The Community of the Future

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Jossey-Bass Publishers • San Francisco

The Community of the Future

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The community of the future / Frances Hesselbein, . . . [et al.], editors.
p. cm. — (The Drucker Foundation Future Series)
Includes index.
ISBN 0-7879-1006-6 (cloth : acid-free paper)
1. Community. 2. Community life. 3. Forecasting.
I. Hesselbein, Frances. II. Series.
HM131.C74288 1998
307—dc21 97-45263

HB Printing 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 FIRST EDITION

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The Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management, founded in 1990, takes its name and inspiration from the acknowledged father of modern management. By providing educational opportunities and resources, the foundation furthers its mission "to lead social sector organizations toward excellence in performance." It pursues this mission through the presentation of conferences, video teleconferences, and the annual Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation, the annual Frances Hesselbein Community Innovation Fellows Program, and through the development of management resources, partnerships, and publications.

Since its founding, the Drucker Foundation's special role has been to serve as a broker of intellectual capital, uniting the finest leaders, consultants, authors, and social philosophers in the world with the leaders of social sector voluntary organizations.

The Drucker Foundation believes that a healthy society requires three vital sectors: a public sector of effective governments, a private sector of effective businesses, and a social sector of effective community organizations. The mission of the social sector and its organizations is to change lives. It accomplishes this mission by addressing the needs of the spirit, mind, and body of individuals, the community, and society. This sector and its organizations also create a meaningful sphere of effective and responsible citizenship for the individuals in society and the community.

The Drucker Foundation aims to make its contribution to the health of society by strengthening the social sector through the provision of intellectual resources to insightful leaders in business, government, and the social sector.

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Preface

This is a book about the future—the future quality of our lives, our businesses, our organizations, our society—and the community we need as we move into the tenuous unknown. The leaders who are to shape the future community are scanning far beyond the horizon. This book is for them.

Looking beyond the known requires new mind-sets, new eyes and ears. To help us appreciate community in its many essential forms, we have gathered about us a group of distinguished authors, leaders, academics, and philosophers. Each individual offers a unique perspective on how we can all build more vital, inclusive communities. Together, their contributions constitute a new treasury of insight and knowledge. As you read this book, we hope the visions of its authors will enrich and expand your visions of a future society in which we move smoothly from one community to the next, finding support from those around us at work, at home, and throughout our own world.

The global community of the future will be at its best a series of communities that are interdependent and diverse, embracing differences, releasing energy, and building cohesion. The broader global community will be enhanced by the health of the many smaller communities that constitute the whole. Those living within each community define all community.

It is only in our relationships with others that we are clearly able to see ourselves. The torrent of change accelerates as we approach the end of the century, and so does the need for a greater understanding of community in its many forms. *The Community of the Future*, the third book in the Drucker Foundation Future Series, gathers thirty-one authors from around the world to contemplate the nature of community—where we have come from, where we are going, and how we will get there.

Peter F. Drucker opens the book with his introduction, "Civilizing the City." As demographics shift and the population of the world becomes more and more urban, Peter calls on the social sector, for the first time in history, to civilize the city and build true community within.

Like the previous books in the series, *The Leader of the Future* and *The Organization of the Future*, this work does not have to be read in sequence, chapter by chapter. Rather, we hope it will be read in an order determined by the reader's inclinations. We have divided the book into six parts in order to point the way.

Part One, "Trends Shaping the Evolution of Community," opens with the help of Margaret J. Wheatley and Myron Kellner-Rogers, discussing the paradox and promise of community in Chapter One. Lester C. Thurow, Rita Süssmuth, and Bob Buford explore additional waves of change shaping communities in Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

Part Two, "The Values of Community," explores the ethical dimensions of diverse communities. It begins with Chapter Five, Stephen R. Covey's discussion of the makeup of an ideal community. Claire L. Gaudiani and R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr. provide their perspectives in Chapters Six and Seven, and in Chapter Eight, Arun Gandhi closes with reflections on the lessons he learned as a child from his noted grandfather.

Innovation in technology is the focus of Part Three, "The Impact of New Communications Technology." In Chapter Nine, James L. Barksdale, CEO of Netscape Communications, explores

the use of communications technology within organizations; in Chapter Ten, Marshall Goldsmith looks at the growth of the global community and the emergence of communities of choice; and in Chapter Eleven, Howard Rheingold examines the human vitality of virtual communities.

Part Four, "Creating Communities in Organizations," features Gifford Pinchot on building community in the workplace (Chapter Twelve) and James L. Heskett on managing for results in a public sector setting (Chapter Thirteen). Dave Ulrich and Maria Livanos Cattaui examine the organizational community and the global economy in Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen, respectively.

