhDs educated on the mainland but most with long-time Hawaiian roots—would likely storm in and impose their presumed technical expertise and big theories onto a fragile community-building process.

With such a mixed audience in front of her, Malia hoped that her remarks would be appropriate. The issues of community building and organizational change seem so complex and intertwined. Then she flashed on one commonality she believed existed among those in the room: a deep commitment to the agency's founder; a belief in the founder's vision of the vital connection among a child, its family, the Hawaiian community, and the larger community; and a respect for the self-determination of Hawaiians, their gifts, identity, culture, and rights. Focused at last, Malia Sunn could begin.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If NHCC had it to do over again, what steps might management have taken to ensure a smoother transition from the strategic planning stage through to its implementation?

   a. How is community building better than casework as perceived by those social workers who are expected to adopt the new practice?
   b. Which employees experience what losses and gains?
   c. Is the organizational culture receptive to change?
   d. What aspects of NHCC need to change, and which can be maintained?

2. Can or should community building be professionalized?

3. Can nonindigenous, or nonethnic people—whether faculty, residents, or professionals—*do* community work with indigenous populations?

vorker." The meeting ended

I

e of the centrality of Hawai-
ort, and its elevated role in
how the university faculty
spective was finally needed.
of the faculty because none
culty—all PhDs educated on
waiian roots—would likely
al expertise and big theories

er, Malia hoped that her re-
ommunity building and or-
tertwined. Then she flashed
ng those in the room: a deep
in the founder's vision of the
: Hawaiian community, and
elf-determination of Hawai-
Focused at last, Malia Sunn

## TIONS

ps might management have
rom the strategic planning

n casework as perceived by
to adopt the new practice?
es and gains?
:o change?
e, and which can be main-

)fessionalized?

–whether faculty, residents,
:h indigenous populations?

