

The “1000Communities²” Proposal

Creating a Multiplier Effect of a Positive Nature

Introduction

In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative that attracted more than 1,700 participants, and produced 40 community goals—which resulted in the implementation of 223 projects and programs, the creation of 1,300 permanent jobs, and a total financial investment of 793 million dollars. (For source references, see p. 9 of the “1000Communities²” proposal)

Many Difficult Challenges Ahead

We now live in very complex and challenging times. More and more people, in more and more parts of the world, are coming to the conclusion that all of us have important responsibilities associated with resolving a significant number of very serious challenges, which include (but are not limited to):

- a) global warming and reducing carbon emissions
- b) peak oil and reducing dependence on petroleum based products
- c) global inequities and the tragic cycles of malnutrition, disease, and death
- d) an increasing world population requiring more resources when many resources are becoming more scarce (*with a special emphasis* on the increasing number of people who are consuming resources and ecological services *indiscriminately*)
- e) cultures of greed, corruption, and overindulgence have caused a crises of confidence in financial markets, and are in many ways slowing the restructuring of investment priorities needed to respond to the challenges listed here (and other challenges)
- f) there still seems to be a majority of people on the planet who do not have a clear understanding, well-grounded in personal experience, of which basic elements of community life and cultural traditions lead to mutually beneficial understandings, which lead to cycles of violence—and why it is so important for people to achieve clarity on this subject.

The “1000Communities²” Proposal

One suggestion which could assist in bringing many solutions to light at the local community level is a 161 page proposal by this writer titled “1000Communities²”.

The “1000Communities²” proposal advocates organizing and implementing Community Visioning Initiatives in 1000 communities (communities—or segments of rural areas, towns, or cities—with populations of 50,000 or less) around the world

1. which are time-intensive, lasting even as much as 1½ years (18 months), so as to give as much importance to developing a close-knit community as it does to

- a) accumulating and integrating the knowledge and skill sets necessary for the highest percentage of people to act wisely in response to challenges identified as priority challenges
- b) helping people to deliberately channel their time, energy, and money into the creation of “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to resolving high priority challenges
- c) assisting with outreach, partnership formation, and development of service capacity for a significant number of already existing (or forming) organizations, businesses, institutions, and government agencies
- d) helping to build a high level of consensus for specific action plans, which will help inspire additional support from people, businesses, organizations, institutions, and government agencies with significant resources

2. which expand on the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” (created by the “Teachers Without Borders” organization) so that such local community points of entry function as information clearinghouses, meeting locations, educational centers for ongoing workshops (on a broad range of topics related to the Community Visioning Process, and building the local knowledge base), practice sites for developing “teacher-leaders”, a location for an ongoing “informal” “Community Journal”, a location for listing employment opportunities—and provide a means of responding quickly (by changing the emphasis of workshop content) to new urgencies as they arise

3. and which suggest—as a way of emphasizing the need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings—that communities (with the resources to do so) enter into “sister community” relationships with communities in other countries where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs.

If even a few....

There are many important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” Community Visioning Initiatives can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as this community building tool encourages and facilitates the creation of a “constellation” of initiatives by which the best (*in view of the participants in the community visioning initiatives*) solutions to the most difficult (*in the view of the participants in the community visioning initiatives*) challenges can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as appropriate recipients of people’s time, energy, and money. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money. The result can be a deliberate increase in the “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to overcoming the challenges identified by residents as priority challenges. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

If even a few of these kind of Community Visioning Initiatives generated results similar to those achieved by the Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA) Visioning Initiative carried out in 1984 (“Vision 2000”)(see reference in first paragraph), people in all parts of the world—keenly attuned when it comes to resolving challenges which require urgent solutions at all levels of society— *could be* inspired to carry out similar Community Visioning Initiatives. And if many communities carried out similar initiatives, and also achieved significant results, our collective capacity to resolve the challenges of our times *would surely* begin to accumulate at an accelerating rate.

Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways—and in a variety of circumstances—by countless numbers of people in communities around the world. A combination of Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” and “sister community” relationships can bring to light the many truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill in your community and region, and contribute much to the building of “close-knit” communities of people... communities with a healthy appreciation for each others strengths, communities with a well-developed capacity to resolve even the most difficult challenges—and communities which demonstrate a high level of compassion for their fellow human beings.

[Note: In light of the urgent need to increase collaboration between diverse communities of people, anyone may access all IPCR documents (including the above mentioned 161 page “1000Communities²” proposal) for free, at the website of The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative (www.ipcri.net). With Kind Regards, Stefan Pasti, Founder and Outreach Coordinator The IPCR Initiative P.O. Box 163 Leesburg, Virginia 20178 (USA)].