In Part Five, "Strengthening the Social Fabric," the diverse nature of our human communities is considered in six compelling chapters. In Chapter Sixteen, Frances Hesselbein explores the dream that lies before us. In Chapter Seventeen, Noel M. Tichy, Andrew R. McGill, and Lynda St. Clair examine a social sector success in inner-city Detroit. Bobby William Austin and Andrew J. Young present a plan for community cooperatives in Chapter Eighteen. Hugh B. Price explores economic power as a means to strengthening community in Chapter Nineteen. In Chapters Twenty and Twenty-One, Raul Yzaguirre and Suzanne W. Morse examine further dimensions of the American social fabric.

Part Six, "Global Dimensions of Community," presents perspectives from points across the globe. Richard F. Schubert and Rick R. Little examine children in Chapter Twenty-Two, and Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika from Zambia and Jaime A. Zobel de Ayala II from the Philippines end with their views on the global community (Chapters Twenty-Three and Twenty-Four).

The book closes with an afterword by Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel. He probes the meaning of community in contemporary life and our relationships to it. Ultimately, communities are the mirrors in which we see our true selves.

We are pleased that all of the distinguished authors of *The Community of the Future* have volunteered their time and donated their

wisdom. They made these gifts to strengthen our communities, to rouse our thinking, to improve our understanding of our world and ourselves, and to stir us to action. Building the global community of the future is not the work of tomorrow. We are each called to build it today—to build it now.

October 1997

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PETER F. DRUCKER

Introduction: Civilizing the City

Peter F. Drucker is a writer, teacher, and consultant specializing in strategy and policy for businesses and nonprofit organizations. He has consulted with many of the world's largest corporations as well as with small and entrepreneurial companies, with nonprofit organizations, and with agencies of the U.S. government. He is the author of twenty-nine books, translated into more than twenty languages, and has made several series of educational films based on his management books. He has been an editorial columnist for the Wall Street Journal *and contributes frequently to the* Harvard Business Review *and other periodicals.*

Civilizing the city will increasingly become the top priority in all countries and particularly in the developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan. The chaotic jungle into which every major city in the world has now degenerated needs, above all, new communities. And that, neither government nor business can provide. It is the task of the nongovernment, nonbusiness, nonprofit organization.

The Global Transformation

When I was born a few years before the outbreak of World War I, fewer than 5 percent—one out of every twenty human beings then living—lived and worked in a city. The city was still the exception. Very few human beings eighty years ago were still nomads. Most had become agriculturists. But the city was still a small oasis in a rural universe. And even in the most highly industrialized and most highly urbanized countries such as England or Belgium, the rural population was still a near majority.

Fifty years ago, at the end of World War II, a quarter of the American population was still rural, and in Japan, people living on the land still numbered three-fifths of the total. Today in both countries—and in every other developed country—the rural population has shrunk to less than 5 percent and is still shrinking. Equally, in the developing world, it is the cities that are growing. Even in China and India, the two big countries that are still predominantly rural, the cities are growing while the rural population is shrinking or, at best, maintaining itself. In all developing countries—and especially in China and in India—people living on the land cannot wait to move into the city, even though there are no jobs for them there and no housing.

The only precedent for this demographic transformation is what happened some ten thousand years ago when our remote ancestors first settled on the land and became pastoralists and farmers. But that demographic transformation took several thousand years. Ours has happened in less than a century. There is no precedent in history for it, with no policies yet to manage a primarily urban society, very few institutions, and, alas, very few success stories.

The key to the survival and health of this new urban human society is the development of communities in the city. In a rural society communities are a given for the individual. Community is a fact, whether family or religion, social class, or caste. There is very little mobility in rural society, and what there is is mostly downward.

Rural society has been romanticized for millennia, especially in the West. The first great Greek poem, Hesiod's *Erga kai hemera* ("Works and Days") (sixth century B.C.), romanticized the life of the farmer. And so did the most beautiful poem left to us by Rome, Virgil's *Georgica* (first century B.C.). Right through this century, the rural communities have been portrayed as idyllic.

The reality was always somewhat different. For the community in the rural society is both compulsory and coercive.

One recent example. My family and I lived in rural Vermont only fifty years ago, in the late 1940s. At that time the most highly popularized character in the nation was the local community's telephone operator in the ads of the Bell Telephone Company. She, the ads told us every day, held the community together, served it, and was always available to help. The reality was somewhat different. In rural Vermont, we still had manual telephone exchanges. When we lifted the telephone we did not get a dial tone; we hoped that we would get one of those wonderful, community-serving operators. But when finally, around 1947 or 1948, the dial telephone came to rural Vermont, there was dancing in the streets and universal celebration. Yes, the telephone operator was always there. But when, for instance, we called up to get Dr. Wilson, the pediatrician, because one of our children had a high fever, the operator would say, "You can't reach Dr. Wilson now; he is with his girlfriend." On another occasion, she would say, "You don't need Dr. Wilson; your baby isn't that sick. Wait till tomorrow morning to see whether she still has a high temperature." Community was not only coercive; it was intrusive.