## APPENDIX A

## Native Hawaiian Children's Center Organizational Culture

### Principles
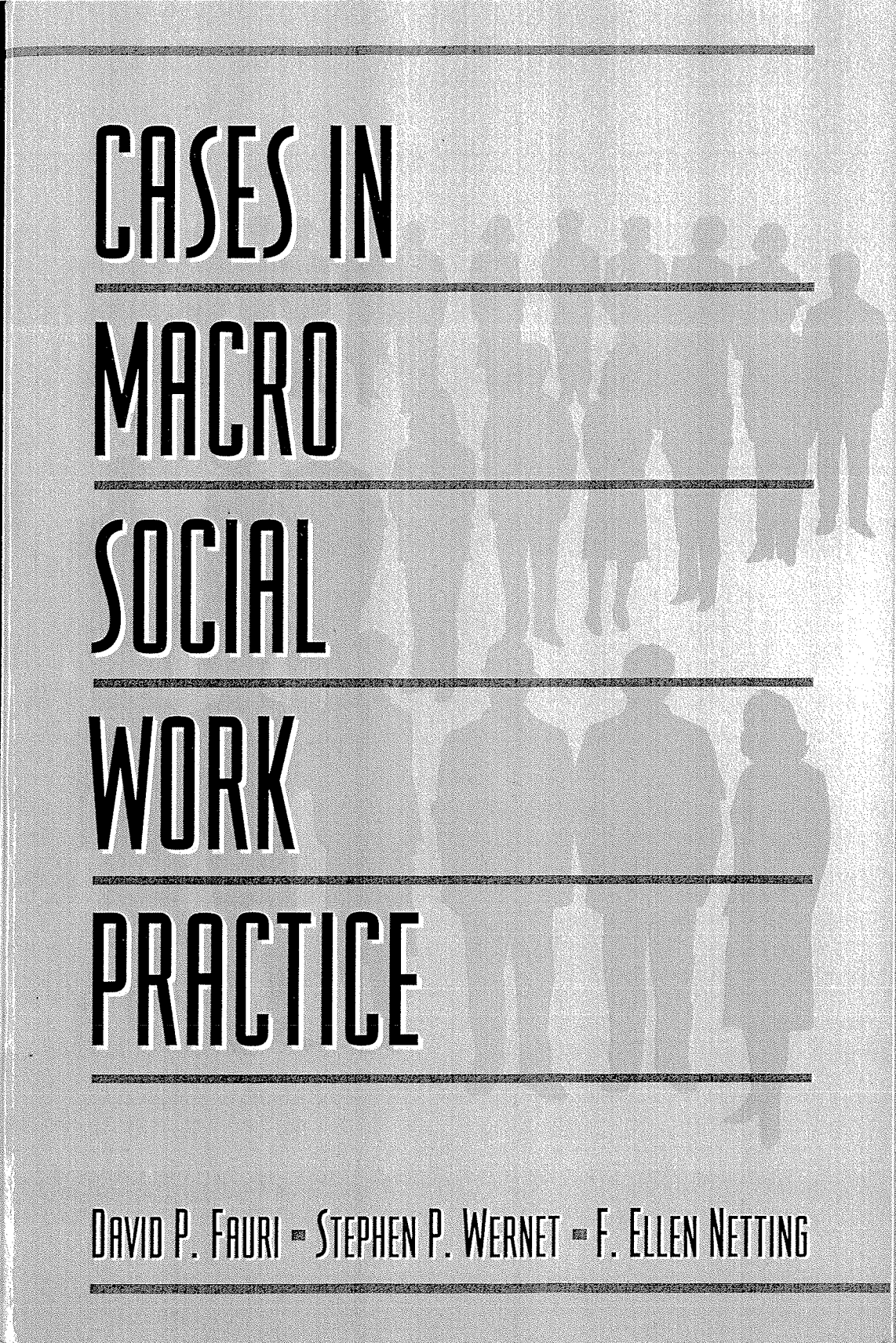
- We will remain in respectful service to our founder and will carry out her work faithfully.
- We commit to enable Hawaiian orphans to not only survive, but to thrive and to prevent conditions that place them at risk.
- Recognizing and respecting the gifts of Hawaiians—their cultural strengths, perspectives, choices, aspirations, rights—helps them fulfill their own goals. Cultural translations help them to succeed in both worlds without compromising identity or integrity.
- The founder's beneficiaries live within *'ohana* (family), who live within the larger Hawaiian community, which is part of the whole community. Children's needs, like those of their elders, are not met in isolation, but in and by their communities. Their readiness for the future depends on the willingness and ability of these communities to nurture and prepare them. Therefore, we work to strengthen and encourage *'ohana* and communities, as well as children.
- More people can be served effectively and appropriately when we work collaboratively to coordinate our strategies, our work, and use of our resources with other organizations and institutions, guided by the communities with whom we work.
- Spirituality is essential in Hawaiian culture. We encourage its expression as a common bond that transforms and unites us, though our spiritual choices and understandings may vary.

## APPENDIX B

### Native Hawaiian Children's Center Strategic Plan

*Methods of Achieving Community Building*

1. *Community Projects and Initiatives.* Community-based projects that work collaboratively to enhance the social, cultural, health, and economic well-being of the founder's beneficiaries and the families and communities that nurture them.
2. *Cultural and Enrichment Activities.* Planned activities designed to enrich the lives of children, adults, and families by enhancing their knowledge, skills, sense of competency in Hawaiian culture, educational performance, health and wellness, or recreation.
3. *Family Life Education.* Learning opportunities in which individuals share information and skills to better understand issues of community and family life and enhance their self-esteem, personal achievement, and social development.
4. *Individual and Family Strengthening.* Counseling and family assistance to enable parents and caretakers to provide safe, nurturing, and permanent homes for their children.
5. *Permanency Planning.* Counseling, financial assistance, adoption, foster home and *'ohana* care, and legal guardianship services for orphans and other children.

# CASES IN
# MACRO
# SOCIAL
# WORK
# PRACTICE

David P. Fauri · Stephen P. Wernet · F. Ellen Netting