This explains why, for millennia, the dream of rural people was to escape into the city. "*Stadtluft Macht Frei*" ("City air sets you free"), says an old German proverb dating back to the eleventh or twelfth century. The serf who managed to escape from the land and was admitted into a city became a free man. He became a citizen. And so we, too, have an idyllic picture of the city—and it is as unrealistic as was the idyllic picture of rural life.

What made the city attractive also made it anarchic—its anonymity and the absence of compulsive and coercive communities. The city was indeed the center of culture. It was where artists could work and flourish. It was where scholars could work and flourish. Precisely because it had no community, it offered upward mobility. But beneath that thin layer of professionals, artists, scholars, the wealthy, and the highly skilled artisans in their craft guilds, there was moral and social anomie, prostitution and banditry, and lawlessness.

Also, not till up to a hundred years or so ago did any city manage to replicate itself. It needed constant replenishment, constant immigration from the countryside in order to maintain its population, let alone to grow. The city meant disease and epidemic. Not until the nineteenth century, with a modern water supply, modern sewer systems, vaccinations, and quarantines, did life expectancy in the city begin to come anywhere near life expectancy in the country. This was true of the Rome of the Caesars, of Byzantine Constantinople, of the Florence of the Medici, and of the Paris of Louis XIV (as portrayed so brilliantly in Dumas's *Three Musketeers*, the nineteenth century's greatest best-seller). It was true, also, of Dickens's London. In the city there was a brilliant "high culture." But it was a wafer-thin layer over a stinking swamp. And in no city in the world, before 1880 or so, did a respectable woman dare go out alone at *any* time during the day. Nor was it safe to walk home at night. Even a member of Parliament ran a tremendous risk of being attacked and killed by murderous gangs on his way home at night (a central event in several of Anthony Trollope's best-selling novels of the 1870s).

This city was attractive precisely because it offered freedom from the compulsory and coercive community. But it was destructive because it did not offer any community of its own.

And human beings need community. If no communities are available for constructive ends, there will be destructive, murderous communities—the gangs of Victorian England, or the gangs that

today threaten the very social fabric of the large, American city (and, increasingly, of every large city in the world).

The first to point out that humans need community was Ferdinand Toennies, in an 1887 book, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* ("Community and Society"), one of the great classics of sociology. But the community that Toennies, a little over a century ago, still hoped to preserve, the "organic" community of traditional rural society, is gone, and gone for good. The task today, therefore, is to create urban communities—something that never existed before. Instead of the traditional communities of history, urban communities need to be free and voluntary. But they also need to offer the individual in the city an opportunity to achieve, to contribute, to matter.

The Need for the Third Sector

Since World War I, and certainly since the end of World War II, the majority in all countries, whether democracies or tyrannies, believed that government should and could supply the community needs of an urban society through "social programs." We now know that this was largely delusion. The social programs of the last fifty years have, by and large, not been successes. They certainly have not filled the vacuum created by the disappearance of the traditional community. The needs were certainly there. And so has been the money (in enormous quantities in many countries). But the results have been meager everywhere.

It is equally clear that the private sector—that is, business—cannot fill that need either. I actually once thought that it could and would. More than fifty years ago, in my 1943 book, *The Future of Industrial Man*, I proposed what I then called the "self-governing plant community," the community within the new social organization, the large business enterprise. It has worked, but only in one country, Japan. It is by now clear that even there, this is not the answer, not the solution.

In the first place, no business can really give security; the "lifetime employment" of the Japanese is rapidly proving to be a dangerous delusion. Above all, however, lifetime employment, and with it the self-governing plant community, do not fit the reality of a knowledge society. There the private sector increasingly has become a way to make a living far more than a way to make a life. It will, and should, provide material success and personal achievement. But the business enterprise is clearly what Toennies, 110 years ago, called a "society," rather than a "community."

Only the institution of the social sector, that is, the nongovernment, nonbusiness, nonprofit organization, can create what we now need, communities for citizens and especially for the highly educated knowledge workers who, increasingly, dominate developed societies. One reason for this is that only nonprofit organizations can provide the enormous diversity of communities we need—from churches to professional associations, and from community organizations taking care of the homeless to health clubs. The nonprofit organizations also are the only ones that can satisfy the second need of the city, the need for effective citizenship for its members, and especially for the educated professional people who, increasingly, are becoming the dominant group in the twenty-first-century city. Only the nonprofit social sector institution can provide opportunities to be a volunteer and thus can enable individuals to have both: a sphere in which they are in control and a sphere in which they make a difference.

The twentieth century, now coming to an end, has seen an explosive growth of both government and business, especially in the developed countries. What the dawning twenty-first century needs above all is equally explosive growth of the nonprofit social sector organizations in building communities in the newly dominant social environment, the city.

And this is what this book is all about.